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messing about in **BOATS**

Special Features This Issue
"Giant 5-Day Messabout" - "4-Day Cruise on 5hp"
"Many Rigs of a Kingston Lobster Boat"

Volume 17 - Number 17

January 15, 2000



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messing about in BOATS

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Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor



I think I've alluded at times on this page to my growing involvement in bicycling, ranging from off-road mountain biking to recumbent road biking, and from this into developing a recumbent hand-pedaled trike with a quadriplegic friend. The topic is not germane to this magazine, but when the mail brought me yet another one of those publicity packets boldly headed "For Immediate Release" all about pedal powered boats, I took a closer look.

We've had articles from time to time on pedal powered small boats. Back in the '80s they turned up at the Small Boat Show in Newport, Rhode Island, topped by a California proa design which was fast indeed, having set race speed records for human power in the open ocean Catalina Island races. Also at that time, Gary Hoyt, the innovative and controversial naval architect proponent of making boats more user friendly for the general public, showed off a pedal powered fully enclosed sort of egg-shaped craft, one he could pedal across Narragansett Bay on a windy winter day in his street clothing, dry and secure. And west coast naval architect Phil Thiel has from time to time reported on his pedal powered canal/houseboat concept he designed, built and uses.

But, pedal powered boats are just not mainstream. So the "news release" we received from the International Water Cycle Association consisted of a low budget packet of four photocopy sheets, two pages extolling "Get a Great Workout Water Cycling", a page listing no less than 12 member firms, and a fourth page photocopy of a montage of photos of the variety of pedal powered craft these firms offer. Obviously not a lot of funding behind this communal effort, pedal boats are still small boats in business as well as in size.

This lack of glitz, coupled with my personal infatuation with pedal power on land in its more exotic forms, soon had me studying the photos, as the text was typical generic boosterism for the activity.

Aha, here was today's version of Gary Hoyt's concept. And here were a couple of catamaran concepts, solo and doubles (not tandems as in bicycling, but side-by-side setups). Also I found sit-on-top kayaks with recumbent pedalling arrangements, as well as a rather conventional looking skiff one might row if it had oarlocks. There was even a sort of bicycle on a water ski arrangement that looked rather

precariously top heavy to me. On land you put a foot down when you stop for balance, but on water?

My involvement this year on our handi-cap handcycle project predisposed me to really look at a small photo in a lower corner showing a happy paraplegic hand pedaling. The boat itself wasn't visible, only his upper body and the handpedals and sprocket, but it was tucked alongside a photo of a sort of sea sled type hull with a recumbent pedaler aboard.

Maybe there's something here I should look into more deeply. My quad friend Charlie, who has kayaked with me in my double and does pretty well despite lack of any handgrip strength (he wedges his hands under straps on the kayak paddle handle so he can push and pull on it) was stoked about a couple of the prospects, which go right along with our low rider recumbent land trike project.

I concluded that the recumbent pedaling kayak style boats made the most sense to me, and maybe that sea sled type. As on my bicycles, low is good, much more stable, more comfortable, more powerful ergonomically. In bicycling I have found that the conventional bicyclist on his 100 year old diamond frame design doesn't have a clue about how much more efficient and comfortable the recumbent style is, and I found that those of comparable fitness to me cannot understand how the old guy can ride off from them into the distance so easily. They think I'm some sort of super-fit geezer. It's the bike, guys.

And so it must be with these pedal boats. The tall designs that more closely mimic the conventional bicycle just cannot possibly provide the experience the low rider recumbent can. The allure of pedal propulsion is addictive. It has been pointed out that the bicycle is the most efficient personal land transportation device ever built in terms of distance travelled for energy expended. Should apply to small boats I would think. I'll have to find out come spring.

If this topic elicits a spark of interest you might want to request your own copy of the International Water Cycling Association publicity, from which you could then pursue it further, if you were so inspired, directly to the listed manufacturers. Contact the International Water Cycling Association at 265 Santa Helena, Suite 110, Solana Beach, CA 92075-1538, (619) 259-8972, <jhschool@aol.com>.

In Our Next Issue...

We'll have two more tales of small boat gatherings from last summer: Bob Simmons reports on the annual "Pend Oreille Rendezvous" out west in Idaho and from back east we have the "Connecticut River Museum's 2nd Annual Steam & Launch Show".

Tim O'Brien returns to our pages with more houseboat adventures in "Shoobox's Fall Cruise"; Robb White discourses on "Kids in Boats"; we hear all about the "Whale City Rowing Club's Summer"; Steve Turi's "Adventures of a New Jersey Boat Nut" gets to Part 12; and our book serialization, "Four Months in a Sneakbox" reaches Chapter 3.

Luc Casaer reports on "The Launching of de Scute", a historic replica in his native Belgium; Mike Moore tells of building "A Traditional Skiff"; and we learn about the "Hudson River Ferry Sloops" from the folks who own them, Ferry Sloops Inc.

Two designs we'll present are "Tony Dias' Small"; and "TNE Marine's Rainbow". Richard Carsen's "Dreamboats" continues his current looking into leg powered small boats in "The Pedalelectric Cruiser" while Phil Bolger & Friends have an extensive "Update on Lily", their electric powered launch.

The yuloh topic is not yet exhausted as Craig O'Donnell brings us a profusely illustrated feature on "The Yuloh, Not Oars, Not Sweeps, But Sculls".

On the Cover...

All smiles at the San Diego based Scuzzbums Giant 5-Day Messabout in August. Report and photos in this issue.



Small Boat SAFETY



Tom Shaw

Night SAR

"This is a drill. This is a drill. This is a drill. Coast Guard Wrightsville Beach, this is the sloop *Ecstasy*. We have lost our steering and need assistance."

So began my part of a night Auxiliary Search and Rescue training operation. I had the easy role as crew on the "disabled" vessel. After the initial call for assistance and subsequent details, size of vessel, number of persons on board and estimated position, all

we had to do was enjoy a good meal and wait in relative comfort (3' seas) until we were "rescued".

Those training for coxswain qualification had a lot more to do. In addition to making all the proper radio calls for information, they had to plot a course to our given position and then, since the given position was deliberately inaccurate, plot and run search patterns until we were found and taken under tow, all of this

under the critical eye of a Qualified Examiner who would, if they performed well, "sign them off" at the end of the night's work.

A good portion of the speed in which we were found depended on the search vessel seeking good information and a vital part of the training was learning how to get facts from distressed sailors who are not always thinking too clearly. A series of questions about our location elicited the course on which we were sailing before the rudder "failure" and our destination, in this case the Masonboro Sea Buoy. The search team then calculated the reciprocal of that course, made allowances for drift over the appropriate period of time and went hunting. As they were underway, they asked for the depth in which we had anchored, one more piece in the puzzle and another clue for serious chart study. All in all, they did a good job, but we were glad to be "rescued" as the night was a cold one.

In my personal experience, Auxiliary boats generally go on Search and Rescue missions with a Coast Guard vessel (and often a helicopter). Two boats running search patterns are several times as effective as one working alone. Even so, a real search can be a long and tiring operation. The Coast Guard does not give up easily, a thought I find very comforting.



Island Usage Management Project

The Problem: The public Trail islands have become a magnet for local boaters, school groups, out-of-state visitors, schooners, and kayaking tours who, in turn, impact the very resource that they have come to enjoy. Problems such as human waste, tent sprawl, and erosion leave islands less pristine for the next visitors, and ultimately threaten the resource.

MITA's Answer: In response to this problem, MITA aims to build sound management strategies that will protect the islands' natural aesthetic appearance and ecological integrity, as well as provide the opportunity for visitors to enjoy relatively wild, natural coastal islands.

The Plan of Action: The key to successfully managing coastal public islands and preserving them for future use lies in partnerships and collaboration among all island users, targeted research projects, public education, and island monitoring. In the next two years, MITA will take the following steps to address increased use:

Partnerships & Collaboration:

Convene annual island stakeholder public forums for island users, owners, community members, land trusts, schools, camps, and commercial guides and instructors to discuss

increased use issues and determine management strategies.

Convene bi-annual Increased Use Advisory Council meetings and work groups, uniting representatives from conservation organizations, federal and state agencies, island owners and managers, and user groups to provide insight, advice, and guidance on MITA's management plans.

Research:

Participate in the "1999 Congress on Recreation and Resource Capacity" in Colorado to gain an understanding of increased use issues and strategies nationwide.

Determine effective solutions to chronic island problems such as human waste & fires.

Research island-by-island carrying capacities and develop capacity limits.

Increase access sites on Trail.

Public Education:

Revise and re-post educational signage on all public Trail islands. Develop and present a series of Leave No Trace/Low-Impact Workshops to guides, instructors, summer camps, and other group trip leaders.

Update Fragile Islands brochure with national Leave No Trace and coastal bird guidelines to educate island visitors about low-impact techniques. Identify and contact out-of-state and local group users to inform them about island-friendly camping, group size, and length of stay limits.

Island Monitoring:

Enhance the Monitoring Program to better track environmental and social conditions on islands throughout the peak boating season. Increase scope of usage and environmental data compilation to guide management discussions and decisions.

The Long-Term Plan: The goal of all of these projects is to develop a comprehensive, long-range island usage Land Management Plan delineating a series of acceptable management strategies to meet predictable usage impacts on the public islands in the years to come.

Important Upcoming Meetings:

March 22, 2000: Working Group Meeting, an open session to discuss your 2000 management strategies (e.g. island capacity limits).

November 15, 2000: Island Stakeholders Meeting, a public forum to review observations from the year 2000 boating season and plan for the years to come.

Additional information (times and locations) will be sent in the coming months. Please call us if you have any questions at (207) 761-8225. Also, let us know if you are interested in receiving future updates or meeting announcements.

MITA, P.O. Box C, Rockland, ME 04841-0735, (207) 596-6456, <www.mita.org>, <islands@ime.net>, <mita@ime.net>

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Activities & Events...

Celebrate New Season at Hulbert Center

Hulbert Outdoor Center, a non-profit environmental/outdoor education center located in Fairlee Vermont, will host a Camping Skills Day on Saturday, June 3, 2000, at Camp Aloha Hive on Lake Fairlee on Rt. 244 in Thetford, Vermont. It is a great way to celebrate warm weather, open water and the beginning of the paddling and camping season. This day of workshops, demonstrations, activities and displays offers something for paddlers and canoe campers of all ages and abilities.

Join experienced canoers and craftsman who will teach their skills. Demonstrations in birch bark canoe building, quiet and white water paddling strokes, poling, trip preparation, outdoor cooking, flycasting, camping techniques, children's activities, canoe paddle carving, and much more, will be a part of the day.

Feel free to bring your traditional small boat for display. Tailgate vendors of low key, boating related items are welcomed. Bring your used boat or equipment for sale or swap.

General admittance for the day is \$3, children under 10, \$1. Specialized workshops must be preregistered, and include a separate fee.

Deb Williams, Hulbert Outdoor Center, Fairlee, Vermont 05045, (802) 333-3405, <Deb.Williams@Valley.Net>

Philadelphia Wooden Boat Factory

The Philadelphia Wooden Boat Factory was founded in 1996 in order to provide maritime education to the public. We work with young people, many of whom grow up in an at-risk environment, and adults in our classes. To us, maritime education means teaching boat building, sailing and canoeing. It also means teaching students about the environment they use and to respect it. Our adult classes are limited to boat building and topics related directly to boat building.

Our youth program is called the Marine Education Initiative Program. We work with local schools and organizations building 15' canoes and exploring marine history, geography, math, science, communication and computer skills. The programs that we offer young people are intensive, challenging courses. In building a boat, students don't watch a boat being built, they do the work themselves. We guide them through the unfamiliar process, show them how to use the tools.

In building a boat a lot of decisions are made during the construction process. The boys and girls doing the work make those decisions with the help of our instructors. One

of the most important aspects of our programs is confidence building. Philadelphia Wooden Boat Factory emphasizes positive experience and a can-do attitude. Through the boys and girls who have come through our programs we have learned that there is a need to make learning relate to the world and be captivating and interesting. We feel that learning how to learn is the most important skill that can be passed on to a young mind.

In our shop boat builder Chad Brenner, co-founder and teacher for our adult classes, is currently working on restoring a 1931 Dee Wite runabout and refinishing a Hubert Johnson Black Jack. We are also finishing up a cedar strip canoe, which was a class project from the fall. Our youth programs meet during the day for 2 to 3 hours a session. We are currently building 10 canoes with young people and will be starting up at least 4 more after the new year.

A list of our courses for the spring to give you an idea of projects we will be working on in 2000 includes: Wood Canvas Canoe Restoration, Beetle Cat Restoration, Advanced Boat Building - Part I, 16' Gentleman's Runabout, Build Your Own Canoe, Beginner Carving, Half Model Making

Geoff McKonly, Philadelphia Wooden Boat Factory, 2045 W. Moyamensing Ave., Philadelphia PA 19145, (215) 755-2400, <pwbf@liberty.net.org>

Big Splash at Mystic Seaport

A major new exhibition, makes a big splash at Mystic Seaport Museum in Mystic, Connecticut, on June 17, 2000. The Seaport's most ambitious exhibit ever, "Voyages: Stories of America and the Sea", will display the pervasive influence the sea has had on our lives. Although the exhibit is comprised of objects, maps, paintings, boats, clothing, tools, carvings, weapons, photographs and other artifacts, it is a story about people, not things, highlighting the historic and contemporary elements of our nation's connection its oceans, rivers, and lakes.

Seven sections including immigration, foreign trade, recreation, inspiration, Navy life, fisheries, and our nation's rivers, are comprised of rare objects and artifacts, interactive computer stations, dramatic performances, hands-on on art activities, and audio and video programs.

Mystic Seaport is dedicating the next decade to creating a broad, public understanding of the relationship of America and the sea. Each year the museum will focus on a theme related to "Voyages", mount complementary exhibits, and amplify the subject matter through symposia, classes, workshops, outreach programs and on-grounds programming. The theme of summer 2000 is immigration;

oppression, opportunity and freedom will be the theme of summer 2001, during which "Black Jacks", an exhibit encompassing the rich history of African Americans in the maritime trades, will be open.

Mystic Seaport, The Museum of America and the Sea, was founded in 1929, and houses the largest collection of boats and maritime photography in the world. This private not-for-profit educational institution serves annually nearly a half-million visitors from around the world and approximately 25,000 members from each of the 50 states and 30 foreign countries. Renowned for its recreated 19th-century village area of historic buildings and tall ships, Mystic Seaport offers exhibit galleries and a unique shipyard where the nearly lost art of wooden shipbuilding comes to life. The Museum's planetarium, publishing program, acclaimed research library and exceptional online access complement extensive youth, undergraduate and graduate maritime education courses.

Mystic Seaport is open daily, year round, except for December 25. Summer hours are 9am to 5pm. Admission is \$16 for adults, \$8 for youth ages 6 -12; under age 5 are free. Mystic Seaport is located one mile south of I-95, Exit 90, in Mystic, Connecticut. (888) 9SEAPORT, <www.mysticseaport.org>

Boatbuilding...

One of These Days...

One of these days I'll be sending a story with photos about my 12' Barnegat sneakbox, *Lazarus*, so named because it was dug out of Long Beach Island baybank the summer after the great March storm of '62. I bought the boat a couple of years ago after it had languished dry in a shed since the '60s.

I got boatwright John Chadwick to replace the ribs, nothing else needed to be done. I glassed the bottom and did some cosmetic work and away we went. She's fat with a beam of 5', but steady as the *Titanic*, and sculls well with a sturdy pair of Shaw & Tenney oars.

The old boys in Barnegat think this 'box (cedar planked, of course) was built in the '40s.

Edward Brown, Medford, NJ

Family Boatbuilding...You Can Do It

Your local group or organization should explore the benefits of producing a Family Boatbuilding event. Few other such endeavors provide such long lasting benefit to participants and the community alike.

If you would like assistance from us in learning how to produce Family Boatbuilding, simply check our website at <www.woodenboat.com> and follow directions to the Family Boatbuilding portion. There are a number of potential pitfalls and short cuts where we can advise you. Properly produced, Family Boatbuilding will be an event that will do your organization and participants proud.

If your organization will be producing such an event in the future, please let us know and we will mention it on our pages in *WoodenBoat* magazine.

Family Boatbuilding, P.O. Box 78, Brooklin, ME 04616

Designs...

About Diesels

I enjoyed Bolger's design articles on the passagemakers (October 15, November 1 & 15). After a lifetime of sailing, I find that trawlers and motor sailers are looking better to me all the time, more room, more speed, a pilot-house. Thoughts of living aboard combined with an injured hand are motivating factors heading me towards power. Bolger's designs take me on an intuitive leap, they always get my little gray cells working, and wishing for longer such articles, complete with full size plans to look at.

I am particularly interested in the Deutz power plant he bases his design upon. It's been my experience that it is difficult to get parts for my '78 two cylinder Volvo diesel, so I wonder about how one deals with an exotic engine such as the Deutz? Bolger makes it sound as if you could motor around the world without any maintenance at all (I wish I had such and engine).

I am also curious about the drive, is it a custom unit or supplied by Deutz?

Dean Raffaelli, 5842 N. Talman, Chicago, IL 60659

Opinions...

Simplistic Sailboat

I was quite taken with the book, *The Simplistic Sailboat* that you reviewed in the November 15th issue. I imagine some hardcore cruising folk will jeer at 20-50 miles, laundromats, etc., but foremost, such little boats give big adventures.

I noted that when describing the rowing position aft thru ports cut in the sides, author Hookham notes some difficulties; possibly he'd be better off standing waist-high in a bow hatch to better see sub-surface obstacles, and be in a better position to fend off with utility oars. Also, within reach might be the aerodynamic counterbalance (wow) of the junk sail to be pushed or pulled or brought dead-amidship. Kinda odd that he steps his main in a keel socket, thus having to lift the entire rig out for battening down. Certainly an able builder/mechanic. Odd that he didn't devise a tabernacle for this. I'd consider this mandatory with wife and tot aboard.

Norm Benedict, Santa Maria, CA

The Boat Not For Sale

I just finished a little sailboat that I have been working on for over a year in my spare time. It ain't a paying job, just for my grandchildren and me, is why it stayed on the back burner so long. Another double ender sort of like the one I have been frolicking in for all these years, only wide enough for more people and very bluff in the bow (a felucca?). It is also the first boat that I actually have a professionally made sail for at launching time. Since I build a different boat every time, I usually adjust the balance by changing the clew-to-tack length of the sail by trial and error using bamboo spars and cheap polyester drapery backing for a try-out sail so I can send the sailmaker something that will work. For the last few years, I have been eyeballing it (used to calculate it in-extremis) right first time

and have become so arrogant that I just sent Stuart the facts right off. The damn thing probably won't sail, just to put me in my place. I'll let you know after I get it in the water.

There is a danger in me building a boat for us. I always get so poor that somebody comes along and makes me an offer that I can't refuse. The only boats of mine I still have are ones that have something suspicious about them, like the old take-apart skiff. My tiny little *Precious*, with the Dabbler lugsail, has an unfortunate lap-line anomaly where a prop stick popped out after I had taken it apart and glued it back together and drunk the two bottles of Guinness Stout in the bathtub and gone to bed. Though it is hard to see, I can't let such a boat go into the public domain without me right there to make my excuses.

This one is so peculiar with experiments (like, it steers with a pivoting daggerboard and the only possible auxiliary propulsion is by paddling, standing up) that nobody can possibly understand how it is supposed to work except me, so it can't be sold.

I learned my lesson about getting attached to saleable boats. I had a little model-bow pirogue that my sons and I had screwed together temporarily as a prototype to make jigs for a get-rich quick manufacturing project a long time ago. We decided not to do it and I slapped the prototype together and used it for a fishing boat. I was very fond of it. Last winter, a rich lady came snooping around for a Christmas present. "I'm looking for a present for my son, and thought he might like a nice little boat." When she found out that I was already obligated through the spring, she asked, "What about that one over there in those bushes?" My heart is still broke and I have no idea where the money went.

Robb White, Thomsaville, GA

This Magazine...

Right Down the Center

Your magazine is right down the center for us small boat enthusiasts. I just bought the first 36 issues of *Small Boat Journal* (I was a subscriber) but find yours much more interesting.

I have a Buccaneer 18, a Chrysler Lone Star 13, a Grumman Ballerina aluminum sailboat and an Oxford dinghy. I just bought a Portabote and am set to buy another. I just missed buying a Grumman Flyer aluminum sailboat advertised in the sample issue you sent me. I called ten minutes after I received the sample and looked at the classified ads, but it had been sold, so I am offering a \$100 finder's fee for my successful purchase of one of these boats.

Bill Narby, 8254 Main St. Ext., Hammondsport, NY 14840, <tlynne@link ny.com>

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Interesting Information...

Hensnest

A new non-commercial e-mail site for owners and lovers of Mud, Marsh and Bay Hen boats has been established, at <Hensnest@Onelist.com>. For those who know how, the shortcut URL to this page is <http://www.onelist.com/community/Hensnest>

Photos and references to the Hen boats appear in *MAIB* from time to time and those who sail these boats and want to exchange cruising stories, or who are looking for technical or other information, should subscribe.

This is a nice group of guys and gals, and for those of us in northern climes shut in for winter, offers a pleasant way to keep up enthusiasm until the return of the warm weather.

Bill Zeitler, Bay Hen *Amenity*,
Wilmington, DE,
<WZEITLER@Compuserve.com>



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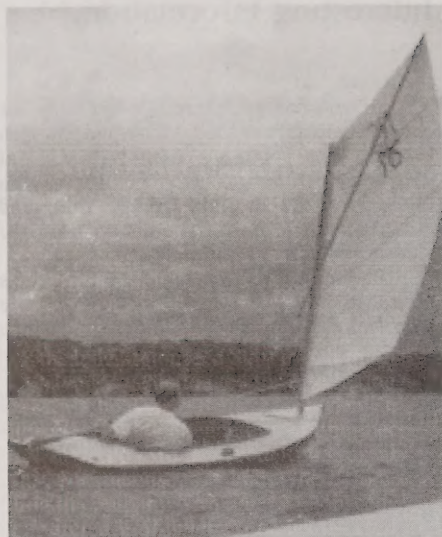


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Shoestring Shipyard



Doug Reese gets going in his brand new *Pepper*.



Walt, Opal and his daughters, Barbara and Patricia, prove three's not a crowd in a Melonseed.



Melonseeds In the Heartland

Melonseed Skiff Midwest Rendezvous '99

By Roger Rodibaugh

As the lone Melonseed Skiff owner in Indiana, I have for years longed for a gathering of these little boats and their owners here in the midwest. Having attended two of builder Roger Crawford's Melonseed Regattas at Duxbury, Massachusetts, I knew the delight of sailing in company with other Melonseeds is unparalleled enjoyment for an obsessed Melonhead. On a couple of occasions I had sailed with another Melonseed or two here in the midwest, but I aspired to a larger gathering if one could be arranged.

When Cincinnati Melonhead Don Traut and I started floating the idea of a midwest rendezvous on the Internet Yahoo! Melonseed Club back in April, it was with high hopes for a good amount of interest. What materialized was better than we hoped, with a total of seven boats attending the event at Cowan Lake, 35 miles southeast of Dayton, Ohio, on August 13, 14 and 15. Sailing and fishing are popular on Cowan Lake and the shoreline and surrounding Ohio State Park offer rather unspoiled beauty. A heaven-sent 10hp motor limit keeps it peaceful and quiet.

I arrived with *Nancy Lee* in tow on Friday afternoon to find Dean Moor already sailing out of the cove. Walt Opal and his daughters were ashore rigging up. A 12-15 WSW breeze (gusting 20) was kicking up a good chop and pushing low, billowing clouds across the gray sky. Occasionally the sun would break through and throw a golden burst across the busy water. Keeping an eye open for clouds beginning to pile into thunderheads, we cut capers for a couple hours, working out to the island, and tacking repeatedly across the chop. There was plenty of spray and it was obvious that although Walt had a boat-full with three

aboard, he benefited from the extra ballast. Don and Sheila Traut opted to stay ashore with the still and video cameras and the weather radio, which continued warnings of impending thunderstorms. After a rousing sail, we loaded our boats on the trailers and adjourned for dinner.

Saturday dawned gray, cool, and drizzly. I arrived an hour early for our 10am launching time to find Bob Fehrenbach all rigged up and nearly ready to launch. He allowed as how he didn't drive from Milwaukee to be put off by a little damp! A nice northwest breeze was shaping up despite the drizzle and Bob and I launched and sailed around the shallow cove, watching the others arrive, rig up and launch. Soon six Melonseeds graced the lake. The roster included Walt Opal and daughters Patricia and Barbara from Minneapolis, Bob Fehrenbach from Milwaukee in *Salt Shaker*, Dean Moor from Dallas in *Sun Dance*, Don and Sheila Traut of Cincinnati in *Catspaw*, Doug Reese of Dayton in his alluring, black, brand-spanking-new *Pepper*, and myself from Lafayette, Indiana in *Nancy Lee*.

I think everyone was taken by the view of these handsome hulls working their way through the water. Several members of the fleet had never seen another Melonseed underway before. There were many compliments and thumbs-up gestures as the boats crossed tacks. The view was good from any angle, and in every direction one could see an elegant little Melonseed from a different perspective: The curling bow wave, shaved from the water by the lovely hollow bow; the graceful sheer as seen in profile, and the breathtaking lee quarter view with the hull heeled down were all there for pure visual delight. And of course it was instructive and rewarding to sail side by side and compare sail trim, courses and tactics. There was no real racing but the competitive urge surfaced in some of us as we tried to get the best out of our boats. (Where's the skipper sitting? How's his sail look? What's his centerboard setting?)

We worked our way upwind to the west end of the lake into the lee of the dam and then ran for the mid-lake park beach for lunch, led by the Trauts. It was at the beach that I received a good deal of ribbing, as I was the only one in the fleet who refused to beach my boat. In an obsessive effort to preserve her pristine gelcoat, I anchored her off in knee-deep water and spent a nervous lunch watching the neophyte wind-surfers, who were also using the beach, cutting it fine around *Nancy Lee*. The only collision during lunch occurred when a big Hobie 18 heading for the beach caught a puff and accelerated uncontrollably upon landing, giving Walt Opal's boat a minor scuff from the glancing blow on the transom.

After a quick lunch, a leg stretch, and a visit to the facilities, I was ready to hit the water again. My comment, "I didn't drive all the way over here to sit and eat lunch, I came to SAIL!" drew chuckles and provided more ammunition for teasing. The breeze was so perfect, I just couldn't stand to watch it from ashore. I was first back on the water and enjoyed the orderly view of Melonseeds pulled up on the beach making sail. In short order all the boats were back on the water. The glorious breeze lasted all day, and the temperature was held comfortable by the low clouds. Late in the afternoon we loaded the boats on the trailers and adjourned for supper.

An informal pizza party in the motel lobby sufficed as the social event and as is always the case where Melonheads converge, there was great conversation and levity. After we killed the pizzas, I unveiled the surprise rendezvous T-shirts to commemorate the occasion. To top it off, Roger Crawford had sent along Melonseed Regatta '99 caps. It wasn't long before everyone sported both shirt and cap, and we ran outside for a group picture in front of Bob Fehrenbach's *Salt Shaker*. We coaxed an agreeable motel staffer into taking our picture with several of our cameras. There we stood as a group, smiling Melonheads from far apart, enjoying our boats and each other's company.

Sunday's sailing proceeded at a more relaxed pace. The cold front had passed through during the night and left gentler breezes and sunshine. Our little fleet of Melonseeds increased to seven when Jim Mason of Columbus, OH showed up with *Serendipity*. Our little group sailed the lake from end to end, often crossing tacks with the big racing fleet from the sailing club. Nearly every boat crossing tacks hailed us with something like, "Pretty boat! Did you build her? What is she?" As usual, this lovely little boat creates a stir wherever she sails.

Some crews began loading their boats and gear fairly early in the afternoon in preparation for their travels home. Jim Mason, Bob Fehrenbach, Doug Reese and I stayed on the lake in the dying breeze and then chatted shoreside for another hour after we had our boats on the trailers.

It was very satisfying to sail in this little fleet. To pull together a group of like-minded folks from far away and sail here in the midwest was pure joy for me. E-mail and Internet club postings first introduced us all to each other and it was marvelous to actually get to meet these people who we only knew as cyberspace personalities. This gathering, though not as large as Roger Crawford's epic Duxbury Solstice Regattas, was richly rewarding, and had a magic of its own. It proved once again that the Melonseed seems to gather about it some of the nicest, most interesting, congenial folks and the instant camaraderie of our rendezvous helped solidify friendships with Melonheads from far away. It will be hard to top our first effort, when the wind and climate cooperated for three terrific days of sailing and rewarding bonhomie, but we're all really looking forward to the Melonseed Skiff Midwest Rendezvous 2000.



Bob Fehrenbach enjoying *Salt Shaker*.



Jim Mason in *Serendipity*.



Ships that pass in the daylight...Don and Sheila Traut in *Catspaw* (left) watching Dean sail by in *Sun Dance*.

Happy Melonheads sporting commemorative T-shirts and caps pose by Bob Fehrenbach's *Salt Shaker*.



Question: Why on earth would anyone want to solo cruise 65 miles up the Delaware River from Wilmington, Delaware to the head of navigation at Trenton, New Jersey?

Answer: Because it is there!

Question: Why on earth would anybody wish to do such a four day, 130 mile round trip, fighting tidal currents, dodging Hurricane Floyd's river flotsam, keeping a continuous sharp eye out for tankers, container ships, tugs, etc. and do it in a converted 21', flat bottom sharpie hull sailboat, using a 5hp 4-cycle Honda outboard (see December 15, 1998 issue for photo of "A Non-US Navy Light Cruiser").

Answer: Why not? And also to prove you don't need mega horsepower and high speed to have a great time, like messing about in boats in general!

Getting to the head of navigation at Trenton, New Jersey on the Delaware River grew into an obsession with me over several years. It was how mountain climbers must feel wanting to climb to the summit of Mt. Itzthere for the first time.

Although I expected that Hurricane Floyd's damaging aftermath (combined with a maximum tide) would fill the river with a lot of flotsam, the weather folks predicted a four day window of good weather beginning Saturday, September 25th. Furthermore the daylight tidal current would be flooding most of the way up the river to Trenton. With only 5hp I find it best that although my vessel is now a "power cruiser", I sail her with a sailboat attitude, playing the tidal currents, accepting cruising speeds of 5 or so knots, and a stiff neck from sitting in the cockpit athwartships at the tiller with my head over my left shoulder.

Day 1: We (*Amenity* and I) cast off at 0835EDT from my usual ramp on the Christina River, a small tributary that feeds into the Delaware River near the river port of Wilmington. It was a hazy 65 degree morning. I could not see the usual Philadelphia skyline about 30 miles distant upriver. We skirted the edge of the shipping channel to catch as much of the favorable tidal flow as possible, keeping out of the way of the various large ships and tugs that ply this highly commercial part of the river.

On the other hand if one gets too close to the shore this time of year one is continuously dodging the crab traps and their floats that are just waiting to catch not only crabs but careless boaters. As I expected, the river was full of all sorts of flotsam. Tree branches, tree trunks, entire trees, planks, sheets of plywood, etc. I even saw a lawn chair go floating by, and these were just the things I could see on the water's surface!

By 1145 we cruised past the Philadelphia International Airport, which is on the river's western shore on the Pennsylvania side. That day the landing/takeoff pattern was such that they roared directly overhead at very low altitude every few minutes. Quite distracting but interesting.

A few miles further upriver we passed the ex-Philadelphia Navy shipyard (now a commercial German-owned shipyard). My old navy-day aircraft carrier is still there, as were several cruisers and an assortment of other serious-gray mothballed navy ships.

This first day's stretch of the river is essentially all industrial, refineries, chemical plants, docks, rail-heads, etc. To me at least,

Four Day Cruise Up the Delaware River (With 5 HP!)

By Bill Zeitler



Shoal draft PMT (Poor Man's Trawler), *Amenity* on the Christina River at Wilmington, Delaware.

much more interesting than just a continuous shoreline of trees. There at one of the older Philadelphia docks was the *USS United States*, previous fastest commercial liner afloat, now a rusting hulk recently designated however be a national historical treasure.

Thanks to the tidal flood current I was at Penn's Landing area off downtown Philadelphia by 1300. By 1600 I was at my first night's anchorage, upriver on the New Jersey side and about a mile or so into Rancocas Creek. Keeping in mind that the tidal range was about six feet, and that in the middle of the night the tide direction would change, I used a couple of anchors to make sure I'd stay put at my anchorage. There was a small marina further upstream about another mile.

For a while in the early evening I watched some jet skis, runabouts, cabin cruisers and fishermen returning from their day on the water. After a beautiful crimson sunset things calmed down, I turned on my anchor light, heated up and ate my canned something-or-other for dinner, completed my cruise notes for the day, sipped my traditional coffee brandy for a nightcap, checked my anchorage one last time and hit the old sleeping bag with a smile. So far so good!

Day 2: 0600. Got up, got the coffee going, did morning functions, wiped the heavy dew off the cockpit cushions, ate something for breakfast and it was anchors aweigh at 0720. NOAA weather started to hedge on their clear weather report, now saying some rain might come in a day early. This being the case I decided to make a dash for Trenton by noon (dash with 5 hp?). Rather than spend the night anchored off Trenton per my initial schedule, I would push to get there by noon and return to Rancocas Creek for a second night.

It was exciting and very interesting (especially at 5 knots) to plot our progress towards our long-sought objective. As we approached the Trenton area I was astounded to

see hundreds of people waving and greeting me from the city's bulkhead wall. What an unexpected victory welcome for this old river-rat!

But then a U.S. Coast Guard craft hailed me over with flashing blue lights and told me I had to turn back before I got to the actual Trenton bridge (to go further you need a canoe) because there was a speed boat race about to start. That was the reason for the crowds, not my upstream victory! I pleaded my case to the Coast Guard that for two years I had been wanting to do this 5hp cruise and I had to go just a bit further to take my "I really did it" photo! They told me that if I hurried (with 5hp?) I could sneak up the edge of the river, take my photo and get out of there because the races were not to start for about 20 minutes! The Coast Guard relayed this information to the race officials who were waiting midstream near the race startline.

The officials were not too happy with me and were more than happy to see me take my photos, turn around and head downstream. I called to them with my converted aluminum lampshade megaphone that I was going to get the hell out of there and they smartly wise-cracked back with a smile, "yes, and that would be fine with us also, captain.!"

The 30 miles of Delaware River north upriver from Philadelphia is really quite beautiful. There is almost no riverfront industry. There are many beautiful stately old homes, marinas, and exclusive boat clubs dotting the shores on both sides of the river. I would strongly recommend however that one not be on this stretch of the river in a small, slow boat on a nice Sunday afternoon! To be philosophic I guess, just as I have a right to go 6 knots, others have a right to go 60 knots or more! But, there was so very much high speed boat traffic that afternoon that the river was solid, very rough chop and large wakes washed from shore to shore from every direction continuously!

I could not help but wonder what happens if you hit a floating log at 60 knots, but the high powered boat skippers seemed not to worry.

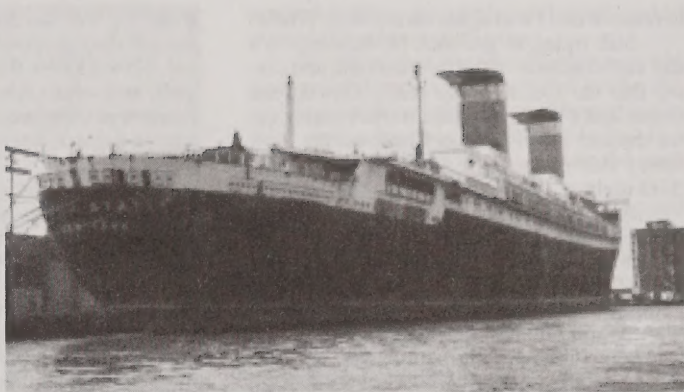
By the time I got back to my second night's anchorage in the Rancocas Creek, my tiller arm was paralyzed in pain and my mental state was totally frazzled. My muscles and brain both required a good bit of medicinal relaxant of the liquid variety. I was asleep by 2030.

Day 3: Since my initial schedule had changed I was now bucking the tidal current. NOAA continued to forecast an early rain. By 0730 the next morning, properly caffeinated and calmed down, I weighed anchor. Again the flotsam was extremely heavy so piloting required full time concentration. The river had even more junk in it by now. About once an hour my prop would hit something unseen underwater. I would hold my breath waiting for the engine to scream at high rpms with a broken prop or shear pin, but we cruised on without problems. It was like trying to sail with tissue paper sails, very gently.

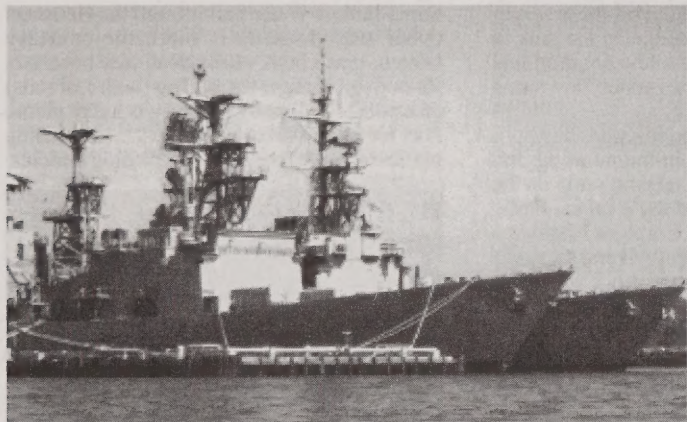
About noontime however, my engine suddenly bogged down and we slowed to perhaps 1/2 knot. What did I hit? I was not too far off shore to make it to the dock of a sailing club just south of the Philadelphia airport. Lifting the Honda out of its motor well I saw that the prop was tangled in a large hunk of now well chewed black plastic sheeting. It was easy



Big boys to be avoided!



USS United States, once world fastest ocean liner, now saved from the shipbreakers to be an historic artifact.



Mothballed naval vessels at former Philadelphia Naval Shipyard.



Square rigger at Penn's Landing, Philadelphia's historic waterfront district.



Typical industrial shoreline on lower river, Sun Oil Refinery at Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania.



Head of navigation for me, the bridge at Trenton, New Jersey.



Typical river port scene, freighter terminal.



Exclusive boating clubs line the river north of Philadelphia.

to remove and I was again on my way. Whew!

Still trying to get back to Wilmington a day early because of the forecast rain, and seeing that the foul tide was really slowing me down, and a darkening sunset was coming on, we ducked into Raccoon Creek on the New Jersey side of the river to anchor our for the third night.

As we passed the closed-for-the-season Raccoon Creek Boat Club, two gentlemen ashore waved me to come into their visitor's dock. These two members told me that it would be okay if I wished to tie up for the night at their floating dock. Later when I told them I was going to have some canned tuna and sardines for dinner they said, "no you're not." The previous weekend the club had their annual pig-roast with roast pork, crabs, beans, corn, etc., and they had all kinds of leftovers. They invited me into the empty club house and heated up delicious a feast just for me. Talk about hospitality! Nice folks indeed!

Day 4: After I removed the much required mosquito netting, and had my required morning coffee and while I was still moored at the club's dock, another gentleman came down about 0730, the president of the club. He welcomed me warmly and was glad they could help out. He warned me, however, that although there was a solid thick morning fog, if I did not cast off soon I might not get over the sandbar at the entrance to the creek and back into the Delaware River and on my way home.

So I was presented with oncoming rain in the afternoon, a very thick fog, and a sandbar to negotiate, or else stay over the long hours required awaiting more water into the creek. I decided to cast off as soon as possible.

If the fog was too bad on the river I'd anchor just off shore beyond the sand bar and wait it out. Now I know this area of the river fairly well, and while staying out of the shipping channel in clear weather is extremely important, in fog don't even think about being anywhere near it.

With my navigation lights on, my red plastic mouth powered foghorn at the ready, and taking many soundings with my flashlight looking portable depth meter, I crept slowly out of the creek and was finally just able to see and identify a shipping channel edge buoy. I know one should not totally rely on buoys but I had no choice. I took a compass heading from the first buoy making darn sure I stayed outside of the shipping channel, and crept downstream from buoy to buoy on compass headings. Ships were out in the channel with fog horns booming. It was a bit dicey, especially since I still had to dodge all the junk in the river. I could see only a few hundred feet ahead and only a few inches at best down into the brown river water.

Around 1000 the fog started to burn away revealing a red-sun-in-the-morning, and by 1430 I was back at my takeout ramp on the Christina River. This used to be called Christina Creek, but since the Corps of Engineers would not dredge creeks (only rivers) the name was changed to Christina River. I was quite happy to be back, and also happy to see that my van and trailer were still there in the City Recreation Department parking lot. There is a guard who watches over things during the day, but at night one on his own!

It was a terrific experience, great fun, great sightseeing, and I learned several new and important on-the-job lessons on small boat

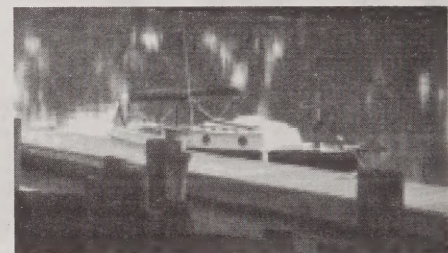
river piloting. But most of all I got it off my chest, off my do-list, out of my fantasies and into my happy memories. My wife was also happy because now she didn't have to hear me talking about the planned "Trenton Trip" all the time, and in her words, she had four lovely days of peace and quiet when I was out there.

Now for my next cruise...

Technical Information: Average trip speed over the ground (all factors considered, up and downstream, tidal currents, etc.) was 4.6 knots. Total fuel used was 7.5 gallons. *Amenity* is a 21' shoal draft Bay Hen converted into a PMT, "Poor Man's Trawler".

PS It didn't rain after all until two days later.

About the Author & His Boat: Retired, age 66, member of East Coast Potter Association, Shallow Water Sailors, and the Hensnest cyber site. *Amenity* is often the courtesy launch, crash boat, chase boat, tow boat, etc. for outings of these two sailing (with real sails) groups. Occasionally *Amenity* is a day picnic boat for friends and sometimes a birdwatching platform for my wife and her birding buddies.

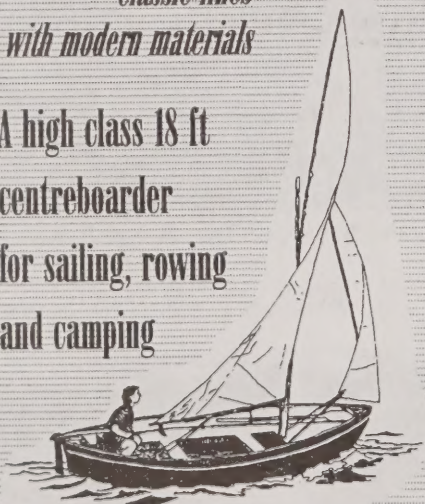


Amenity, at last night's mooring at Raccoon Creek Boat Club visitor dock.

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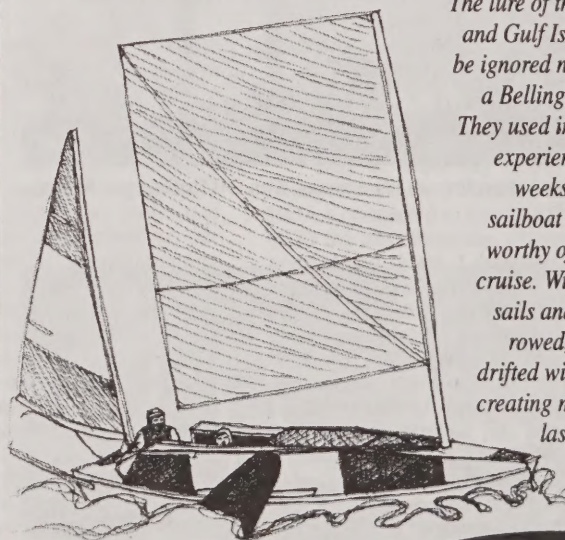
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The Hackensack River

The Hackensack River has some lovely, wide stretches, surrounded by the natural beauty of the Meadowlands. It's often a surprise to find oneself floating amid wildlife in the middle of megalopolis. Brilliant white egrets, great blue herons, and red-winged black birds outnumber the airplane traffic. The horizon is punctuated by the peaks of New York City's skyscrapers. Today, the water is cleaner and is populated by carp, killies, blue claw crabs, and striped bass.

The Sportsmen's Marina harbored some colorful characters and was run by Harold and Joe. Harold looked like Al Goldstein, the publisher, and smoked cigars. Joe was easily mistaken for "Broadway Joe" Namath. The yard boat was a 45' steel Viking, all black with big engines and no mufflers. It had an unusually narrow and deep forefoot and was nearly flat aft. I read recently that Phil Bolger had something to do with this design.

Herb and Myrna lived aboard a 42' Alden ketch they had sailed from Florida. They resurfaced the old snack bar in the airplane hangar-turned-boathouse. Tuna salad sandwiches and chocolate ecremes were highpoints on their menu. One day I found Herb on his boat with two very cute young ladies. I learned that Myrna would not be back, the boat was for sale, and there would be no more ecremes or sandwiches. My old school chum, Wesley Strange, paid Herb and Myrna \$8500 for the ketch. Some months later his girlfriend Kathy moved on board with him.

A man named Bush built a replica of a Chesapeake Bay sloop. I'm not sure if it was a bugeye or a skipjack, but it was about 50' and had a raked mast, long bowsprit, and outboard rudder. Its bottom planks ran across its length. Bush's nephew had a 30' sloop and liked to motorsail in the river. His boat had an air-cooled Lister diesel, and he told me about the practicality of painting his boat with ordinary house paint.

An old wooden sailboat, long and narrow, lay at a mooring. Its faded and dull topsides were yellow, perhaps from its past racing days. Once in a while its owners would show up and sail it. They were quiet and spoke very little to anyone else. If you have a picture in your mind of Tugboat Annie, that was she. He was half her size but chivalrous. He carried all the gear to and from their dinghy, the outboard on one shoulder, other stuff slung from his shoulders, and the remaining arm held bags and a cooler.

Scotty bought another boat before I bought his old one. His new craft was 45' long and built of plywood. I'm not sure if *Golden Hind* was its name or description. It had double chines and bilge keels on each side, allowing it to sit level on the mud when the tide was out. He sailed for the Caribbean, Scotland, or both. I haven't heard from him.

"Doc" Watson was another denizen of Sportsmen's. He sported a beret and a goatee and kept Nietzsche on his boat's bookshelf. Residents of the marina were rocked to sleep by the wakes of tugboats and barges. They carried oil to terminals in Hackensack and Bogota. Some carried sludge from the water treatment plant at Little Ferry to dump in the ocean. The dumping has since been banned.

Sailing the Manasquan

I spent a lot of time trying to think of a name that I liked for my boat. I gave up and



Adventures of a New Jersey Boat Nut

Part 9 Boating from Behind the Statue of Liberty

By Steve Turi © 1998

I must down to the seas again, for
the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may
Not be denied.
John Masfield

never named her.

After exploring the *Mighty Hackey*, it was time to move on. There was an empty slip in Point Pleasant at UJ's, and the price was right. My old friend Tad joined me for the trip. We topped off with fuel, water, and snacks and slipped away from Carlstadt at dusk. From Secaucus to Newark Bay there's a whole bunch of bridges across the river. I had no radio and communicated to the tenders by putting the little tin fish horn to my mouth and honking. At Jersey City there are three horizontal lift bridges, one for cars and two for railroads. They're so close that there is no room to wait between them for the next to open so boats must wait until all three can open together.

The running lights added sparkle to the multi-colored lights of the industrial landscape we motored through. Down Newark Bay, under the Bayonne Bridge, and out Kill van Kull we dodged tugboats and ships. We raised sail under the gaze of the Statue of Liberty and ran with the tide under the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. We navigated from beacon to beacon and hung a right at Sandy Hook. It was a downhill run from there along the beach. We

arrived at Manasquan Inlet mid-morning and started the engine, just in case.

We sailed the inlet on following seas and lowered sail inside. We motored to the slip and tied her in her new home. The water was a bit shallow in the slip at low tide, but in a week or so the keel brushed away the sand for a perfect fit.

Having the boat at UJ's was great. I could go out for 10 minutes or 10 days at a time. Travel and schlepping stuff were eliminated, so a cruise was simply a matter of hopping aboard and casting off. I often sailed alone, but there was always ready crew and passengers amid my family and friends. These trips might be a circuit of the river or a short ocean voyage. When I became more confident (cocky) with the boat and sails, I'd sometimes maneuver in the narrow creek or in and out of the slip using sail alone.

Visiting Old Barney

Point Pleasant was nice, but it was time to strike out for new horizons. Barnegat Inlet lay 20 miles south, far enough to be interesting. The chart showed a marina with 10' of depth, not far inside the inlet. Barnegat Lighthouse, or Old Barney, was a short walk from the marina and would be interesting to visit.

My company on this voyage was my cousin, Guy. Guy inherited from his father a deep and unreasoning fear of water. Much to his credit, Guy was able to overcome his fear and enjoy boating. As we sailed south along the beach, he was a little alarmed when he looked out the leeward portholes and saw only water. He soon realized this was only because we were heeling and it was OK. The summer weather was gorgeous and we literally breezed along.

I'd heard that Barnegat Inlet could be treacherous and didn't doubt it. Its jetties were low, hidden at high tide, and there were shifting shoals and breaking waves to consider. We arrived in perfect conditions and glided through the mouth of the beast.

Once inside, we started to follow buoys and the chart to the marina. The main channel was fine, but as soon as we tried to turn into the side channel we found that the water was exactly 3-1/2' deep because the boat stopped. The boat drew 3-1/2'. We stuck our nose into several likely looking spots to no avail. The falling tide left us firmly stuck alongside the channel.

Resigned to our wait, we sat and dined on peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Night had fallen. Silently in the dark, a sailboat approached. It came nearer and circled us once or twice. It was not a small boat; there were several people on it. A voice from the boat said, "Water's kinda shallow, huh?" As they sailed off, I thought I heard something like, "Hee hee!" I realized the boat was one of those damn shallow draft, tubby-looking catboats.

We turned in, slept well, and weighed anchor early the next day. When we arrived back at Point Pleasant, we received quite a welcome. It seems that the day before, Guy's father went looking for us soon after we'd left the dock. He drove to every beach from Sandy Hook to Seaside Heights and scanned the sea with binoculars.

Certain we'd been devoured by sea monsters, he called the Coast Guard, and the marine police, and the local police, and drove our entire family crazy until we returned. Maybe if we'd reached the marina and called

Inland Waterway Rules and Political Statements

In the early '70s, the damnable war in Vietnam was raging. Protests against it were everywhere. One form these protests took was flying the national flag upside down as a signal of the distress our country was in. One sunny, breezy summer Sunday afternoon, I thought it might be a nice gesture to express these feelings by flying the boat's flag inverted.

As soon as we cleared the inlet I hoisted Old Glory to the spreader, upside-down. Two or three boats converged on us immediately and frantically asked what was wrong, were we sinking, on fire? Once convinced we were in no danger, they scolded us for "crying wolf" and misusing the distress signal etc. etc. I apologized and humbly "struck the colors." So much for my political protest.

It was a balmy, starry evening when I found myself with a group of eager passengers. The boat's running lights absolutely refused to light. Nonetheless, we sailed around and chatted while I played the beam of a flashlight on the sails. A powerboat charged up, running lights ablaze, and the skipper yelled from the flying bridge, "Hey. You guys have no running lights!" "Yes sir," I replied, "Inland Waterway Rules, Section 15." The other boat said nothing and zoomed off into the night, leaving us to continue our sail.

Winter

I left the boat in the water at UJ's for the first winter. I went to check on it in January and I was a bit shocked by what was going on. It was so cold that year that the water around the boat and the docks was actually a thick slush of ice. The snow, rain, and freezing cycles were really chewing away at the paint and making a real mess of the varnish. I made frequent cold trips to check on her that winter. I realized that it was foolish and damaging to leave her exposed to the elements. I resolved to take her north to Carlstadt for future winters.

I spent a pleasant summer sailing after I'd patched up the results of Old Man Winter's predations. That fall I sailed and motored back to the mighty "Hacky." Along the way I was motoring, with no sails up, when the engine started vibrating and bogged down almost to a halt.

I happened to be right in front of the Staten Island Ferry slip. The Staten Island Ferry happened to be arriving. Man, his horn sure was loud! Luckily the tide carried me past the slip and out of harm's way. Just beneath the water's surface, next to the boat, was the largest plastic garbage bag I had ever seen. Its other end was wrapped around the prop. I pulled and tugged and wrestled it free. It drifted off to its next victim and I proceeded upriver.

Once the boat was securely high and dry, the "to do" began to grow. Main items were stripping and re-varnishing all the brightwork, including the 30' mast and boom. A sheer plank needed to be replaced as it had been damaged by the rusting of an iron spike that supported the coaming above. The canvas deck covering was cracked and split badly enough to warrant replacement.

The first nice day of late winter/early spring found me at the yard with a brand new piece of mahogany and a brand new Sears Craftsman jack plane. The job was pleasant

and went well.

The varnish stripping was another story. It seemed that as soon as I'd spread a layer of (expensive) stripper, it would begin to rain, every time. I was painting the new deck canvas and realized that it was now mid August. Enough! A quick splash of bottom paint and in she went, ready or not, full speed ahead, directly to Point Pleasant.

Sailing Alone

I had dreams of sailing long ocean distances dancing in my head. I realized one couldn't do that without some sort of self-steering gear. I did many experiments trying to balance the helm. I trimmed sheets, I moved ballast, I tilted the mast, all to no avail. She always needed a hand holding the tiller to weather. She would heave-to nicely if I lashed the helm over, sailing up to the wind and then falling off repeatedly. She just wouldn't sail herself, and that was probably a nice safety factor in case "Bligh" fell overboard. I drew many sketches of wind vanes and water vanes but none ever became a self-steerer.

Another reality penetrated my dense self while solo sailing somewhere off the Jersey shore. It's a BIG and LONELY ocean out there! How long could I be delighted by my own company? Hmmm. Thoreau's "Walden" contains some lovely observations on the pleasures of solitude, but I found myself missing something. Let's just say I was lacking for a bit of hubbub. Sailing on the heaving main, beneath an ever-changing sky is a unique bliss. The question boils down to one of dosage. I learned that my sailing affliction could be treated quite successfully without the need for spending weeks or months out of sight of land.

Another Experiment

Roller reefing looked like a neat idea. The prices for factory made units seemed to me quite high, though. Well, what are junk piles for anyway? I started to dig and came up with a couple ball bearings, a sturdy spool, and assorted hardware. I cobbled them together and replaced the headstay with my innovation.

For several reasons it didn't work. The sail wouldn't roll out. The sail wouldn't roll in. I conducted sea trials in the ocean off Manasquan, and I nearly lost the mast in the process. I'd had one beer and nothing else to eat. The forestay was disconnected and I don't know what I was thinking, but I let go the Pelican hook of the only other shorter headstay. The boat was pitching and the mast immediately began to whip fore and aft. I was sitting on the bow, one leg dangling off each side, my feet getting dipped under each wave. It was all I could do to get that hook reset in the deck ring. Back to the drawing board!

The Big Cruise

The longest trip I took on this boat was a visit to New London, Connecticut. I bought provisions at the Brielle Shoprite store. Bananas were 16¢ a pound. I took my departure from the buoy one mile off Manasquan Inlet. I set a course of 060 degrees, direct for Fire Island Inlet. I tied a light line around my waist and to the mast in case I went overboard. The weather was perfect and the sun sparkled on the blue waves. Everything was going so well that I rigged a red and white feather on a fishing line and trolled while I sailed. It wasn't long before a nice size bluefish hit the lure.

Suddenly I felt like the proverbial one-armed paperhanger. The reel was screaming as line ran out. I dropped the tiller and grabbed the pole. As I began to reel, the mainsail jibed. There were sheets, lines and monofilament going in all directions. I landed the fish, congratulated it for its noble battle, and released it. I love to eat freshly caught bluefish but this one was lucky because I wasn't about to try to prepare it or to cook it on my little alcohol stove. I stowed the fishing pole, settled down, and got back on course.

I noticed that my sight of land was a little indistinct. Unconsciously I steered up a few degrees. I had no real idea of what speed I was making and wasn't sure of my time either. Some sort of position check would be very comforting. Ambrose Light Tower should be fairly close though, I thought. Another few degrees up won't hurt. I soon saw the tower on the horizon and headed for it. Up close, it's a very impressive structure, and so are the ships that pass near it. I was now comfortable, knowing my position but immediately realized I had blown my passage to Fire Island Wet. Well, let's see. Hmm. Rockaway Inlet is pretty much straight north and close enough to make before dark. I picked my way along the inshore buoys and was tied to the public dock before sunset.

I could relax now. I could use the head now. These were the days before holding tanks were required. After I'd pumped out, I heard the voices of two New Yawk kids on the dock, a boy and a girl, maybe 10 years old. "What's dat?" "Looks like shit." "Is it?" "Yep, that's what it is aw-right." Needless to say, I was pretty embarrassed and I resolved never to pump out at a dock again.

I turned in early and was awakened by a commotion from a powerboat tied at the dock just ahead of me. It appeared a man had a heart attack and his rescuers were administering some early form of CPR. Basically they were pounding his chest and yelling a lot. He was carried to the ambulance with his face covered.

Early next morning I was very happy to leave the Rockaways behind me and head east for Montauk. I sailed parallel to the beach, too far out to check bathing suit styles but close enough not to have to do any navigation. I passed Jones Beach and Gilgo Beach. The long, straight white beaches of Long Island's South shore were pretty and I was sailing along them pretty slowly. Around mid-afternoon I found myself off Fire Island Inlet and decided to enter and spend the night "inside."

As I approached the mouth of the inlet I was shocked because I could see the bottom. I quickly checked the depth and found plenty. I just wasn't accustomed to sailing in water that wasn't brown. I discovered a nice boat basin at Robert Moses State Park and tied up. It was dinnertime on a Saturday when I called Cousin Guy to check in with the folks at home. He said he would take a drive and visit me tomorrow, Sunday. He arrived as promised with his current girlfriend. It was another beautiful summer day and the park was crowded with people enjoying a day off.

I studied the charts that evening and made a decision. I would continue eastward, but on the inside, on Great South Bay. This route would save some miles and avoid currents and rips near Montauk Point. I departed early Monday and soon passed the Fire Island Light-

house. The channel passes close to the Fire Island community of Ocean Beach. There are docks there and they're plastered with signs that say "GO AWAY," "Don't even THINK of docking here," etc. Ocean Beach still maintains this attitude, 27 years later.

I planned to sail most of this route, the charts showed sufficient depth. I only needed 3-1/2' of water, but I soon found out that I had to stick strictly to the marked channel. To hold an accurate course between buoys, I motored, with a little help from the mainsail, all the way to Shinnecock Bay.

Along the way, a lad in a small aluminum outboard ran alongside with me. We chatted, "where y'from, where y'goin'" stuff. As we talked I noticed that his boat was planing along happily while my boat plowed through the water at five miles per hour or so. I don't remember too much else about this leg, probably because I was so intent on each next buoy. I vaguely recall some large modern houses poking above the dunes at the town of Quogue. I arrived at Shinnecock Bay well after dark. I was tucked out so I just dropped anchor, took a bearing on lights ashore to check later for anchor slip, and turned in to a bouncing bunk. The wind was kicking up and the bay was choppy.

Morning dawned gray, windy and raining. I put on my orange bargain store rain gear and motored over to the Shinnecock Canal. There's a lovely park there and I found a slip at the public boat basin. A few other cruising boats docked there and their company made the dull day pass quickly. Folks on a boat named *Scotch Mist* were especially congenial. The canal runs between Shinnecock and Peconic Bays and I was surprised to learn that it has locks (as in the Erie Canal). I imagine they must be needed to compensate for different tide levels in the bays.

A low bridge spans the canal, but the park system provides a dock at each end equipped with a crane for pulling and stepping masts. It's a very classy operation. I think the fee was a dollar or two. I pulled the mast, locked through, stepped the mast and, next day, I was sailing the sparkling waters of Peconic Bay heading for Plum Gut and Long Island Sound.

Here I was, in one of the most beautiful sailing spots on earth, and I found myself wishing for an autopilot or some way to take a break from steering. I got over it quickly and that evening dropped anchor in the Thames River at New London.

My mother was born in nearby Quaker Hill, so I have a lot of aunts, uncles, and cousins there. I visited with many of them on shore, but Cousin Barry Ramus and Uncle Marty Sheedy joined me for a sail. We went out to Fisher's Island and swam in the harbor. The island is a pretty ritzy neighborhood and we enjoyed thumbing our noses while we cavorted from the boat. Barry was 15 then, liked the whole sailing idea, and decided to join me for the trip back to Point Pleasant.

The route home was to be Long Island Sound to New York Harbor and south along the Jersey coast. We had great sailing weather on our first westward leg. We favored the Connecticut shore. I was watching the chart for landmarks and buoys. I thought we could rest for the night at New Haven. It was mid-afternoon when I looked at the chart and saw two red buoys that lay ahead. They were perhaps a quarter mile apart and in line with our course. There was plenty of clear water

around them and I didn't pay attention to the little asterisk on the chart, directly between the buoys. We'd passed the first one.

Barry was taking in the scenery from the bow, standing and holding onto the forestay. "Hey, what's that in the water," he shouted, pointing dead ahead. I turned to port and, as we passed the spot Barry had pointed to, I saw a boil in the water. Inches below the surface and a foot or two away was the pointy top of a rock. We were in line with the buoys and midway between them. That rock was the asterisk on the chart. My face must have turned seven shades of pale when I contemplated what that stone can opener would have done to my thin cedar hull if Barry hadn't spotted it. Thanks Barry!

We were on the outer edge of an area of the Connecticut shore known as the Thimbles, unique for vertical spines of rock. A bit more west was Branford Harbor. We followed the buoys in and spent the night. A fellow on shore hailed us as we entered and asked if my boat was a Stone Horse, a lovely boat designed, I think, by Crocker. He was a bit disappointed to learn it was not. He didn't recognize my mighty Viking, designed by Mower. They are similar boats, the Stone Horse having an outboard rudder and a bumkin.

The next day was a Sunday and, as we proceeded westward, the boat traffic became thicker and thicker. As we neared our City Island destination it seemed as if one could literally walk across the Sound from boat to boat. A gal on one large sailboat amid this mayhem was blithely reading the Sunday Times Magazine.

We topped up at Sagman's gas dock and dropped anchor among the boats on moorings. We were in the Big Apple now and the next day's sights included the Throgg's Neck, Whitestone and Triboro Bridges, and a passage through the notorious Hell's Gate. I was concerned by the Gate's reputation, but we had a smooth time of it. It helped, too, that the underwater rock pinnacles here had been dynamited away at the turn of the century.

The sight of the United Nations Building was impressive from the deck of my humble craft. We left the tip of Manhattan and the Statue of Liberty behind. We went under the Verrazano Narrows Bridge and out into the Atlantic.

Thunderstorms began to appear just off the tip of Sandy Hook. I headed seaward to avoid the possibility of getting blown onto shore. Barry said he would prefer to head closer to shore but I vetoed his suggestion. Luckily we missed the direct path of the storms and we entered Manasquan Inlet before dark. Home. Home at last.

Back to Carlstadt

It was a gorgeous day in October, sunny and warm but crisp. The breezes were light and fluky so I motored north along the shore. I was half a mile off Sea Bright when the trusty Gray went silent. I made the usual checks for spark and fuel. All seemed OK. Crank, crank, no response. I raised the sails, and got no response. The wind had faded to absolutely nothing, the water was glassy. As the boat rolled in the small swells the sails would simply flop from one side to the other. I cranked the engine to no avail. I checked the points. I pulled the plugs. I traced the wires. I choked it. I unchoked it. I drained the carb. I primed it. Silence.

Except for the rolling, my position was fixed. The bearings on shore were rigid. To pass time I cleaned the galley. In other words, I finished the last of my milk supply and scraped the bottom of the peanut butter jar. I may have had a few crackers.

At dusk the 6-volt battery was too exhausted to crank the engine, I was getting hungrier, so I took out the hand crank to spin the engine. After many fruitless turns, night had fallen. As I spun the flywheel in the dark, I was presented with an unwelcome light show. Every time the points broke contact there was a bright blue glow. It surrounded the plug wires, the distributor cap, and the top of the coil. I took all these pieces off the engine and tried to dry them on the little alcohol stove. No dice. The blue corona persisted.

When I bought the boat, the owner briefly mentioned that it could use new wiring. I thought he meant the low voltage wires, but they seemed fine. The high voltage system had, until now, worked fine. I've never seen such a sudden and complete failure like this before or since.

The shore bearings began to move. I was ever so slowly moving south. Whether it was the breath of a ghost or the movement of the offshore tidal currents, I don't know. Any progress in any direction was welcome. It must have been around 4:00 AM that I arrived a half mile off Manasquan Inlet. I dropped the anchor but left the sails up. There was no boat traffic at all.

I lit a red flare and held it until it sputtered out, hoping to draw the attention of the Coast Guard. I guess I didn't look too distressed with all my sails up. I would have given anything for a tow through the inlet. The Coast Guard used to provide things like that. I may have napped for a while, but suddenly there was a breeze. It was a good one, too. I wasted no time in hauling up the anchor and making a beeline to the inlet. I sailed to the slip and tied up as a gray dawn broke. By the time I snuggled into bed in the house, the wind was screaming. It blew northeast for three days.

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The southerly branch of the Ohio River, and one of its chief affluents, is made by the union of the West Fork and Tygart Valley rivers, in the county of Marion, state of Virginia, the united waters of which flow north into Pennsylvania as the Monongahela River, and is there joined by the Cheat River, its principal tributary. The Monongahela unites with the Alleghany to form the Ohio, at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The length of the Monongahela, without computing that of its tributaries, is about one hundred and fifty miles; but if we include its eastern fork, the Tygart Valley River, which flows from Randolph County, Virginia, the whole length of this tributary of the Ohio may exceed three hundred miles. It has a width at its union with the Alleghany of nearly one-fourth of a mile, and a depth of water sufficient for large steamboats to ascend sixty miles, to Brownsville, Pennsylvania, while light-draught vessels can reach its head, at Fairmont, Virginia.

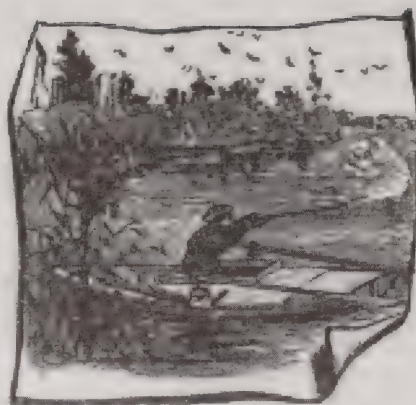
The northern branch of the Ohio, known as the Alleghany River, has a length of four hundred miles, and its source is in the county of Potter, in northern Pennsylvania. It takes a very circuitous course through a portion of New York state, and re-enters Pennsylvania flowing through a hilly region, and at the flourishing city of Pittsburgh mingles its waters with its southern sister, the Monongahela.

The region traversed by the Alleghany is wild and mountainous, rich in pine forests, coal, and petroleum oil; and the extraction from its rocky beds of the last-named article is so enormous in quantity, that at the present time more than four million barrels of oil are awaiting shipment in the oil districts of Pennsylvania. The smaller steamboats can ascend the river to Olean, about two hundred and fifty miles above Pittsburgh. At Olean, the river has a breadth of twenty rods.

In consequence of its high latitude, the clear waters of the Alleghany usually freeze over by the 25th of December, after having transported upon its current the season's work, from the numerous saw-mills of the great wilderness through which it flows, in the form of rafts consisting of two hundred million feet of excellent lumber.

The Ohio River has a width of about half a mile below Pittsburgh, and this is its medial breadth along its winding course to its mouth at Cairo; but in places it narrows to less than twenty-five hundred feet, while it frequently widens to more than a mile. A geographical writer says, that, "In tracing the Ohio to its source, we must regard the Alleghany as its proper continuation. A boat may start with sufficient water within seven miles of Lake Erie, in sight sometimes of the sails which whiten the approach to the harbor of Buffalo, and float securely down the Conewango, or Cassadaga, to the Alleghany, down the Alleghany to the Ohio, and thence uninterruptedly to the Gulf of Mexico."

There are grave reasons for doubting that part of the statement which refers to a boat starting from a point within seven miles of Lake Erie. It is to be hoped that some member of the New York Canoe Club will explore the route mentioned, and give the results of his investigations to the public. He would need a canoe light enough to be easily carried upon the shoulders of one man, with the aid of the canoeist's indispensable assistant—the canoe-yoke.



Four Months In a Sneak-Box

By Nathaniel H. Bishop, 1879
(1837-1902)

Chapter 2 Sources of the Ohio River

Description of the Monongahela and
Alleghany Rivers
The Ohio River Exploration of Cavelier
De La Salle
Names Given By Ancient Cartographers
to the Ohio
Routes of the Aborigines From The Great
Lakes to the Ohio River

It will be seen that the Ohio with its affluents drains an immense extent of country composed of portions of seven large states of the Union, rich in agricultural wealth, in timber, iron, coal, petroleum, salt, clays, and building-stone. The rainfall of the Ohio Valley is so great as to give the river a mean discharge at its mouth (according to the report of the United States government engineers) of one hundred and fifty-eight thousand cubic feet per second. This is the drainage of an area embracing two hundred and fourteen thousand square miles.

The head of the Ohio River, at Pittsburgh, has an elevation of eleven hundred and fifty feet above the sea, while in the long descent to its mouth there is a gradual fall of only four hundred feet; hence its current, excepting during the seasons of freshets, is more gentle and uniform than that of any other North American river of equal length. During half the year the depth of water is sufficient to float steamboats of the largest class along its entire length. Between the lowest stage of water, in the month of September, and the highest, in March, there is sometimes a range of fifty feet in depth. The spring freshets in the tributaries will cause the waters of the great river to rise twelve feet in twelve hours. During the season of low water the current of the Ohio is so slow, as flatboat-men have informed me, that their boats are carried by the flow of the stream only ten miles in a day. The most shallow portion of the river is between Troy and Evansville. Troy is twelve miles below the historic Blennerhasset's Island, which lies between the states of Ohio and Virginia. Here the water sometimes shoals to a depth of only two feet.

Robert Cavelier de la Salle is credited with having made the discovery of the Ohio River. From the St. Lawrence country he went to Onondaga, and reaching a tributary of the Ohio River, he descended the great stream to the "Falls," at Louisville, Kentucky. His men having deserted him, he returned alone to Lake Erie. This exploration of the Ohio was made in the winter of 1669-70, or in the following spring.

The director of the Dépôt des Cartes of the Marine and Colonies, at Paris, in 1872 possessed a rich mass of historical documents, the collection of which had covered thirty years of his life. This material related chiefly to the French rule in North America, and its owner had offered to dispose of it to the French government on condition that the entire collection should be published. The French government was, however, only willing to publish parts of the whole, and the director retained possession of his property. Through the efforts of Mr. Francis Parkman, the truthful American historian, supported by friends, an appropriation was made by Congress, in 1873, for the purchase and publication of this valuable collection of the French director; and it is now the property of the United States government. All that relates to the Sieur de la Salle—his journals and letters—has been published in the original French, in three large volumes of six hundred pages each. La Salle discovered the Ohio, yet the possession of the rich historical matter referred to throws but little light upon the details of this important event. The discoverer—of the great west, in an address to Frontenac, the governor of Canada, made in 1677, asserted that he had discovered the Ohio, and had descended it to a fall which obstructed it. This locality is now known as the "Falls of the Ohio," at Louisville, Kentucky.

The second manuscript map of Galine's, made about the year 1672, has upon it this inscription: "River Ohio, so called by the Iroquois on account of its beauty, which the Sieur de la Salle descended." It was probably the interpretation of the Iroquois word Ohio which caused the French frequently to designate this noble stream as "La belle rivière."

A little later the missionary Marquette designed a map, upon which he calls the Ohio the "Ouabouskiaou." Louis Joliet's first map gives the Ohio without a name, but supplies its place with an inscription stating that La Salle had descended it. In Joliet's second map he calls the Ohio "Ouboustikou."

After the missionaries and other explorers had given to the world the knowledge possessed at that early day of the great west, a young and talented engineer of the French government, living in Quebec, and named Jean Baptiste Louis Franquelin, completed, in 1684, the most elaborate map of the times, a carefully traced copy of which, through the courtesy of Mr. Francis Parkman, I have been allowed to examine. The original map of Franquelin has recently disappeared, and is supposed to have been destroyed. This map is described in the appendix to Mr. Parkman's *Discovery of the Great West*, as being "six feet long and four and a half wide." On it, the Ohio is called "Fleuve St. Louis, ou Chucagoa, ou Casquinampogamou;" but the appellation of "River St. Louis" was dropped very soon after the appearance of Franquelin's map, and to the present time it justly retains the Iroquois name given it by its brave discoverer La Salle.

It would be interesting to know by which of the routes used by the Indians in those early days La Salle travelled to the Ohio. After the existence of the Ohio was made known, the first route made use of in reaching that river by the *coureurs de bois* and other French travellers from Canada, was that from the southern shore of Lake Erie, from a point near where the town of Westfield now stands, across the wilderness by portage southward about nine miles to Chautaugue Lake. These parties used light bark canoes, which were easily carried upon the shoulders of men whenever a "carry" between the two streams became necessary. The canoes were paddled on the lake to its southern end, out of which flowed a shallow brook, which afforded water enough in places to float the frail craft. The shoal water, and the obstructions made by fallen trees, necessitated frequent portages. This wild and tortuous stream led the voyagers to the Alleghany River, where an ample depth of water and a propitious current carried them into the Ohio.

The French, finding this a laborious and tedious route, abandoned it for a better one. Where the town of Erie now stands, on the southern shore of the lake of the same name, a small stream flows from the southward into that inland sea. Opposite its mouth is Presque Isle, which protects the locality from the north winds, and, acting as a barrier to the turbulent waves, offers to the mariner a safe port of refuge behind its shores. The French ascended the little stream, and from its banks made a

short portage to the Rivière des boeuf, or some tributary of French Creek, and descended it to the Alleghany and the Ohio. This Erie and French River route finally became the military highway of the Canadians to the Ohio Valley, and may be called the second route from Lake Erie.

The third route to the Ohio from Lake Erie commenced at the extreme southwestern end of that inland sea. The voyagers entered Maumee Bay and ascended the Maumee River, hauling their birch canoes around the rapids between Maumee City and Perrysburgh, and between Providence and Grand Rapids. Surmounting these obstacles, they reached the site of Fort Wayne, where the St. Joseph and St. Mary rivers unite, and make, according to the author of the *History of the Maumee Valley*, the "Maumee," or "Mother of Waters," as interpreted from the Indian tongue. At this point, when ninety-eight miles from Lake Erie, the travellers were forced to make a portage of a mile and a half to a branch called Little River, which they descended to the Wabash, which stream, in the early days of French exploration, was thought to be the main river of the Ohio system. The Wabash is now the boundary line for a distance of two hundred miles between the states of Indiana and Illinois. Following the Wabash, the voyager would enter the Ohio River about one hundred and forty miles above its junction with the Mississippi.

The great Indian diplomatist, "Little Turtle," in making a treaty speech in 1795, when confronting Anthony Wayne, insisted that the Fort Wayne portage was the "key or gateway" of the tribes having communication

with the inland chain of lakes and the gulf coast. It is now claimed by many persons that this was the principal and favorite route of communication between the high and low latitudes followed by the savages hundreds of years before Europeans commenced the exploration of the great west.

There was a fourth route from the north to the tributaries of the Ohio, which was used by the Seneca Indians frequently, though rarely by the whites. It was further east than the three already described. The Genesee River flows into Lake Ontario about midway between its eastern shores and the longitude of the eastern end of Lake Erie. In using this fourth route, the savages followed the Genesee, and made a portage to some one of the affluents of the Alleghany to reach the Ohio River.

(To Be Continued)

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Peter Spectre had this to say about the show in 1990 (WB#95):

"The word on the waterfront was that this show was different, and it sure was...the exhibits were real boats, and parts for real boats, and services for real people, and the folks in attendance were real boat enthusiasts."

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off of Commercial Street —

A sailor is born, not made. And by sailor is meant, not the average efficient and hopeless creature who is found today in the fore-castle of deepwater ships, but the man who will take a fabric compounded of wood and iron and rope and canvas and compel it to obey his will on the surface of the sea. Barring captains and mates of big ships, the small boat sailor is the real sailor. He knows, he must know, how to make the wind carry his craft from one given point to another given point. He must know about tides and rips and eddies, bar and channel markings, and day and night signals; he must be wise in weather lore; and he must be sympathetically familiar with the peculiar qualities of his boat which differentiate it from every other boat that was ever built and rigged. He must know how to gentle her about, as one instance of a myriad, and to fill her on the other tack without deadening her way or allowing her to fall off too far.

The deepwater sailor of today needs know none of these things, and he doesn't. He pulls and hauls as he is ordered, swabs decks, washes paint, and chips iron rust. He knows nothing, and cares less. Put him in a small boat and he is helpless. He will cut an even better figure on the hurricane deck of a horse.

I shall never forget my child astonishment when I first encountered one of these strange beings. He was a runaway English sailor. I was a lad of twelve, with a decked over, fourteen foot, centerboard skiff which I had taught myself to sail. I sat at his feet as at the feet of a god, while he discoursed of strange lands and peoples, deeds of violence, and hair raising gales at sea. Then, one day, I took him for a sail. With all the trepidation of the veriest little amateur, I hoisted sail and got under way. Here was a man, looking on critically, I was sure, who knew more in one second about boats and the water than I could ever know. After an interval, in which I exceeded myself, he took the tiller and the sheet. I sat on the little thwart amidships, open mouthed, prepared to learn what real sailing was.

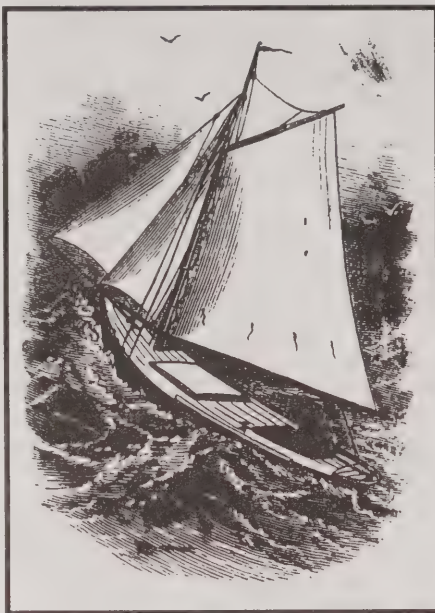
My mouth remained open, for I learned what a real sailor was in a small boat. He couldn't trim the sheet to save himself, he nearly capsized several times in squalls, and, once again, by blunderingly jibing over; he didn't know what a centerboard was for, nor did he know that in running a boat before the wind one must sit in the middle instead of on the side; and finally, when we came back to the wharf, he ran the skiff in full tilt, shattering her nose and carrying away the mast step. And yet he was a really truly sailor fresh from the vasty deep.

Which points my moral. A man can sail in the forecastles of big ships all his life and never know what real sailing is. From the time I was twelve, I listened to the lure of the sea. When I was fifteen I was captain and owner of an oyster pirate sloop. By the time I was sixteen I was sailing in scow schooners, fishing salmon with the Greeks up the Sacramento River, and serving as sailor on the Fish Patrol. And I was a good sailor, too, though all my cruising had been on San Francisco Bay and the rivers tributary to it. I had never been on the ocean in my life.

Then, the month I was seventeen, I signed before the mast as an able seaman on a three topmast schooner bound on a seven months' cruise across the Pacific and back again. As my shipmates promptly informed me, I had had my nerve with me to sign on as able sea-

The Human Drift... Small-Boat Sailing

(Reader Brian Salzano sent on this narrative from a bygone time, suggesting it would make a great read for all of us. I agreed. ED.)



man. Yet behold, I WAS an able seaman. I had graduated from the right school. It took no more than minutes to learn the names and uses of the few new ropes. It was simple. I did not do things blindly. As a small boat sailor I had learned to reason out and know the WHY of everything.

It is true, I had to learn how to steer by compass, which took maybe half a minute; but when it came to steering "full-and-by" and "close-and-by", I could beat the average of my shipmates, because that was the very way I had always sailed. Inside fifteen minutes I could box the compass around and back again. And there was little else to learn during that seven months' cruise, except fancy rope sailorising, such as the more complicated lanyard knots and the making of various kinds of sennit and rope mats. The point of all of which is that it is by means of small boat sailing that the real sailor is best schooled.

And if a man is a born sailor, and has gone to the school of the sea, never in all his life can he get away from the sea again. The salt of it is in his bones as well as his nostrils, and the sea will call to him until he dies. Of late years, I have found easier ways of earning a living. I have quit the fore-castle for keeps, but always I come back to the sea. In my case it is usually San Francisco Bay, than which no lustier, tougher, sheet of water can be found for small boat sailing.

It really blows on San Francisco Bay. During the winter, which is the best cruising season, we have southeasters, southwesterers, and occasional howling northers. Throughout the summer we have what we call the "sea-breeze", an unfailing wind off the Pacific that on most afternoons in the week blows what the Atlantic Coast yachtsmen would name a gale. They are always surprised by the small spread of canvas our yachts carry. Some

of them, with schooners they have sailed around the Horn, have looked proudly at their own lofty sticks and huge spreads, then patronisingly and even pityingly at ours.

Then, perchance, they have joined in a club cruise from San Francisco to Mare Island. They found the morning run up the Bay delightful. In the afternoon, when the brave west wind ramped across San Pablo Bay and they faced it on the long beat home, things were somewhat different. One by one, like a flight of swallows, our more meagerly sparred and canvassed yachts went by, leaving them wallowing and dead and shortening down in what they called a gale but which we called a dandy sailing breeze. The next time they came out, we would notice their sticks cut down, their booms shortened, and their after-leeches nearer the lufts by whole cloths.

As for excitement, there is all the difference in the world between a ship in trouble at sea, and a small boat in trouble on landlocked water. Yet for genuine excitement and thrill, give me the small boat. Things happen so quickly, and there are always so few to do the work, and hard work, too, as the small-boat sailor knows. I have toiled all night, both watches on deck, in a typhoon off the coast of Japan, and been less exhausted than by two hours' work at reefing down a thirty foot sloop and heaving up two anchors on a lee shore in a screaming southeaster.

Hard work and excitement? Let the wind baffle and drop in a heavy tideway just as you are sailing your little sloop through a narrow drawbridge. Behold your sails, upon which you are depending, flap with sudden emptiness, and then see the impish wind, with a haul of eight points, fill your jib aback with a gusty puff. Around she goes, and sweeps, not through the open draw, but broadside on against the solid piles. Hear the roar of the tide, sucking through the trestle. And hear and see your pretty, fresh painted boat crash against the piles. Feel her stout little hull give to the impact. See the rail actually pull in. Hear your canvas tearing, and see the black, square ended timbers thrusting holes through it. Smash! There goes your topmast stay, and the topmast reels over drunkenly above you. There is a ripping and crunching. If it continues, your starboard shrouds will be torn out.

Grab a rope, any rope, and take a turn around a pile. But the free end of the rope is too short. You can't make it fast, and you hold on and wildly yell for your one companion to get a turn with another and longer rope. Hold on! You hold on till you are purple in the face, till it seems your arms are dragging out of their sockets, till the blood bursts from the ends of your fingers. But you hold, and your partner gets the longer rope and makes it fast. You straighten up and look at your hands. They are ruined. You can scarcely relax the crooks of the fingers. The pain is sickening.

But there is no time. The skiff, which is always perverse, is pounding against the barnacles on the piles which threaten to scrape its gunwale off. It's drop the peak! Down jib! Then you run lines, and pull and haul and heave, and exchange unpleasant remarks with the bridge tender, who is always willing to meet you more than halfway in such repartee. Finally, at the end of an hour, with aching back, sweat soaked shirt, and slaughtered hands, you are through and swinging along on the placid, beneficent tide between narrow banks where the cattle stand knee deep and gaze

wonderingly at you. Excitement! Work! Can you beat it in a calm day on the deep sea?

I've tried it both ways. I remember labouring in a fourteen days' gale off the coast of New Zealand. We were a tramp collier, rusty and battered, with six thousand tons of coal in our hold. Life lines were stretched fore and aft; and on our weather side, attached to smokestack guys and rigging, were huge rope nettings, hung there for the purpose of breaking the force of the seas and so saving our messroom doors. But the doors were smashed and the messrooms washed out just the same. And yet, out of it all, arose but the one feeling, namely, of monotony.

In contrast with the foregoing, about the liveliest eight days of my life were spent in a small boat on the west coast of Korea. Never mind why I was thus voyaging up the Yellow Sea during the month of February in below zero weather. The point is that I was in an open boat, a sampan, on a rocky coast where there were no lighthouses and where the tides ran from thirty to sixty feet. My crew were Japanese fishermen. We did not speak each other's language. Yet there was nothing monotonous about that trip. Never shall I forget one particular cold bitter dawn, when, in the thick of driving snow, we took in sail and dropped our small anchor. The wind was howling out of the northwest, and we were on a lee shore. Ahead and astern, all escape was cut off by rocky headlands, against whose bases burst the unbroken seas. To windward a short distance, seen only between the snow-squalls, was a low rocky reef. It was this that inadequately protected us from the whole Yellow Sea that thundered in upon us.

The Japanese crawled under a communal rice mat and went to sleep. I joined them, and for several hours we dozed fitfully. Then a sea deluged us with icy water, and we found several inches of snow on top the mat. The reef to windward was disappearing under the rising tide, and moment by moment the seas broke more strongly over the rocks. The fishermen studied the shore anxiously. So did I, and with a sailor's eye, though I could see little chance for a swimmer to gain that surf hammered line of rocks. I made signs toward the headlands on either flank. The Japanese shook their heads. I indicated that dreadful lee shore. Still they shook their heads and did nothing. My conclusion was that they were paralysed by the hopelessness of the situation. Yet our extremity increased with every minute, for the rising tide was robbing us of the reef that served as buffer. It soon became a case of swamping at our anchor. Seas were splashing on board in growing volume, and we bailed constantly. And still my fishermen crew eyed the surf battered shore and did nothing.

At last, after many narrow escapes from complete swamping, the fishermen got into action. All hands tailed on to the anchor and hove it up. For'ard, as the boat's head paid off, we set a patch of sail about the size of a flour sack. And we headed straight for shore. I unlaced my shoes, unbuttoned my greatcoat and coat, and was ready to make a quick partial strip a minute or so before we struck. But we didn't strike, and, as we rushed in, I saw the beauty of the situation. Before us opened a narrow channel, frilled at its mouth with breaking seas. Yet, long before, when I had scanned the shore closely, there had been no such channel. I HAD FORGOTTEN THE THIRTY FOOT TIDE.

And it was for this tide that the Japanese had so precariously waited. We ran the frill of breakers, curved into a tiny sheltered bay where the water was scarcely flawed by the gale, and landed on a beach where the salt sea of the last tide lay frozen in long curving lines. And this was one gale of three in the course of those eight days in the sampan. Would it have been beaten on a ship? I fear me the ship would have gone aground on the outlying reef and that its people would have been incontinently and monotonously drowned.

There are enough surprises and mishaps in a three days' cruise in a small boat to supply a great ship on the ocean for a full year. I remember, once, taking out on her trial trip a little thirty footer I had just bought. In six days we had two stiff blows, and, in addition, one proper southwester and one ripsnorting southeaster. The slight intervals between these blows were dead calms. Also, in the six days, we were aground three times. Then, too, we tied up to the bank in the Sacramento River, and, grounding by an accident on the steep slope on a falling tide, nearly turned a side somersault down the bank. In a stark calm and heavy tide in the Carquinez Straits, where anchors skate on the channel scoured bottom, we were sucked against a big dock and smashed and bumped down a quarter of a mile of its length before we could get clear. Two hours afterward, on San Pablo Bay, the wind was piping up and we were reefing down.

It is no fun to pick up a skiff adrift in a heavy sea and gale. That was our next task, for our skiff, swamping, parted both towing painters we had bent on. Before we recovered it we had nearly killed ourselves with exhaustion, and we certainly had strained the sloop in every part from keelson to truck. And to cap it all, coming into our home port, beating up the narrowest part of the San Antonio Estuary, we had a shave of inches from collision with a big ship in tow of a tug. I have sailed the ocean in far larger craft a year at a time, in which period occurred no such chapter of moving incident.

After all, the mishaps are almost the best part of small boat sailing. Looking back, they prove to be punctuations of joy. At the time they try your mettle and your vocabulary, and may make you so pessimistic as to believe that God has a grudge against you, but afterward, ah, afterward, with what pleasure you remember them and with what gusto do you relate them to your brother skippers in the fellowship of small boat sailing!

A narrow, winding slough, a half tide, exposing mud surfaced with gangrenous slime; the water itself filthy and discoloured by the waste from the vats of a near-by tannery; the marsh grass on either side mottled with all the shades of a decaying orchid; a crazy, ramshackled, ancient wharf; and at the end of the wharf a small, white painted sloop. Nothing romantic about it. No hint of adventure. A splendid pictorial argument against the alleged joys of small boat sailing.

Possibly that is what Cloudeley and I thought, that sombre, leaden morning as we turned out to cook breakfast and wash decks. The latter was my stunt, but one look at the dirty water overside and another at my fresh painted deck, deterred me. After breakfast, we started a game of chess. The tide continued to fall, and we felt the sloop begin to list. We played on until the chess men began to fall over. The list increased, and we went on deck.

Bow line and stern line were drawn taut. As we looked the boat listed still farther with an abrupt jerk. The lines were now very taut. "As soon as her belly touches the bottom she will stop," I said.

Cloudeley sounded with a boat-hook along the outside. "Seven feet of water," he announced, "The bank is almost up and down. The first thing that touches will be her mast when she turns bottom up."

An ominous, minute snapping noise came from the stern line. Even as we looked, we saw a strand fray and part. Then we jumped. Scarcely had we bent another line between the stern and the wharf, when the original line parted. As we bent another line forward, the original one there crackled and parted. After that, it was an inferno of work and excitement.

We ran more and more lines, and more and more lines continued to part, and more and more the pretty boat went over on her side. We bent all our spare lines; we unrove sheets and halyards; we used our two inch hawser; we fastened lines part way up the mast, half way up, and everywhere else. We toiled and sweated and encouraged our mutual and sincere conviction that God's grudge still held against us. Country yokels came down on the wharf and sniggered at us. When Cloudeley let a coil of rope slip down the inclined deck into the vile slime and fished it out with seasick countenance, the yokels sniggered louder and it was all I could do to prevent him from climbing up on the wharf and committing murder.

By the time the sloop's deck was perpendicular, we had unbent the boom lift from below, made it fast to the wharf, and, with the other end fast nearly to the masthead, heaved it taut with block and tackle. The lift was of steel wire. We were confident that it could stand the strain, but we doubted the holding power of the stays that held the mast.

The tide had two more hours to ebb (and it was the big run out), which meant that five hours must elapse ere the returning tide would give us a chance to learn whether or not the sloop would rise to it and right herself. The bank was almost up and down, and at the bottom, directly beneath us, the fast-ebbing tide left a pit of the vilest, illest smelling, illest appearing muck to be seen in many a day's ride. Said Cloudeley to me gazing down into it: "I love you as a brother. I'd fight for you. I'd face roaring lions, and sudden death by field and flood. But just the same, don't you fall into that." He shuddered nauseously. "For if you do, I haven't the grit to pull you out. I simply couldn't. You'd be awful. The best I could do would be to take a boathook and shove you down out of sight."

We sat on the upper side wall of the cabin, dangled our legs down the top of the cabin, leaned our backs against the deck, and played chess until the rising tide and the block and tackle on the boom lift enabled us to get her on a respectable keel again.

Years afterward, down in the South Seas, on the island of Ysabel, I was caught in a similar predicament. In order to clean her copper, I had careened the *Snark* broadside on to the beach and outward. When the tide rose, she refused to rise. The water crept in through the scuppers, mounted over the rail, and the level of the ocean slowly crawled up the slant of the deck. We battered down the engine room hatch, and the sea rose to it and over it and climbed perilously near to the cabin companionway and skylight. We were all sick with



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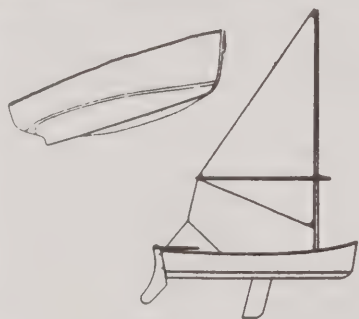
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fever, but we turned out in the blazing tropic sun and toiled madly for several hours.

We carried our heaviest lines ashore from our mastheads and heaved with our heaviest purchase until everything crackled including ourselves. We would spell off and lie down like dead men, then get up and heave and crackle again. And in the end, our lower rail five feet under water and the wavelets lapping the companionway combing, the sturdy little craft shivered and shook herself and pointed her masts once more to the zenith.

There is never lack of exercise in small boat sailing, and the hard work is not only part of the fun of it, but it beats the doctors. San Francisco Bay is no mill pond. It is a large and draughty and variegated piece of water. I remember, one winter evening, trying to enter the mouth of the Sacramento. There was a freshet on the river, the flood tide from the bay had been beaten back into a strong ebb, and the lusty west wind died down with the sun. It was just sunset, and with a fair to middling breeze, dead aft, we stood still in the rapid current.

We were squarely in the mouth of the river; but there was no anchorage and we drifted backward, faster and faster, and dropped anchor outside as the last breath of wind left us. The night came on, beautiful and warm and starry. My one companion cooked supper, while on deck I put everything in shape Bristol fashion. When we turned in at nine o'clock the weather promise was excellent. (If I had carried a barometer I'd have known better.) By two in the morning our shrouds were thrumming in a piping breeze, and I got up and gave her more scope on her hawser. Inside another hour there was no doubt that we were in for a southeaster.

It is not nice to leave a warm bed and get out of a bad anchorage in a black blowy night, but we arose to the occasion, put in two reefs, and started to heave up. The winch was old, and the strain of the jumping head sea was too much for it. With the winch out of commission, it was impossible to heave up by hand. We knew, because we tried it and slaughtered our hands. Now a sailor hates to lose an anchor. It is a matter of pride. Of course, we could have buoyed ours and slipped it. Instead, however, I gave her still more hawser, veered her, and dropped the second anchor.

There was little sleep after that, for first one and then the other of us would be rolled out of our bunks. The increasing size of the seas told us we were dragging, and when we struck the scoured channel we could tell by the feel of it that our two anchors were fairly skating across. It was a deep channel, the farther edge of it rising steeply like the wall of a canyon, and when our anchors started up that wall they hit in and held. Yet, when we fetched up, through the darkness we could hear the seas breaking on the solid shore astern, and so near was it that we shortened the skiff's painter.

Daylight showed us that between the stern of the skiff and destruction was no more than a score of feet. And how it did blow! There were times, in the gusts, when the wind must have approached a velocity of seventy or eighty miles an hour. But the anchors held, and so nobly that our final anxiety was that the for'ard bitts would be jerked clean out of the boat. All day the sloop alternately ducked her nose under and sat down on her stern; and it was not till late afternoon that the storm broke in one last and worst mad gust.

For a full five minutes an absolute dead calm prevailed, and then, with the suddenness of a thunderclap, the wind snorted out of the southwest, a shift of eight points and a boisterous gale. Another night of it was too much for us, and we hove up by hand in a cross head sea. It was not stiff work. It was heartbreaking. And I know we were both near to crying from the hurt and the exhaustion.

And when we did get the first anchor up and down we couldn't break it out. Between seas we snubbed her nose down to it, took plenty of turns, and stood clear as she jumped. Almost everything smashed and parted except the anchor hold. The chocks were jerked out, the rail torn off, and the very covering board splintered, and still the anchor held. At last, hoisting the reefed mainsail and slacking off a few of the hard won feet of the chain, we sailed the anchor out. It was nip and tuck, though, and there were times when the boat was knocked down flat. We repeated the manoeuvre with the remaining anchor, and in the gathering darkness fled into the shelter of the river's mouth.

I was born so long ago that I grew up before the era of gasoline. As a result, I am old fashioned. I prefer a sailboat to a motorboat, and it is my belief that boat sailing is a finer, more difficult, and sturdier art than running a motor. Gasoline engines are becoming foolproof, and while it is unfair to say that any fool can run an engine, it is fair to say that almost any one can. Not so, when it comes to sailing a boat. More skill, more intelligence, and a vast deal more training are necessary. It is the finest training in the world for boy and youth and man. If the boy is very small, equip him with a small, comfortable skiff. He will do the rest. He won't need to be taught. Shortly he will be setting a tiny leg of mutton and steering with an oar. Then he will begin to talk keels and centerboards and want to take his blankets out and stop aboard all night.

But don't be afraid for him. He is bound to run risks and encounter accidents. Remember, there are accidents in the nursery as well as out on the water. More boys have died from hot house culture than have died on boats large and small; and more boys have been made into strong and reliant men by boat sailing than by lawn croquet and dancing school.

And once a sailor, always a sailor. The savour of the salt never stales. The sailor never grows so old that he does not care to go back for one more wrestling bout with wind and wave. I know it of myself. I have turned rancher, and live beyond sight of the sea. Yet I can stay away from it only so long. After several months have passed, I begin to grow restless. I find myself day dreaming over incidents of the last cruise, or wondering if the striped bass are running on Wingo Slough, or eagerly reading the newspapers for reports of the first northern flights of ducks.

And then, suddenly, there is a hurried pack of suitcases and overhauling of gear, and we are off for Vallejo where the little *Roamer* lies, waiting, always waiting for the skiff to come alongside, for the lighting of the fire in the galley-stove, for the pulling off of gaskets, the swinging up of the mainsail, and the rat-tat-tat of the reef points, for the heaving short and the breaking out, and for the twirling of the wheel as she fills away and heads up Bay or down.

Jack London, on board *Roamer*, Sonoma Creek, April 15, 1911



SCUZBUMS NEWS

SCUZBUMS: S.C.S.B.M.S.: SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SMALL BOAT MESSABOUT SOCIETY

The Scuzbums' Giant Five Day Messabout

By Kim Apel

About 40 boats, ranging from a trio of 8' sailing prams to a Bolger Light Schooner, participated in the Southern California Small Boat Messabout Society's sixth annual Giant Five Day Messabout (GFDM) held August 18-22 at Fiddler's Cove on San Diego Bay. Given the pride that the members take in being not-too-organized, it's not easy to measure such things. It's clear, however, that well over 100 folks attended and had a great time.

The group's name is impossibly awkward, of course, so a nickname was coined from the initials: SCSBMS; they proudly call themselves the Scuzbums. They're far removed in distance and attitude from the yacht club scene elsewhere in San Diego bay. Their irreverent name expresses perfectly their low-key, sandy-feet-and-damp-shorts boating lifestyle.

The Scuzbums started arriving Wednesday and the gathering peaked on the weekend. The GFDM is the highlight of the Scuzbums' annual cycle of year-round on-the-water events at Fiddler's Cove and elsewhere. Overnight accommodations were on the beach in tents or RVs; a few slept aboard. Some group meals were provided; otherwise dining and social arrangements were ad hoc. Evenings featured campfires on the beach, nightsailing for some, views of the sparkling San Diego skyline framed by the Coronado bridge, and nightly fireworks from the SeaWorld theme park.

It was a pleasantly crowded and diverse scene along the launching beach. There were boats with one, two and three hulls. There were a variety of sailboats of course, as well as kayaks, rowboats, mini-tugboats (gas and electric powered), and an Avon inflatable. There were a variety of sailplans represented, including sloop, gaff-rigged (catboat and schooner), sprit, lateen, lug ketch and cat-ketch. There were home-builts and production boats. There

were various types of wood construction: stitch-and-glue, riveted lapstrake, carvel, strip-planked, and cold-molded. There were also fiberglass, rotomolded plastic, and fabric hulls. There were immaculate showpieces and workboat-finished craft and everything in-between. There were boats familiar from past messabouts and new additions to the Scuzbum family. They ranged from fresh out of the workshop to about 75 years old.

Participants also reflected a similar diversity of age, interests, gender, etc. They came from near and far. The Scuzbums' messabout allies from central California, the Baywood Navy, also arrived in force, maintaining their tradition of several years. Three generations of the Roubanis family traveled from northern California. The Skidmores from Wyoming brought a stunning bright-finished lapstrake dory built from John Gardner's plans. Jeff Smith and family, on vacation from New York, dropped in and Jeff was invited out sailing.

Were there an award for the most interesting first-time participating boat, it would have been a tie. Co-honorees would have included Jim Harmening and his 21' cat-ketch of his own design. Also, Georgia Tanner brought her new Easy Rider three-section, take-apart, hard-shell kayak, with Balogh batwing sail rig and detachable outrigger hull. This is a 17' sailboat that can be disassembled and kept in an upstairs closet!

The GFDM served as the unofficial southern California annual meeting and regatta of the San Francisco Pelican class, six boats including a Great Pelican (upsized version). Other family groups included a couple of sailing Swampscott dories, two El Toro dinghies, a pair of mini-tugs, designed by Scuzbum Berk Eastman, a pristine, genuine Beetle Cat and its plywood variation, a Bolger Bobcat.

The Fiddler's Cove Marina showed many improvements since last year's GFDM, includ-

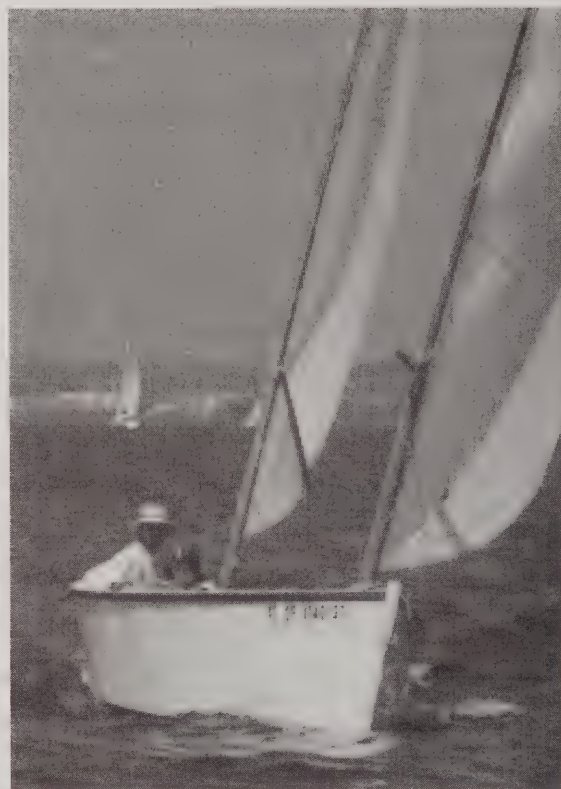
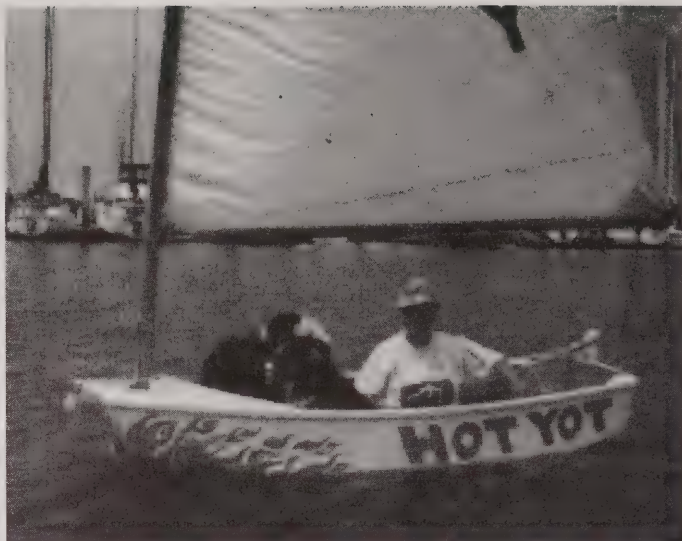
ing a new lawn, remodeled store and food service area, improved showers and toilets, a paved road to the camping area, and paved sidewalks. The Scuzbums were grateful as always to the U.S. Navy, owner-operator of the marina, for hosting the GFDM, but especially in light of the recent improvements.

Some things thankfully remain the same from year to year, like there are always interesting derelict boats to look over (in the marina, NOT the Scuzbums'). This year there was a wrecked sailboat of about 25', washed up on the beach on the fringe of the anchorage area. The ruined hulk was already well scavenged, but some Scuzbums still salvaged interesting stuff to take home, such as bronze fasteners, a big bronze mast step, and the unfortunate vessel's boom, a nice piece of spruce to be recut for some use yet to be determined.

Sail races were held Saturday in perfect conditions. Nineteen Scuzbum craft were simultaneously on the big course, racing in three classes. In addition to racers, some serious and some not, participants included the two mini-tugs, one serving as the Committee boat and the other helping to get photos of the race and retrieving the race marks afterward. The sight of all those sailors in formation in a good breeze was beautiful.

There were some exciting moments, such as when the Scuzbum fleet unexpectedly intersected a separate race fleet moving in the opposite direction. Later, dinghies raced on the inside harbor course, in the 8 feet and under class. In keeping with Scuzbum tradition, the competition is designed to be low-key and friendly.

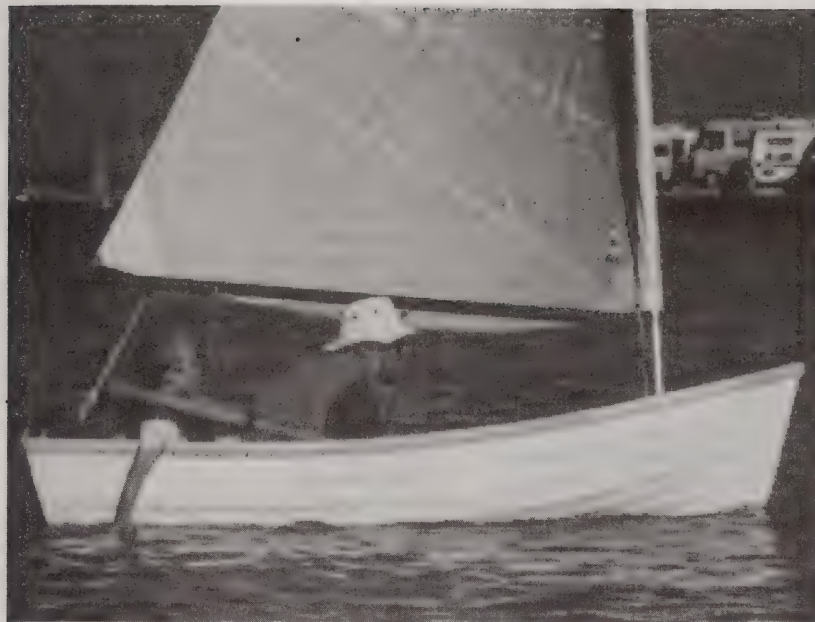
The Bums will do it all again in August 2000, perhaps to be called the Mega-Millennium Messabout. As always, everyone inclined to messing about is invited. Contact the Commodorable, Annie Kolls, at (619) 569-5277 or <scuzbum@aol.com>.



Giant Five Day Messabout

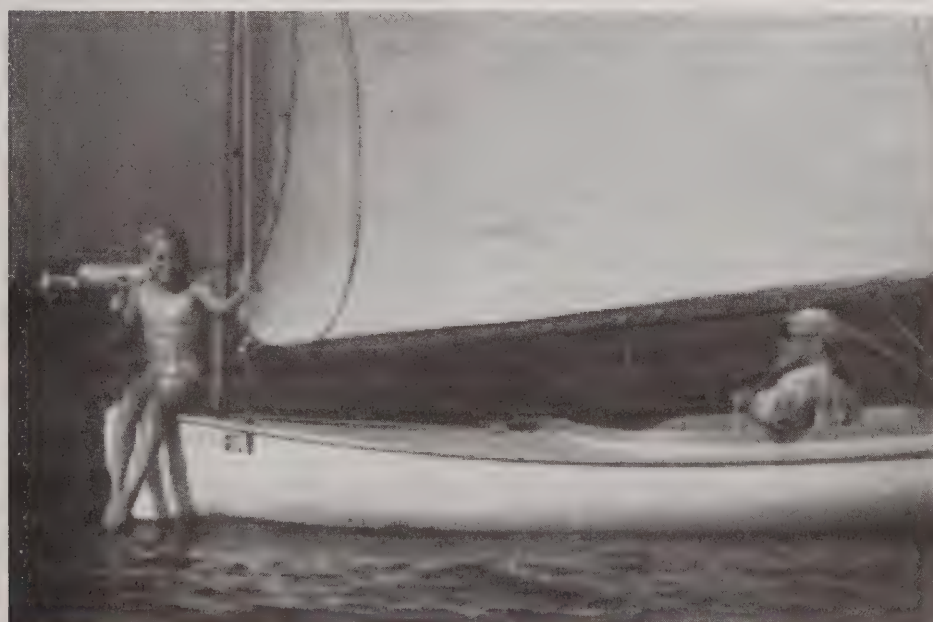
Clockwise from top left: 1) Roger Nelson stylin' in his Pelican; 2) Scuzmum and sailordogs on a spin around the harbor; 3) Jim Harmening and son aboard *Hawk*; 4) Scenic landing beach congestion; 5) Mini-tugs *Moxie* and *Candu Jr.* side by side.





Giant Five Day Messabout

Clockwise from top left: 1) Sailing lesson; 2) Greg and Mary Hogan venture outside the harbor in a breeze; 3 & 4) Steve Ruttschow and daughter aboard the Beetle Cat *White Wing*; Randy Ames, guest skipper, at the helm of Pelican *Ruby Begonia*.



The dinghy didn't like all the weight and began to dance like a dervish. The weight was in the form of concrete and human ashes, all that remained of my friend Bill, who a few days earlier had passed on from a life of adventure. In 1907 he had come into this world and begun a cruise of 92 years. These included a working and playing acquaintance with motorcycles and this, in turn, led him to Canada and Betty, the love of his life, and to finding his first boat during World War II service in the Canadian army.

He found an old skiff with only its bow sticking out of the ice in a small pond in the middle of the winter. Investigation told him it was a sound hull and some questions around the army camp where he was stationed located the owner, a lieutenant. The officer was very happy to sell the craft and shortly after the ice melted, Bill was found sailing on a nearby lake.

After the military years came various jobs, including repairing Texas oilfield diesels, and enterprises such as owning an agency for Austin/American two-seater cars (undertaken after he and Betty built a tiny teardrop trailer and headed for Mexico City 1800 miles away in one of the Austin/Americans), and a Harley-Davidson franchise. A career-ending stint in heating and air conditioning brought Bill to retirement and a move to the Rogue River shore in the city of Grants Pass, Oregon.

Bill bought a new aluminum skiff with a 10hp outboard. It proved to be useless as the river nearly dried up that year and the range of travel for Bill was about one mile upriver and two miles downriver before the rides became walks through the "Rock Gardens of the Rogue", as Bill would put it. They began to look for waterfront property elsewhere and the lakes of the central Oregon coast began to beckon.

A lovely spot was found in Florence, midway up the coast, on Siltcoos Lake. The widow who owned the property was anxious to sell as she was unable to care for the place and when Bill heard her asking price no further discussion was needed to convince him.

Bill never wanted to go far after that, their travel bug died on the shore of the lake, and Bill began to dream of his fleet to be. In 1981 I met Bill and in a few moments we established a friendship that lasted until his passing. Bill at that time owned a big inboard run-about built of fiberglass, a tri-hull with everything but a direction finder and a paid captain!

However, his dreams were already beginning to include an airboat. I began to help his imagination along telling him of different power options. I knew where air boat engines as well as propellers could be found.

Bill had a 15' aluminum Gregor and thought 5hp with a matching prop would just be the ticket to push him at breathtaking speed around the lake. I said he might be happier with a larger engine, 18-20hp maybe, he said, "Well, I wouldn't want to overpower it," and, of course, 5hp didn't. His subsequent power increases crept up in experimental steps until he finally found the right one, an 18hp B&S.

Bill never allowed a boat to lay around unused and he felt the same way about his airboat engines. Having bought three engine/propeller combinations and having two of them hidden away in his treasure closet, he bought two 10' aluminum skiffs at two different yard sales, two identical jon-boat style, flat bot-

Lost at Sea

By Rags Ragsdale

tomed skiffs. On one he put the 5hp engine and on the other he put a 10hp engine. Neither proved to be worthwhile.

Then came new inspiration in Bill's life as a fleet owner. Hovercraft! The idea of speeding across the water, mud, lily pads, and shallows where no boat could follow or, better yet, precede him, was the dominating thought for months to come!

But before he could apply his resources to the acquisition of a hovercraft, Arrow Props sent him a brochure on their airboat inventory. The fiberglass skimming model with a 26hp engine caught his attention and Bill ordered it. The two week wait nearly lasted a year according to Bill!

Two days later, I stepped outside my house and heard what I thought was an airplane taking off. Bill had his new fleet addition skimming the lake, at 6:45 am! No one complained, but I heard comments like, "Did you hear a seaplane taking off from Siltcoos Lake the other morning?" While talking about this with residents around the lake, I always pleaded deafness.

If they had thought they'd heard a plane that day, they really did think so when Bill started flying his hovercraft, the first of ultimately five he owned over the rest of his life.

Bill's favorite hovercraft was a SevTec bought from the original builder in Washington. This builder actually flew the craft clear into Canada from his riverside home. A total round trip, if Bill told me right, of 700 miles! The next to last was a Scat single seater that was very much like a motorcycle in that weight-shift was used a lot in flying it.

Bill's passing was not unexpected. Within a period of a month his energy level dropped alarmingly and his strength faded. He suspected cancer had reared its ugly head again. In 1986 he had fought and beaten stomach cancer. He never had any doubt he would win that battle, but at age 92, he knew the outcome was certain to be different. Doctors confirmed the following: Enlarged heart, which he'd had all his life, lung cancer, chronic pneumonia, and, as Bill said, "old age".

So Bill and I discussed practical matters about his coming departure and how he wanted things done. His lovely wife Betty had become a victim of Alzheimer's disease and Bill's main concern was for her constant care, which we both knew would continue, for she was in otherwise great health. We also discussed the disposal of his ashes, since he would be cremated. We both decided keeping ashes on the mantelpiece was impractical as well as morbid. "I don't want anyone mourning my passing, good grief, I've lived the most wonderful life anyone could imagine and I have no regrets except I had hoped to live to 100! And I don't know why I thought I wanted to do that."

"Mix my ashes in concrete and when it sets up take them out in the lake in the airboat and boot them overboard at 30mph. Do it where you won't be aware of where they actually went down." I agreed to do this, but I asked if he wanted a stone anywhere. "No, there will be stone in Winnipeg where Betty will be taken when her time comes, there will be room for both our names on that." He continued, "Under my name I want it to read,

"Lost At Sea!"

I picked the ashes up from the mortuary and stopped by the builders' supply for a sack of pre-mixed concrete. Rain and procrastination, as well as sorta not wanting to let go just yet, delayed the process of readying the ashes for sending them to the lake bottom. I had inherited the aluminum skiff and the airboat. A very enthusiastic buyer wanted the airboat and, as I was probably never going to be an airboat owner on purpose, I sold it. Bill's last ride was destined to be at a bit slower than 30mph.

The concrete cylinders (yes, more than one) were loaded one to each side of the dinghy. I sat not quite in the center. I had mixed too much concrete. The amount I mixed with the ashes was more than would fit into one bucket. I didn't have another bucket as large as the first one so I had to make do with a smaller bucket.

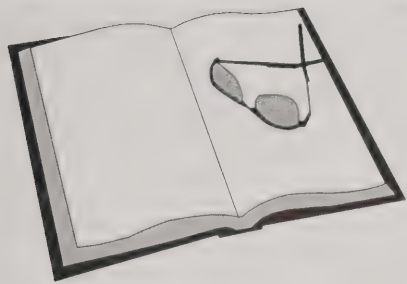
I began to row toward the middle of the lake. After an interval that seemed much longer than it was, I tried to turn around to gauge if I was somewhere near the middle of the lake. I was so busy staying upright that making any sort of sound guess was impossible.

After two near capsizes I decided it was far enough and started my one man wrestling match to get the two concrete cylinders overboard in the same area of the lake. I picked the one on the starboard side first. It was heaviest and my mind said, "Do the heaviest first". With that weight balanced on the gunwale I had to slide a few more inches to port. That big chunk of cement started to topple back toward me! My reflex action slammed my hand against it and it flopped overboard. The dinghy did what dinghies do, it dipped a cup of water over the port side and caused another reflex action to starboard, nearly caused me to involuntarily dive overboard!!

My jerking back to port caused the weight of the smaller cylinder to repeat the process, joining my own weight to dip another cup of water over the port side. I grabbed both gunwales and told that dinghy to straighten up or I would leave it to return to shore alone. With no effort on my part, the dinghy whirled around and before it could plot any more surprise moves, I flipped the smaller cylinder over the side. With no more offset weight aboard I took both oars and pointed the dinghy for the launch ramp.

Nearly home, I turned as far as my musclebound neck would allow, and could see some new pilings in my path, but I was certain they were far enough to my starboard to cause me no trouble. I stepped up the stroke and made about four more, gaining speed with each one. The piling didn't even shiver when the dinghy struck. With an engineer's preciseness, the front transom centered the piling and stopped the boat dead in its tracks, leaving me lying flat on my back securely anchored on the floor forward of the rowing seat and held in place by my surplus Coast Guard lifejacket.

After thoughts of deliberately capsizing to escape my predicament, I managed to get back on the rowing seat and struggle the remaining 20 yards to the ramp, retrieving a lost oar before it got away. I stepped ashore on the ramp, dragging the dinghy up by its painter. I turned around and gazed back at where I thought I had deposited Bill's ashes, but you know what, Bill really was "Lost At Sea!" For a second there I thought I heard him laughing, and I wished it was true.



Book Review

Racing The Ice To Cape Horn

By Frank Guernsey and Cy Zoener
Bristol Fashions Publications, P.O. Box 20,
Enola, PA 17025-0020, (800) 478-7147

Reviewed By Norm Benedict

Racing The Ice To Cape Horn is a rather reader-friendly book of 246 pages remarkably printed on new waterproof laminated paper with a spiral binding enabling the publication to lay flat on surface. Hopefully other publishers will adopt this method to add longevity to favored and expensive books that suffer in the marine environment. Further, while this book is remarkable for things it does, it is equally remarkable for missions not-accomplished. The single photo on a frontpiece is so illegible it can hardly be discerned as a 26' fiberglass production raised-deck daysailer.

The co-authors, Frank Guernsey and Cy Zoener, intersperse flashbacks of ocean sailing with superb descriptions of large storm conditions with Guernsey's boyhood military education days and, most of all, continuing highly emotional marital upsets with a woman dearly loved. But, there is never a reason given for these tragedies nor, in fact, for much of Guernsey's selection of boat and operations.

I believe it was William Garden, who noted many small boat voyages transform themselves from great adventures to great ordeals. Sailor Guernsey apparently experiences this in additional voyages to Hawaii, Tahiti, and Japan. This remarkable voyage at age 48 took him non-stop west-to-east around Cape Horn, terminating at Punta del Este, Uruguay with a full measure of sicknesses and injuries. These healed quickly as he enjoyed the wonderful surroundings while waiting for his wife to enplane from the United States to Montevideo.

Assuming the main readership of small boat cruising books are wannabees, some order of the contents is usually outlined up front. More famous voyagers, such as Joshua Slocum and Harry Pigeon, address this by first describing in detail their vessel's selected design and construction. Not Guernsey/Zoener. On page 31 the co-authors inform readers of finding *Cestus*. Then follow barebone descriptions of

strengthening the rudder, chainplates, stepping a new mast on deck, adding a vertical post under the foredeck, and references to improving the structural integrity of the cockpit. It is not until pages 90-95 that readers discover the all-important craft is a 24' fiberglass production *Gladiator*, designed by noted naval architect Bill Lapworth, purchased for \$2,000. At this point, such information meaningful to sailors/readers as a full length keel with 2,050lbs lead ballast for a boat displacing 3,850lbs, is offered. Somewhat disconcerting was headroom of 4'9" for a 6' skipper. Such required separate construction of a head-sized doghouse to observe operational conditions.

Guernsey and company also refastened the deck-hull joint, however leaving overlength bolts that were to inflict severe, almost crippling injuries to Guernsey's cranium while being thrown around in a severe storm, including full ejections from his bunk. Guernsey does recognize some need for head protection as a helmet but, while undergoing crippling low temperature conditions, apparently did not realize most of the body temperature loss is through the scalp. Not nit-picking, such details convert the ordeal factor to more of the great adventure ilk.

Mindful of Guernsey's serious sufferings from major body rashes, salt water sores (26 on one leg), and even eventual signs of internal bleeding, I found stunning his remark about using a quart and a half of water per day for drinking and washing. A contemporary off-shore book recommends a gallon per person per day. For certain, individual physiologies play a part here, but also the selection of such food as 75 Top Ramen and 114 MREs should have been viewed carefully for supplemental salt content. This, added to literal salt water immersions, can be crippling.

While Guernsey comments frequently on his trusted PUR manually pumped watermaker, never does he mention entrapping rain water in sail bights or the broad raised deck as practiced for years past in extended cruising. Due to experiencing painful ejection from his bunk, he apparently settles for bracing himself on the sole amidst sloshing, sea water that leaked in. It would seem that a quarter berth would mostly prevent such ejections, or a rope mesh restrain the body from ejection across the cabin.

The book has repetitive line drawings of the southern United States and South America to illustrate positioning along with travel descriptions, mostly of rough seas and storms. Latitudes in 30 degree increments help to localize the commentary. Navigation was principally by GPS means followed up as warranted by sextant sighting. Guernsey did his homework well with details of currents, etc., that are invaluable to followers. His desire for the smallest boat to traverse the Horn is noted along with thoughts of speed penalties inherent in short LWLs.

As I mentioned initially, the co-authors have provided constant flashbacks from voyaging to a complex personal life. If some message was intended to be drawn from this, it was lost on this reviewer. Interestingly, Guernsey's obsession about encountering icebergs around the Horn never materializes, but is evidence of a certain wisdom in consulting official publications about the area, along with past and present books on cruises there, and specialized books on ideal ways and means.

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On our 25th anniversary, Porta-Bote International has unveiled its latest remarkable folding Porta-Bote. Over 41 major engineering advances have been incorporated that allow the craft to go 20% faster than last year's model using the same low powered outboards. Also new, a set of superlightweight plastic molded seats that weigh half as much as the old style wooden seats. Special beverage container holders are molded into the sides of the seats.

The new, internationally patented series is available in 8', 10', and 12' models in Pacific Pearl, Duck Hunter Green (olive drab) and a new color, Aluminium. The Porta-Bote hulls weigh in at an ultra-light 49lbs., 59lbs. and 69lbs., respectively. The redesigned folding craft can be easily opened or closed in just a few minutes and weigh half as much as comparable aluminum boats. This exotic, engineered resin hull material is warranted by the manufacturer for 10 years. It never needs painting and is unaffected by salt water. The new models meet Coast Guard maximum capacity requirements. All are NMMA Certified.

Heightened interest in the portable folding boat concept is the result of recent dramatic changes in the lifestyles of fishing and boating enthusiasts, worldwide. Many boating fans have moved to condominiums, apartments, smaller homes and now have no place to store ordinary craft. Porta-Bote stows easily in this type of environment. RVers who loathe towing boats, attach Porta-Botes on the side or top of their vehicles. Owners of sailboats/cabin cruisers use the folding craft as practical ship to shore dinghies as they take up only 4" of valuable deck space. An optional sailkit turns Porta-Bote into a sprightly sailboat. Porta-Bote, which is surfboard shaped when folded, fits neatly atop the smallest auto just like a surfboard or a pair of skis and ends the hassle of towing, forever.

The performance hulls actually outperform similar sized aluminum craft and inflatables. And, they use half the horsepower. A new, deep keel-twin hydro-tunnel flexihull (R) design traps the bow wave and guides it under the boat, which dramatically reduces drag and increases stability. The internationally patented fold-up square back and removable transom features now offer a more aesthetically appealing classic nautical design in a folding boat configuration.

Porta-Bote's 25th Anniversary Edition

(A recent phone call received was from the man behind the Porta-Bote, he'd just discovered us on our website. He wanted to tell me about his unique boat. I remarked that I'd noticed his ad in boating magazine classifieds over the years (not ours), a young woman carrying one of his boats under her arm like some sort of folding table. "Yes, he responded, "that young woman today could be a grandmother." It's been a while. In fact, 25 years. So when his promotional material showed up in our mail I thought, why not, let's give it this page, you gotta admire such a survivor in the small boat business. ED.)

Answers to some frequently asked questions about Porta-Bote:

Q: How reliable are the Porta-Bote hinges?

A: They are waterproof and are so unique they have been granted a patent. The hinges can take stress of over 90,000lbs. per square inch. They are actually stronger than the boat, itself! They have been designed so that the higher the pressure on the hinge, the more it wants to stay closed. The Porta-Bote hinges have been time-proven for over 25 years by thousands of satisfied customers, worldwide.

Q: Why is Porta-Bote so much more stable than ordinary, rigid boats?

A: Flexibility is the secret of Porta-Bote's incredible stability! This is the same reason inflatables are more stable than rigid craft. When a strong wave slams against

the side of Porta-Bote's Flexi-Hull (R), the polypropylene flexes inwards. This immediately dissipates the energy of the wave & actually disperses its force.

Q: Why is the Porta-Bote hull constructed with polypropylene? How durable is it?

A: Polypropylene, an engineered resin, was developed by the aero-space industry. It has remarkable properties. Our formula utilizes an ultra-violet filter as well as an anti-oxidant. This renders the material unaffected by exposure to saltwater. It won't even burn! This material is presently being used in the manufacture of the new lifetime batteries, astro-turf, automobile bumpers; even highway road signs. How long will it last? We have inspected 25 year old Porta-Botes and they looked almost as good as new! That's why we can offer a 10 year limited hull material warranty.

Q: How puncture resistant is the hull?

A: Porta-Bote's hull is almost 1/4" thick, twice as thick as an aluminum hull. And, unlike the thin skin of an inflatable, even the sharpest rocks would cause no damage to the almost indestructible polypropylene material. Many are in use off the shores of Florida and the Bahamas where skin divers use them on sharp, coral reefs.

Q: What about maintenance of the hull and hinges?

A: Almost no maintenance is required. The color goes thru and thru. You couldn't rub it off even if you tried. If it gets dirty just wash it off with water. Nothing sticks to it, not even dirt. You won't be spending your time cleaning, just having fun!

Q: Does Porta-Bote meet Coast Guard specifications?

A: Yes! All three models were recently tested at a Coast Guard approved testing facility. The production models exceed the latest compliance standards. NMMA Certified.

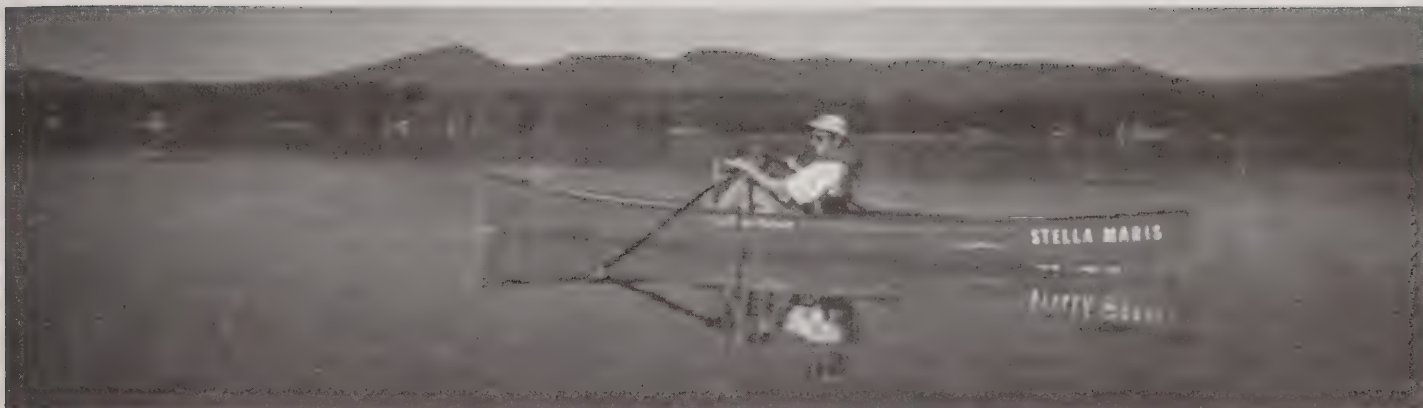
Q: How does it perform with the optional sail kit?

A: Although it won't keep up with a Hobie Cat, Porta-Bote is actually a very fast sailboat and will outrun most sailing prams and dinghies. The leeboard provides even added stability.

Porta-Bote International, 1074 independence Ave., Mountainview, CA 94043, (800) 227-8882, <www.porta-bote.com>, <Info@porta-bote.com>

The new Genesis III Series Squareback folding Porta-Bote folds to 4" flat.





Rowing for the Directionally Challenged

By Kevin Harding

I've been rowing in one way or another for many years. My first leap forward was an Alden Shell and Oarmaster with Ciolli oars. I'm lucky enough to live on a lake in Maine in the summer, and many early mornings have been pleasantly spent getting a great workout rowing around one of the bays. My five mile loop not only produced wonderful exercise to combat my expanding waistline, but by rowing early in the morning I avoided boat traffic and enjoyed the company of loons, gulls, ducks, and even an occasional otter or beaver.

But, rowing backwards has its drawbacks. Inevitably I hit things, or just barely missed them despite putting a rear view mirror on board. It sometimes got scary. There was the day I missed taking off the head of an early morning swimmer by just inches. I don't think the swimmer ever knew I almost clobbered him, but it scared the hell out of me. Even more incredible was the day I saw a beautiful wooden shell rowing on the same bay, and even though there was just the two of us, we somehow managed to come within feet of a disastrous collision in which I'm sure I would have severed that lovely boat right in two!

The final straw was the morning that I rowed full tilt right into a rock. After quickly looking around to see if anyone had seen my idiocy, I returned to the beach to examine the damage. Amazingly the bow was chipped, but intact. I have rowed by that rock for over ten years, and yet somehow I managed to find it.

I had seen a rig advertised that promised you could row facing forward, and remembered seeing an early model at a boat show in Maine. My fiftieth birthday was approaching and my generous wife said to treat myself. I found the manufacturer on the net and made an appointment. Ron Rantilla (inventor, owner, and manufacturer) urged me to give the device a try, but I had already made my mind made up after seeing the quality of the workmanship and professional nature of the shop. Besides, it was December, and I wasn't sure rowing a rig I'd never seen was a good idea in questionable conditions. I bought the rig and I waited for spring.

From the first try I was sold. I was rowing facing forward! I was using both my legs and arms, or just my arms, or just my legs! Sounds impossible, but it's true. The Frontrower has several advantages over my Alden Oarmaster: It is unlikely that I will keep running into things; I can not only see where I am

going, but I can have my hands free to use binoculars; although the rig uses my whole body, it seems less physically demanding than my Oarmaster (no more blisters).

I have always enjoyed birdwatching from my canoe, but the best spots were almost an hour down the lake. Now, I can use the Frontrower to row into the small streams in about twenty minutes with binoculars in hand. I did make one modification to the rig to improve its performance as a birding platform; I painted the aluminum shafts of the oars black to prevent the reflection from alerting the birds.

There are additional features of the Frontrower worth mentioning. The machine is designed to fit into a canoe (with suction cups, or with wooden blocks fiberglassed into place). A significant advantage of rowing my canoe as opposed to paddling it, is that my weight is much lower in the boat and so there is much more stability. I have purposely taken the boat out in heavy winds and waves that would be quite challenging if I were solo paddling, and there is a great feeling of security as it handled the conditions with no problems.

According to his advertising video, Ron is often asked if the Frontrower is fast, and he seems to have answered that question by beating traditional sliding rigs in several races (including the Blackburn challenge). My own experience is more subjective, but I have outraced fast sea kayaks and I expect I could beat a traditional sliding seat Alden shell.

But, there are also several disadvantages. I am constantly stopped by boats and spectators who want to know what I'm doing and how the rig works. It's tough to be polite and row right by them, so there have been several interrupted voyages. I made the mistake of encouraging my wife to give it a try; and as a result I recently bought another Frontrower! She is a non-swimmer, and always depended on me to captain our tandem canoe. Not only did the Frontrower provide her with a secure stable platform, but now she is the captain of her own boat. At least I haven't had to buy another canoe, because the rig also fits nicely in my Alden shell.

My enthusiasm for this front facing rowing has expanded my boating, not limited it. I still enjoy a vigorous row with the Oarmaster, and there are quiet evenings when a solo paddle is just the thing to unwind the tensions of the day. A new means to enjoy messing about in boats is always welcome.

This commentary may read like a publicity release, but my endorsement does not come from any arrangement with the manufacturer. It does come from first hand experience. I expect that as good as the Frontrower is, the number of customers may be limited because most folks would not purchase one without trying it. Innovation that dramatically violates tradition faces a real challenge, but in this case, it is worth a try.

If you are interested, the manufacturer can be reached at the following address: Aquamation Systems, 30 Cutler St., Warren, RI 02885, (401) 247-1482, <<http://frontrower.com/>>

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Late one afternoon last fall I revisited one of my favorite spots off the Merrimack River, the Indian River in West Newbury, Massachusetts. It's a shallow tidal estuary that bisects a vibrant marsh backed by a stand of pine and mixed hardwoods. It's always quiet and fully accessible only at high water. At low water you bottom out and are effectively isolated from society. I find it a pleasant retreat and frequently stay there overnight.

One must take care to anchor directly in the center along the stream's axis as the banks are fairly steep. If you fail to do this even a flat bottom boat such as my houseboat, *Shoebox*, will lie at an odd angle in both list and pitch, making a good night's sleep problematic at best. For this reason I always anchor bow and stern.

This particular evening, entering the Indian River with a flood current, I first dropped the light Danforth anchor from the starboard quarter and, powering slowly ahead, fed out most of the 200' of 3/8" braided nylon line. The bow anchor had earlier been hung off on a trip line with a slippery hitch to the pipe rail. It was quickly dropped in the center of the stream. Now this section of the river runs south but the breeze was across river from the west, and freshening all the while.

Easing the line to the bow anchor, I hauled about half of the 3/8" braid to the stern anchor. Even after taking the slack out of the

Houseboat In a Hammerlock

By Tim O'Brien

bow line, *Shoebox* lay too close to the eastern bank. This would be fine for a while, but not a tenable mooring for overnight. The seven foot tidal drop and the steep mud bank would combine to give us a very large list.

I take a lot of kidding for carrying so much ground tackle on such a small boat. *Shoebox* may be small but she displaces nearly three tons. Cruising in a tidal river means husky anchors and plenty of line are a necessity not an affectation. And, believe me, they all get used as this story will illustrate.

For the moment I relaxed, made some tea and enjoyed the sunset and the evening noises of the marsh. My reverie was short lived as the tide was falling and the wind was increasing from the west. Something must be done or it would be a long, none too restful night.

Years ago, as a very inexperienced young naval officer on my first ship, I was lucky to have a very talented seaman as my C.O. He enjoyed teaching his junior officers the tricks of his trade and was good at it as well. One very windy day we were assigned an exposed

anchorage in the Chesapeake. The Captain showed me how to do a hammerlock moor. If a ship rides to only one anchor in a heavy wind it will often yaw severely, sailing off across wind first in one direction and then in the other putting terrific strain on the ground tackle. The hammerlock moor was designed to prevent this.

To effect a hammerlock moor, the ship heads into the wind toward the anchorage, then (just prior to reaching the intended anchorage point) steers off the wind for a time before dropping the upwind bow anchor. She veers chain to this anchor. When the desired scope of chain is out, (say in this case to the port anchor), she steers cross wind in the opposite direction until the port anchor chain is pulled hard around the bow and then drops the starboard anchor. As the chain is veered to this second anchor the ship will fall back to an intermediate position with an anchor broad on each bow and their chains tightly crossed on her stem. The ship's bow will be securely fixed between these crossed chains and the ship will cease to yaw back and forth across the wind.

All this is very interesting, Mr. O'Brien, but is it relevant to our current situation? After due consideration I thought it might be. We, (*Shoebox* and I), would execute a modified hammerlock moor by the stern. This is how it worked out.

We were now anchored bow and stern but had only used the lighter of two stern anchors. Both stern anchors are deployed from quarter posts, 4"x 4" hard yellow pine posts built into the after corners of this rectangular barge-like hull. These husky posts extend up about five feet above the waterline. The anchor lines run through snatch blocks at the tops of the posts, down through large fairlead shackles just below the waterline and out to the anchors.

The light stern anchor line was upwind. Using a boat hook I picked up a bight of this line, a section aft of the lower fairlead, and tied it off temporarily to the top of its quarter post. Then, starting the outboard, I backed *Shoebox's* stern upwind and under the light stern anchor line. We backed across the river to the upwind bank and dropped the heavy stern anchor, an 18lb Danforth with a length of heavy chain to 5/8" nylon. I shut down the engine and tilted it up and then let the wind do its thing.

Shortly the two stern anchor lines were crossed just aft of the raised outboard engine. With minor adjustment to these two anchor lines, I easily positioned *Shoebox* in the center of the stream. Despite the brisk wind and the tidal changes, she remained snug in her modified hammerlock moor for the night.

Shoebox's intrepid skipper declared a victory, lit the lamp, cooked supper and went to bed early.



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The Many Rigs of a Kingston Lobster Boat Gone West

By John Erickson

Several years ago on a cruise up the reaches of the Pacific Northwest's great "Inland Sea", my wife and I encountered a man building a John Alden Malabar II schooner in an old red barn on the wide, windy and wet flats of the Skagit River. Beside the magnificent workmanship of the schooner was a far smaller craft, also of magnificent workmanship; and unlike the schooner completely finished and ready to sail.

The boat was a Kingston Lobster Boat right out of the pages of Howard Chapelle's *American Small Sailing Craft*, the model before racing had influenced the type. Her lines and plank-on-frame construction seemed to follow Chapelle's data exactly, her rig likewise, except that the mizzen was a standing lug rather than the sprit sail shown.

On a later visit we found the lobster boat out of the barn and moored on the banks of the Samish River at the head of navigation, i.e. just below the first low highway bridge. Our friend told us of adventures he and his wife had sailing there in the boat. The Samish, from the bridge to the deep waters of Bellingham Bay, is an area much like the Frisian Islands described so well in Erskine Childers *The Riddle Of The Sands*. During high water, deep draft vessels can negotiate the channel if the captains are familiar with the marks. At low tide you can't get a dinghy down the channel unless the river is in freshet. Local knowledge is necessary because the course is marked with pilings, but the channel has meandered here and there so you must know which piling to believe.

On a third visit we found the lobster boat, named *Samish* after the river, back in the red barn having been damaged in the heavy gales and floods that swept the area the winter before. Our friend was in turmoil because the barn had been sold off from over the incompleting schooner. It was necessary for him to move her by road, and *Samish* was a secondary problem. Our friend said, "I'll give

her to you." She was far too nice a boat for that but he insisted.

When we returned to our home at the south end of Puget Sound, I rustled up a boat trailer and a friend with a pickup and we were off on the miles of freeway to find the red barn on the flats. There a huge rig was in the process of moving the schooner and *Samish* was shoved aside against a fence. The 17' boat was planked with 3/4" planks and ceiled inside with 3/8", not a light boat! Somehow we got her on the trailer. We met our friend and wife down the road a bit and talked about it. He said he had her sails, spars and registration at the new home for the schooner in Port Townsend across Admiralty Inlet. I could get them there later.

Over the objections of my wife, the boat spent the winter in our garage at the expense of the family car, which was left exposed to the slings and arrows of the winter weather. I hired my boat builder friend to repair the decks, cleats and stem that had suffered damage in the storms. The boat being so pretty, I did not want to degrade it with the crudeness of my carpentry.

The next summer my wife and I sailed our ketch to Port Townsend to collect the spars, sails and the registration. The owner-builder said, "I guess you thought I gave you the boat?" I sure did and had spent money, a lot of time and risked alienating my wife on that assumption. After much talk we agreed I was to have the use of the boat for a year or so. We loaded the spars and sails and sailed home.

The day came when she was ready and we slid her into the lagoon at the end of our island. The owner had told me she had excessive lee helm when rigged as Chapelle showed. He had reversed the masts and made her a schooner, under which rig, if you sheeted the foresail in hard, she sailed all right. It didn't look right to me. I calculated centers of effort and of resistance and concluded she should balance as the cat ketch of Chapelle's book. I rigged her that way for the voyage home.

It was necessary to beat to windward for about a mile in a force 3 breeze and a foot of chop to gain her mooring in our cove. In view of the owner's remarks, I was a bit nervous with her rigged as I had her. I needn't have worried, she balanced well and went well. Well, pretty well. Running along with the main sheeted well in and the mizzen a bit slack, almost luffing, she went all right. I got organized and sheeted in the mizzen. She immediately went into irons and stayed there until the mizzen sheet was eased. How he had found lee helm I'll never know.

Later I was to find that by putting the centerboard part way down I could sheet the mizzen closer, but I always had to be alert to keep wind in the mainsail to avoid the mizzen shooting her up into the wind. The mainsail was loose footed and overlapped the mizzen, creating a nice slot effect, but requiring attention when tacking. I followed Roger Taylor's advice, sheeting utilizing the windward part of the double sheet. I had to be quick with the sheet to keep her out of irons. I eventually learned to avoid this by rigging a second pair of sheets at the clew of the first reef when beating. This could be left unattended while I floundered about with the principal sheet.

There is a phenomenon at the south end of Puget Sound similar to one found in the region of Qualicum Beach on the Strait of Georgia. In both cases low lands flanked by high mountains form funnel passages that allow ocean winds to flow across and down into the waterways beyond the mountains. When the situation is right these winds occur suddenly and blow with gale force. I have had rude experiences with these winds in both places and as a result felt the need of a way to shorten sail drastically in a rush.

Chapelle shows winter and a summer rigs for the Kingston Lobster Boat. There is a third mast step just forward of amidships. It is left empty with the two-masted summer rig in use, but in the winter the mizzen goes there to become the main and only mast. I thought of shifting to the winter rig underway but soon decided it would take a bull-necked Hercules who was sure on his feet to do that. The lobster men must have done that once in the fall, not changing back until late in the spring.

With this idea of trying the shift underway, I loosened the masts in their steps with the perhaps foreseeable result that one day in a force four wind the unstayed masts raised out of their steps sending us home like a wounded duck on the water.

When I did convert to the winter rig properly in the fall, I was amazed. Even in light airs the boat performed well with just the single lug sail and was simplicity itself in the sailing. To tack when beating all I did was put the helm down, the rig balanced perfectly and she came through the wind like a twelve meter.

Lugsails are fascinating to me and I tried things with this one. As the mizzen it was set with a sprit boom a la Bolger. It worked fine but, when I removed the sprit and sheeted it to the blocks that had served the boom, it seemed to work even better as a loose-footed sail. Probably why the Scottish luggers carried their mizzens sheeted aft to a long bumpkin.

I then carried the tack forward to the stem head and, lo, I had a dipping lug. It set beautifully. It took me a day of sweating and cussing to learn to dip it ahead of the mast, Cornish style, and somewhat like Richard Carsen's small dhow, but I eventually mastered the art.



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This husky launch was designed for day sport fishing along the north shore of Long Island Sound. She would have to be able to take some serious head sea action and be reliably safe for more than just fair weather exploits. And this well-proven bow shape will do that without spray-rails or other makeshift fixes after the fact. Interestingly then (mid-80s) and now, the owner specified the modest die-

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Design # 551, 22'0" x 7'0" x 2'1" x 3,100lbs
Displacement at DWL, 30hp

sel engine and speed was never mentioned in the correspondence leading to the design, or since, for that matter. We would guess that with the 30hp diesel she can cruise at just about seven knots; a little above displacement speed since she has sharp lines, a very straight run, and good bearing aft. And with her lines she'll look good to the hard-core conservatives as well.

The forward engine position has numerous advantages in a boat with a small and light engine for her size: It is out of the cockpit which is the important part of the boat. Unlike crew often forced by engine-bulk too far forward, the engine does not mind the bow action in choppy headseas. Behind a tight cuddy door it is isolated for noise helped by the opportunity to mount the engine very softly on that long prop shaft for minimum transmitted vibration. While far forward the engine is still carried low in the boat for good stability and an unusually level shaft angle. The propeller and rudder can be well under the boat with minimum tendency to foul fishing lines.

Lastly, the engine is well protected and perfectly accessible for maintenance, most unusually so in a boat of this type. These days we would certainly give it a dry exhaust and, after recent personal experience, radiator cooling, or better yet air-oil-cooling to eliminate all throughhull fittings except the propeller shaft stuffing box. We would try to rig some kind of dipping arrangement ahead of the bow for the stick-mounted depth sounder to save that hole as well.

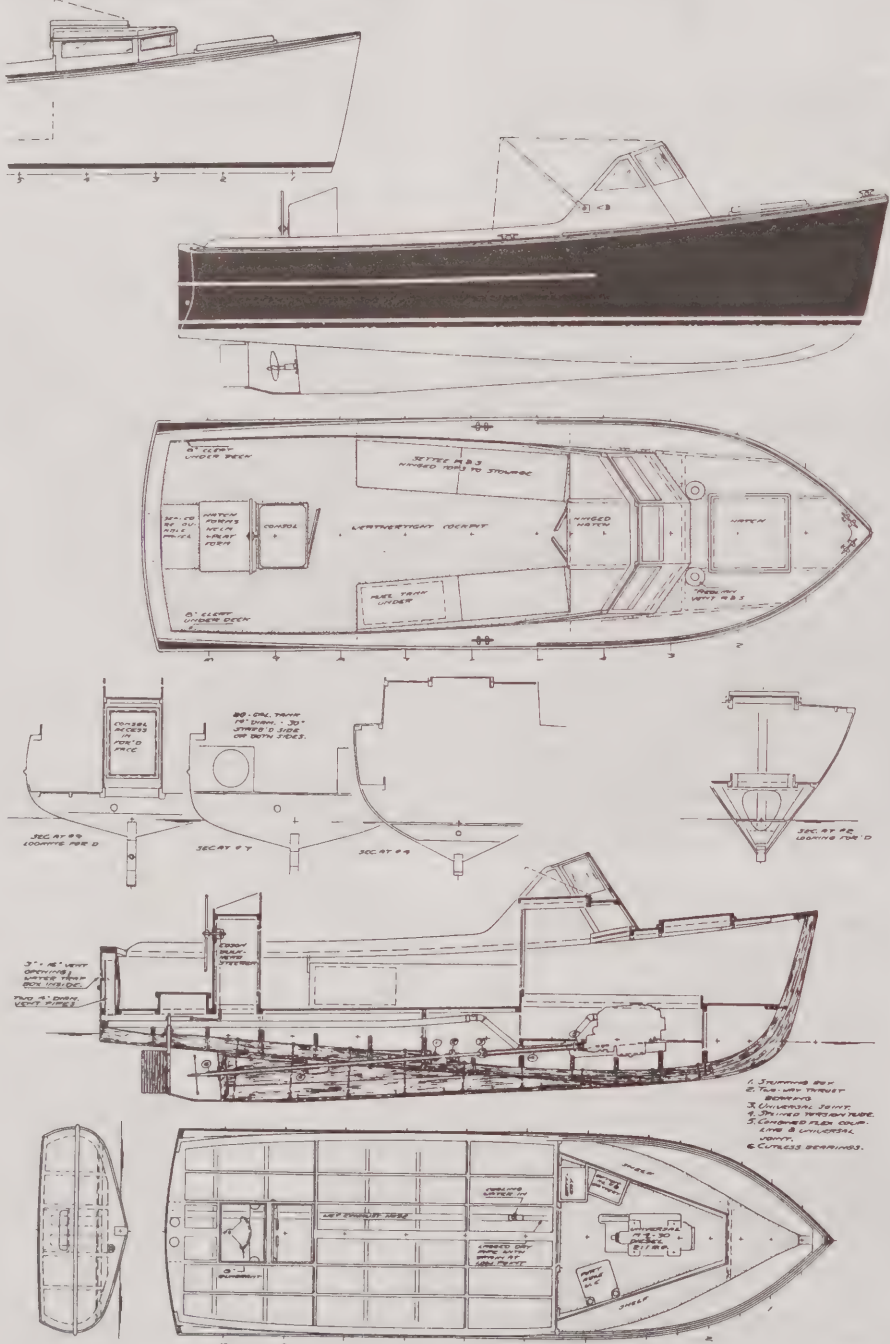
The big smooth-rimmed wheel placed far aft was to allow controlling the boat while shifting the rod around the stern from one side to the other. A tiller directly on the rudder stock would have been a lot simpler, but is not nearly as good as the wheel to hang on to in a pitching and rolling boat, and incidentally is kinder to the ribs if you fall on it. Unlike those of many currently fashionable production types, this self-draining cockpit is placed high enough to give her a big reserve of buoyancy before she could flood through her scuppers. After all, the reliable freeboard of any boat with a scuppered cockpit is to the level of the cockpit, not to the rail!

Various cabin configurations with inside soles low on top of the floor timbers would offer two-some cruising with inboard diesel-power.

She was designed to be built with conventional glued and edge-nailed strip construction, but the hull was finally built of C/Flex fiberglass by Suites Fiberglass Designs Inc. of New Orleans, LA, and finished off by her owner's crew. As happens all too often though, we never got performance data or photos of her.

Plans are available for \$200.00 to build one boat; four 17"x 22" sheets suitable for experienced builders, from Phil Bolger & Friends, Inc., 66 Atlantic Street, Gloucester, MA 01930-1627. Fax (978) 282-1349.

ALTERNATE TRUNK - DECK REAR UNCHANGED



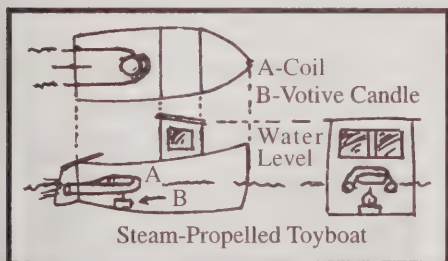
Dream Boats: Human Generated Electric Power?

By Richard Carsen

The boat I show here I think of as a possible low powered cruiser, the power provided being human-produced electricity. This time the electricity is not produced by leg/pedal, but by the entire body, including the leg-muscles. This is done by converting a rowing machine, such as is found in fitness centers, which measures your output and even predicts the time you will need to cover a certain distance, with its heavy, fast rotating fly-wheel, into a drive for a generator. If you adopt the "impeller"(jerk) method I discussed earlier in an article on ancient rowing, you can produce four impulses in one stroke: The first one with the legs (sliding seat) and two, three and four with body and arms as you go thru the complete stroke. You can make that fly-wheel fly. I know, I did it.

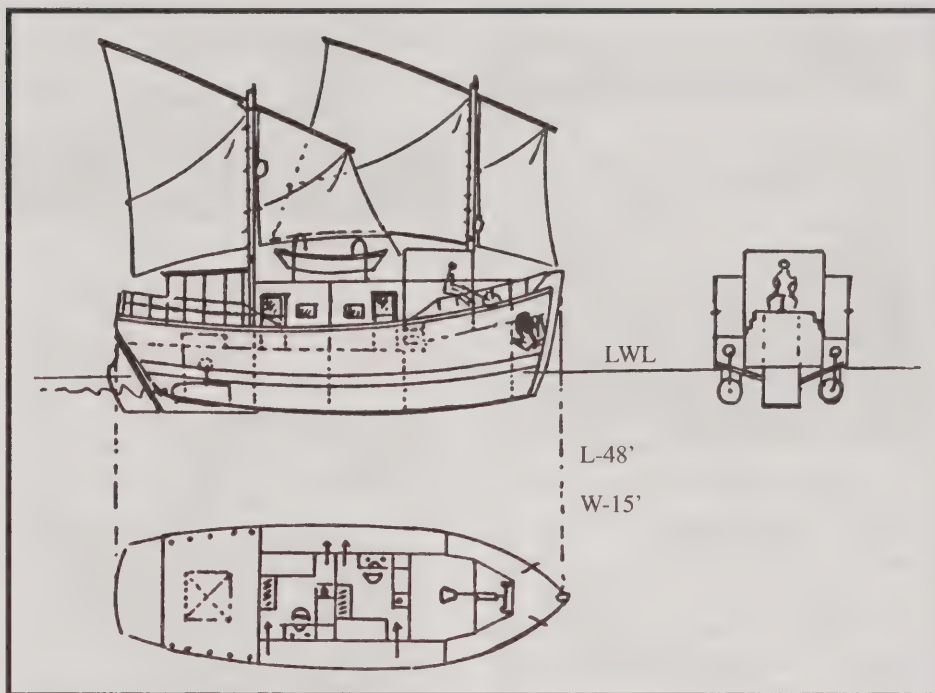
In this concept you will find the skipper located forward on the bridge rowing, but facing forward, pulling his machine. The electricity could be used to drive two electric motors (thru batteries and regulators) which drive two props. But if the electricity can be converted into heat, there is another possibility, heat generated jet-propulsion.

To explain this, let me tell you about a toy we had in our childhood, a small, steam-propelled boat. Basically it was based on the same principle as the Siemens-Schuckert steam engine that drives many European ships because of its high efficiency and low volume. It has no boiler, steam is produced and overheated in coils without the use of a boiler.



The system shown here in the toy-boat has the disadvantage that jetstream expulsion and intake of water, takes place thru the same openings. The model boat moved in a stuttering, sputtering way because of this; but it moved! The hull was made from metal. This sputtering can easily be avoided by providing an intake with a non-return valve. In fact, you would be creating a jet-engine, but using steam instead an expansion of burned petroleum gas. Of course, when human-powered propulsion is not the point, one could use propane for heating the coil, which might be more heat efficient.

The auxiliary sails are for those who understand sail propulsion (who are few and far between). The split-lug shown has great advantages, not the least of which is the ability to instantly take-away sail because of the ability to brail. All brail lines can be led to the wheel-house. Because of the nav lights, the aft part



of the split lug is laced to a secondary mast which used to be called a snow-mast, don't ask me why.

Two deck cabins are shown but could be replaced by a galley and lounge; there is head-

room below standing in the box-keel, the idea of which is, of course, based on Phil Bolger's lifelong experimentation. The aft deck has a canopy and a ship-to-shore boat is shown on the upper deck.

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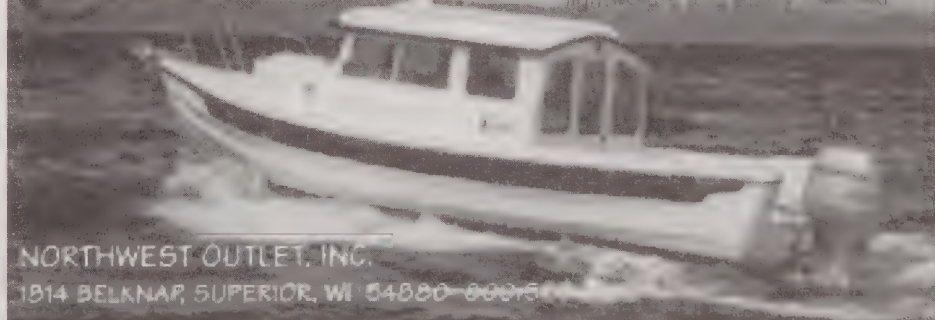
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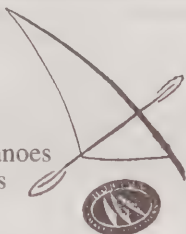
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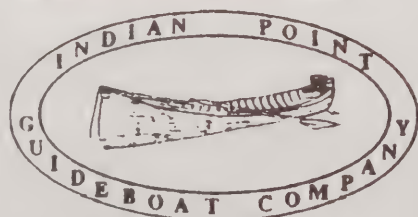
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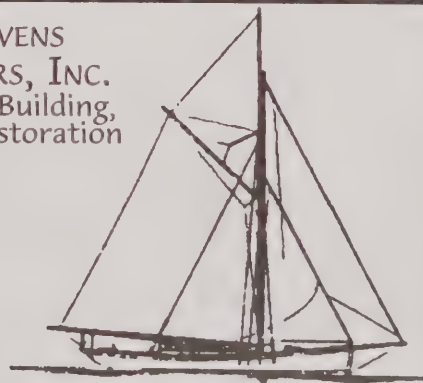
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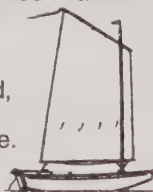
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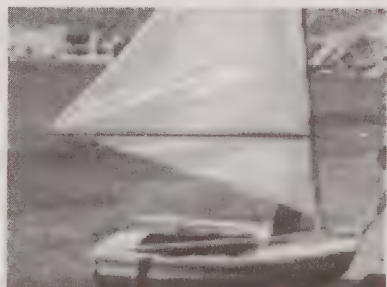
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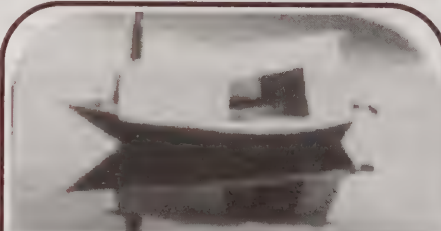
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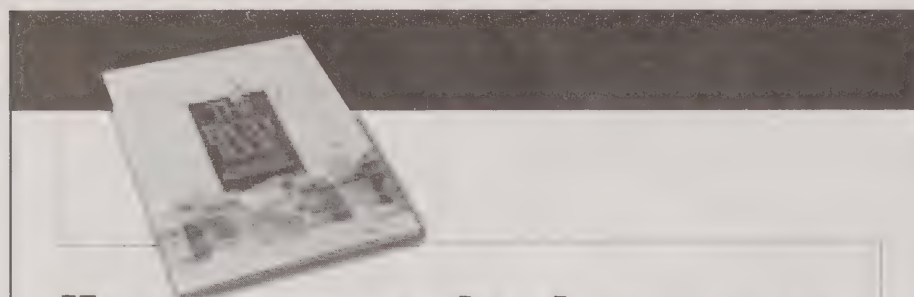
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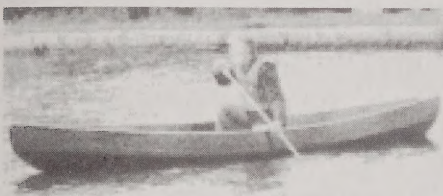
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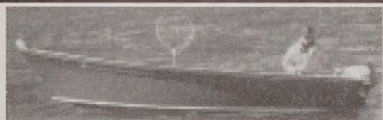
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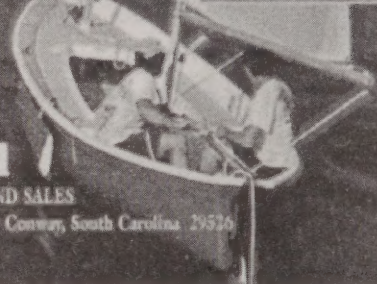
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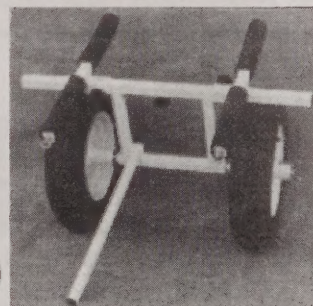
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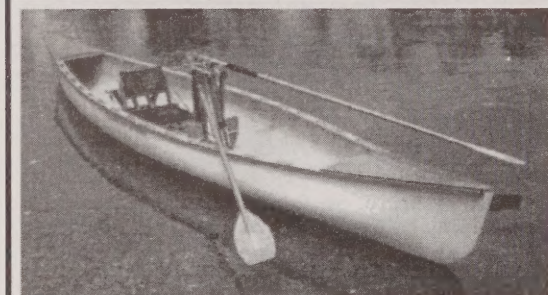
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