

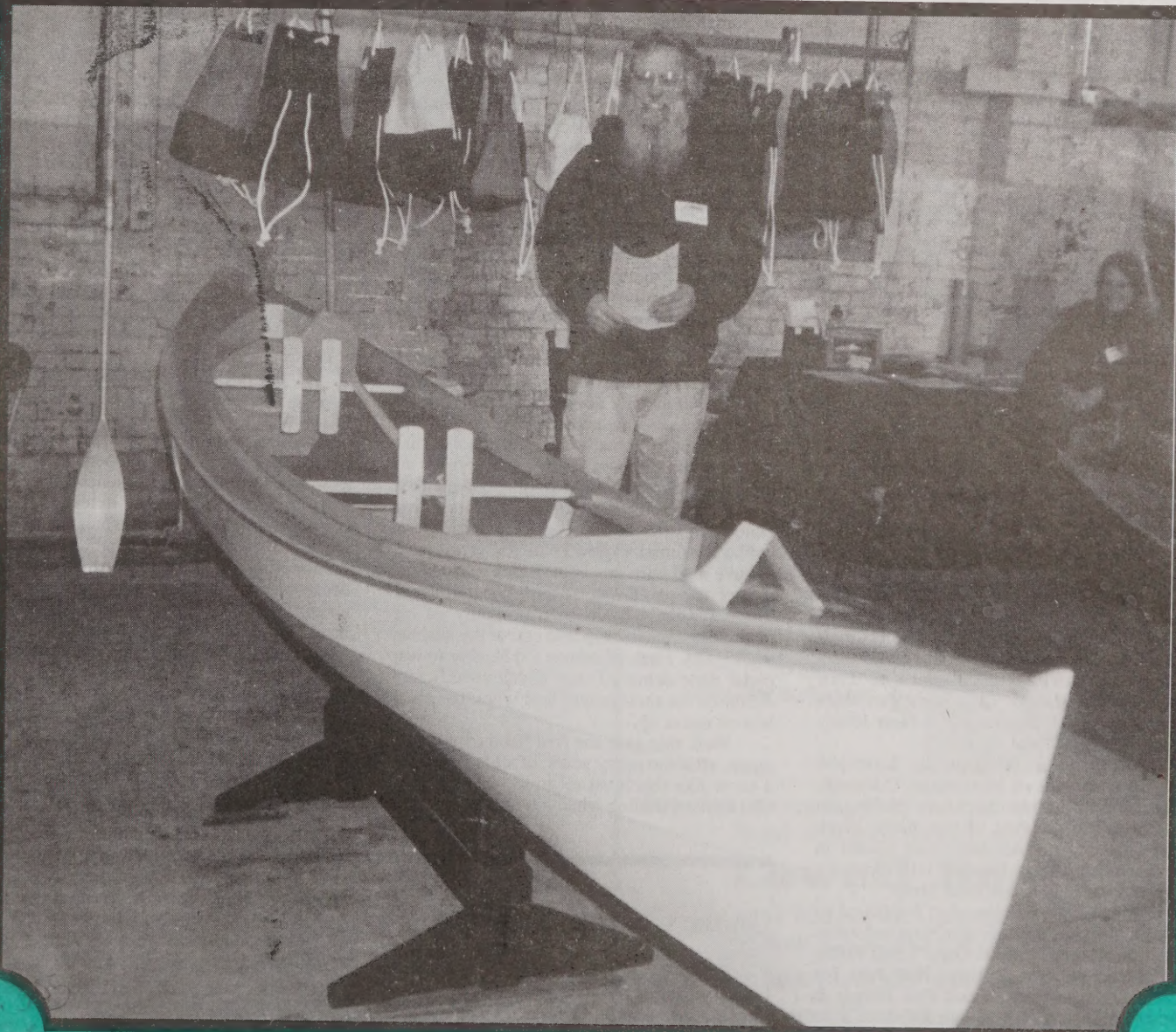


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messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 18 - Number 1

May 15, 2000



Special Features This Issue

"Maine Boat Builders' Show"
"Battle for the Waves...1958" - "Canoe Poling"

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messing about in BOATS

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May 15, 2000



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Looking Ahead...

Jim Munsie tells about "150 Years of the Springfield Yacht & Canoe Club"; Eric Russell covers the "Launching of the *Amistad*"; and John Marotzke reveals what happens "When Potters Gather".

Johnny Robinson recalls "My Summer as a Deckhand"; Bob Reddington offers Part 1 of "When *DoMe* Sailed to the Catboat Meeting"; Reinhard Zollitsch concludes his "Paddling 'Round the Gaspé Peninsula"; Nathaniel Bishop continues on with Chapter 8 of "Four Months in a Sneakbox"; and Steve Turi nears the end of his "Adventures of a New Jersey Boat Nut" in Part 18.

Larry Ruttman brings us an "Interview with Leon Pezzack of Mousehole, Cornwall, England"; Bill Mantis discusses "Sailing on the Cheap" in the first of two parts; Mark Steele reports on "An American Model in Auckland"; and Steve Bussiere tells us what's happening at "The Little Boat Shop".

Robb White reveals what happened to "The Old J80 Johnson"; Foster Nostrand wants to tell us all that "I Made Oars!"; Jeff Potter announces "Canoe Poling: Not Just for Downeasters Anymore"; and Phil Bolger & Friends introduce their "Nymph Cubed".

Commentary...



Bob Hicks, Editor

Another Maine Boat Builders' Show has come and gone, opening up the new boating season for many of us here in New England. This early bird look at so many small boats and the plethora of related boating gear that now jams the show is the shot in the arm some of us need to get moving on whatever we have in mind to do this year afloat.

We participate in only two boat shows annually, this one and the WoodenBoat Show. It's business, for at these shows we can reach potential new readers as well as greet old, and see gathered in one place what the boatbuilders are building and the designers are offering in the way of plans and kits. Our motives are not those of most who attend these shows, obviously. It is my observation that the majority attend as a recreational experience, basking in the sea of boats that they find attractive. A smaller portion is there with specific intent upon buying a new boat, or some plans, or a kit, or needed new gear.

I haven't been looking for anything for my own boating for several years now, but this year my personal interest was lit up when I came to the Ozone Watercraft display featuring a pedal powered propellor drive unit that could drop into most small boats, or be acquired built into a sleek sea kayak hull ready to go. The four young men who own this company had obviously done their homework on design, and meeting someone offering a boat with a propulsion method that is just like that on my favored recumbent bicycle formed an immediate bond of understanding between us.

So at this moment this roving journalist/editor/publisher became another excited potential consumer. I knew I was gonna just have to have a go with this boat. Being a backyard seat of the pants sort of designer-builder of things I want, I figured I'd probably go for one of the units to drop into one of my surplus sea kayaks. First, of course I'd be able to test pedal their demo 17' sea kayak specifically designed for their power unit when the local waters warm up.

Well, this gave me first hand experience again, after too many years, of what attending a show like this must mean to many of you. The thrill of finding what you may be looking

for, and the allure of the possibilities it promises for the coming season. When you are in the business and there to sell it's not like that at all. The pleasures are not just selling, in our case, sample magazines or subscriptions, but in meeting many of you who already are subscriber/readers. Our own boating activity was already all set, I thought. Now, suddenly and unexpectedly something new was beckoning. Sure dispels the yawns from more of the same old same old.

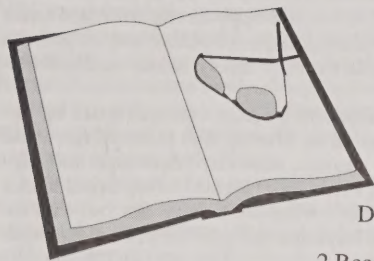
When Phin and Joanna Sprague offered their first Maine Boatbuilders' Show in 1989, *Messing About in Boats* was finishing up its sixth year, we'd published about 140 issues and were still struggling to get our financial heads above water. This show was a wonder, we fell in love with it, just our sort of show. We'd already done the earlier Wooden Boat Shows in Newport (unaffiliated with *WoodenBoat* magazine at that time) and watched them fade away from lack of wooden boat builder support. With the Sprague's new pre-season show in March we had a show that was priced right for the resources of the small boat builder, and the support the Spragues received in that first year from, as I recall, about a dozen local boatbuilders, was encouraging at the time.

Had I not chosen to launch this magazine back in May of 1983, 17 years ago as of this issue, I don't know to what or where my blossoming interest in small boats would have led me. Everything that happens in one's life as the years roll by is influenced by what is ongoing, so one's course determines what comes next. My attention span seems to be respectably longish, I'd stayed with motorcycling for 33 years after all, but again because I got into it for a living with my magazines. So my 25 years of messing about in boats, including the last 17 doing this magazine, seems to be continuing this trend in my life.

Now when the possibility of waning interest might be ahead, given all the accumulated years, and with a new personal enthusiasm growing in bicycling, I happen across something that will perhaps merge these dominating interests in my life today. How nice.

On the Cover...

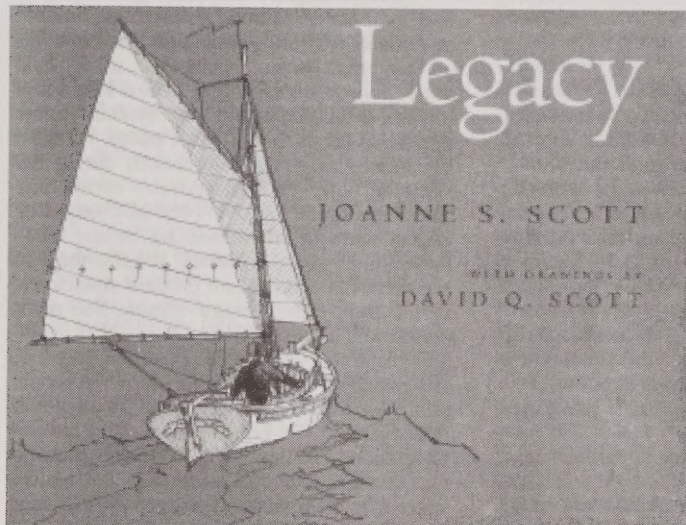
Harry Bryan and the new two place version of his Fiddlehead double paddle canoe was typical of the small boat builders who displayed their work at the 12th Maine Boat Builders' Show in mid-March. Our usual coverage is featured in this issue.



Review

Legacy

By Joanne S. Scott
 Drawings by David Q. Scott
 \$30, Nimbus Press,
 2 Reed Ct., Chestertown, MD 21620



Reviewed by Bob Hicks

A bit over a year ago we began publishing, more or less regularly, the poetry of Joanne S. Scott, poetry focussed on a lifetime of boating shared with her husband David, who died in a plane crash in the late 1970s. Joanne's poetry was strongly evocative of their shared experiences with the many, many wooden boats they came to own and love. And David's pen and ink drawings perfectly complemented Joanne's writing.

Now Joanne has gathered together 21 of her poems in a superb portfolio format book, illustrated with 25 of David's drawings (most of which did not appear in our series). While the content, Joanne's poems and David's drawings, is the point, the package, 9"x11" portfolio format on heavy quality Mohawk Superfine stock with wraparound cover with large fold-in flaps, is a thing of beauty in itself for anyone who loves good books.

Roger C. Taylor has written the foreword for Joanne and he captures the essence of this remarkable book better than I could articulate it, so I am going to print his comments herewith:

"Last summer, I sat in Joanne Scott's studio on Monhegan Island, chatting and admiring paintings she had done. My favorite showed me a big breaker thundering in on the rocks. I could sense the wave's awesome power and swift approach, hear its roar, fear its height, anticipate the shudder of the island itself. 'I've been writing poetry,' Joanne said. 'About our boats. About David.' Would I read them, make sure she got the boat stuff right? Of course.

A week later, I opened a brown, Manila envelope, pulled out some white sheets, and soon found myself nodding-and-smiling and crying in turn. Joanne's poems paint pictures of herself and David, of their boats and their life around the water that, for me, are every bit as charged with emotion as are the products of her brush and easel. Whether Joanne takes me to the creeks of the Chesapeake Bay or to the islands of Maine, she lets me experience the water and the boats fully, but most of all she lets me feel the dynamics of two people living adventures together. Moreover, I believe that Joanne gets at the Truth in these poems. Just as the boats in the Scott fleet were honest craft, so Joanne's poems paint an honest picture of the life she shared with David.

Recently, another envelope brought layouts of this book's pages with Joanne's poems illustrated by David's pen-and-ink drawings. Seeing his sketches next to Joanne's poems made me remember the harmony of their life together, how the edges of their lives met in strong boundaries that allowed plenty of mutual support.

Joanne's poems are about David's legacy, not just the legacy of a fleet of old, wooden boats, but also the legacy of a life well lived and a

life well shared. She speaks now for both of them, in a beautiful true voice. I picture David reading these poems. I can see his eyes sparkle, sense his mirth and his sadness, feel his love of life.

Roger C. Taylor"

The title poem, "Legacy" concludes this remarkable effort, and it seems somehow fitting to conclude this review in similar fashion:

"Legacy"

We had seventeen boats
 When he died:
Medusa, German ketch, 1946, 43 feet
Roaring Bessie, Block Island Cowhorn, 1911, 34 feet
Sparkle, Sound Interclub, 1925, 28 feet
Hope, a classic Chesapeake deadrise, 26 feet
Chic, gaff-topsail sloop, circa 1890, 13 feet
Absolutely, Bahamian dinghy
 A pulling boat
 Swampscott dory
 International 14
 Rhodes 19
 Kayak
 Sunfish
 And assorted other wooden craft.
 Seventeen bags of sails in the loft.
 A boat shop filled with rudders, fittings, line, nails, paint.

I sold some boats, donated others,
 Gave away, burned,
 Until they were gone.
 The sails went to a broker.
 The shop remained.
 I wanted to use it
 As a studio for my painting,
 But my son said it was
 Perfect as it was, filled
 With all that gear.

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Add a touch of class to your classic boat (or home) with a chrome or brass finish fire extinguisher. An attractive and durable coating withstands the marine environment. ABC type, UL listed and USCG approved for marine use.

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\$65.50 ea.

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You write to us about...

Activities & Events...

Midwest Potter Sailing

A group of West Wight Potter sailors who have gathered over the past two years at the Muncie Sailing Club, Prairie Creek Lake near Muncie, Indiana, will return again this year on May 19-21. 54 Potter owners in a nine state area have indicated an interest in joining this year's gathering.

For details contact: John Marotzke, 950 Hummer Lake Rd, Ortonville, MI 48462, (888) 305-7154, Mid-West Potter Group, <http://www.marot.net/MidWest%20Potters.html>

On June 17-18 John Ulmer is organizing the 1st Annual Lake Erie Messabout on Sanduskey Bay, Ohio, near the Lake Erie islands at the western end of Lake Erie about 70 miles west of Cleveland and 30 miles east of Toledo. Sailing will be in very sheltered waters with potential of sailing out to the islands about five miles offshore.

For details contact John Ulmer, 659 S. Canal St., Box 4104, Canal Fulton, OH 44614, <J.ULMER@JUNO.COM>

Hidden Pond Paddlers

Since 1988 a small group of paddlers have met at a local park every week to talk, picnic, paddle and talk some more. Anyone in the Rochester, NY area with a passion for small boats, especially canoes, wishing to know more, or to join us, should call me.

I am also seeking folks with an interest in recreational or open water rowing. Last year I converted a tandem canoe into a rowing boat which worked great. I want to share what I've learned as well as needing to learn more about sportsmanship.

Steven Tolle, 247 Wimbledon Rd., Rochester, NY 14617, (716) 266-6736

Come Paddle with Country Canoeist

Country Canoeist's paddling workshops combine fun and exploration with safety and instruction. This year we are pleased to offer a full and varied schedule.

Introduction to Sea Kayaking classes are taught "on Golden Pond" beautiful Squam Lake, New Hampshire.

Intermediate Sea Kayaking classes are held in a variety of locations depending on weather conditions.

Quiet Water Solo and Tandem Canoeing classes will be held on area ponds for approximately 2 hours in the evenings.

FreeStyle Paddling Workshop teaches you how to make your canoe dance on the water!

Demo Day on June 7th at Elm Brook Park in Hopkinton, NH can help you decide which boat is best for you, an opportunity to paddle lots of canoes and kayaks, talk to the manufacturers' reps and find some great deals!

This year we are offering some FREE Saturday morning mini-seminars and discussions on a variety of paddling related subjects.

Bill & Ann Zeller, Country Canoeist, 1005 School St. Dunbarton, NH 03045, www.cookeee.com/canoe

Sail Newport 2000

Our 2000 *Sailing Calendar Newport & Narragansett Bay* lists 40 events for the coming summer, May through October. If you are interested send a #10 (legal size) SASE for a copy.

Sail Newport, 60 Fort Adams Dr., Newport, RI 02840

Quiet Water Symposium

The Quiet Water Symposium at Michigan State University was a wonderful show! I wish I had just walked around the photographed every booth. I bet it holds its own with your fancy east coast shows. It's the 7th annual, I believe. I'd say there were 75 exhibits of small craft and 8 presentations. Lots of nice looking items and easy-build kits plus plenty of innovation on display. Also lots of historic and topical booths for various associations and water causes. I estimate that 1,000 attended at \$5 per. It seems like the show is put on by a few main volunteers and a couple small area shops and the Boy Scouts.

There were two folding kayak displays; voyageur and dragonboat displays; a restoration of a larger Great Lakes early days furtrapper-missionary vessel; MSU's super metalflake concrete racing canoe, built by the civil engineering kids; and a 100lb sail-cat made of blue foamboard and fiberglass and a supersize windsurfer rig. One of the many unique aspects of this DIY boat was the airslots directing wind under the hulls as you sail, making planing start at lower speeds and reducing friction overall. There was also a nice AuSable guideboat, Michigan style, not New York, of course.

A river expedition booth fit closely with an ongoing history research project. Jim Woodruff showed how he's compiling and researching Michigan river history, much of it for the first time ever. He seems to have improved the historians' theories about how LaSalle walked across Michigan. He had lots of old maps of early routes around our watery state.

He showed big notebooks of details about his latest project, writing the bio and social history of the Grand River, our biggest, and pegging the "stream" of historical notes to a map of the river as it is today. The Grand River 2000 Expedition is going to paddle from the headwaters to Lake Michigan this summer for 14 days. The plan is for a flotilla of about 50 paddlers to paddle about 20 miles a day, followed by a road crew which will set up camp and a daily river show for the public. The paddlers will do research the whole way and follow Woodruff's historic guidenotes as they go. This guidebook will be made available to the public as well, as the first and biggest history of the Grand River.

I had a nonstop video running at my display showing the high-performance canoe poling that I've been developing on our flatwater (see article in this issue). It was a popular attraction all day. I'd just made it a few days before when we got our lucky warm spell. Too bad the water was kind of flooding and my poling was rusty. I shoulda looked

better. Even so, viewers never got to see me swim. See, we use tippy kevlar solo race boats here in Michigan for our poling and we go both up and down very nicely in our shallow waters.

I also had a canoe and sailrig set up behind my table. The rig was made of firewood 2'x4's, clamps, blue tarp, duct tape and saplings. It works fine! I heard a Boy Scout leader say, "That's what we'll have our boys do instead of buying a sail rig!" so I'm content with that display.

The Michigan Canoe Racing Association had a variety of carbon fiber flatwater racing pro-boats on display, with their cool batwings and supernarrow highspeed vibe, all covered with sponsor stickers. This seems like a real big part of Michigan paddling, probably more important for us than in other states. We have big money races most weekends during the summer, with world class fields competing. These guys race big rivers and also tiny little creeks with the most twisting bends, all in these long rudderless boats. What a thrill to see them blast along and do their maneuvering! I think they average 10mph. The races are usually about 2-3 hours long.

To give a wonderful nod to the state history in this sport, the AuSable Marathon people published a book a few years ago for their 50th Anniversary race. What a wonderful, rare historic document this is! It's fully of amazing race stories and photos going back through 50 years of superstuds and dude-ettes. All race records and times are included. It's a great slice of Michigania? Unfortunately, they only printed a few copies. It seems like a sporting tradition that's equally admirable to the college sports. I really enjoyed reading about all the father-son teams and the old guys who still kick butt.

But I guess our paddlers are a quiet breed. They do their thing mostly out of the limelight. But maybe that's only in terms of downstate limelight. I think the AuSable Marathon is the biggest northwoods event, drawing about 200,000 spectators to party hearty and watch the racers go under all those remote bridges as they vie for \$50,000 throughout that long summer night on the last Saturday of every July.

Jeff Potter, Meridian, MI

Opinions...

True Trans-America Voyage by Amphibian?

Past and present accounts of "voyaging" across America open up new vistas, including validity of a literal "boat" separate from its land transporter. It is interesting to research out capabilities of an amphibious vehicle capable of dealing with water and land elements and problems along the way.

In existence are a few WWII-derived amphibians with conversions of small VWs and gigantic DUKWs still used around the world. The DUKW would require immense mechanical abilities to keep running plus constant scrounging around incessantly for spare, surplus parts.

A questionable vehicle is the historic VW Beetle which will float quite readily on its chassis-pan providing some mastic is applied over a few thru-body places. Occasionally, wacko outings occur using bolt-on

paddle-wheels for propulsion. A real minimal VW-amphib might be to remove two cylinders for economy running, and eliminating the passengers seat for a lie-down berth. VW Beetle chassis are not easily converted for towing, but possibly some very lightweight trailer might constitute a flotation barge plus extra pontoons or boat end shapes.

In past years a few scow hulls have been converted, with autos using the cars' drive wheels for propelling. Remarkably simple with accompanying inefficiencies. It remains to be seen how the 4WD off-road vehicles might be converted by removing one drive shaft from the transfer case to make a propeller shaft.

The original lightweight VW van "Kombi" has more houseboat proportions with adequate freeboard beneath its windows. It also has 3:1 reduction rear axles for hauling out purposes. Any aspirants for "firsts" or record-making might research Australian Ben Carlin's amphibious jeep crossing of the Atlantic, including towing of gasoline tankage. As I recall, Carlin observed that amphibious jeeps could be mass produced with an eager public awaiting the output for myriad ocean crossings. History has failed to bear this out....

The boat enthusiast populations is well sprinkled with able auto mechanics and vice versa. All things considered, small amphibians could emerge with most affordable and interesting results.

Norm Benedict, Santa maria, CA

Are We Saving Money Yet By Building Our Own Boats?

Motorboating & Sailing's new directory of power boats is very interesting. If you add up the numbers, it looks like this for 1,400 boats from 20' to 90'. Figures are averages for the list:

LOA 54'

Price \$1,075,000

Displacement 50,600lbs

Cost/Foot \$19,900

Cost/Pound \$21.25

Jim Betts, Pt. Pleasant Beach, NJ

Best Tacks & Assymetric Hulls

In a recent issue there was an account of a boat doing best on a port tack with its centerboard case offset. This interested me because in a course I am taking in meteorology at the Academy of Lifelong Learning, Alan Watts' (who is a meteorologist) book, *Wind & Sailing Boats*, states that boats do better on a starboard tack going to windward in gusts in the northern hemisphere and the reverse is true for the southern hemisphere, a coriolis effect of the earth's rotation.

In the first case it wasn't clear to me which side of the boat the centerboard case was offset on, in the other the implication was clear enough that America's Cup boats would likely have to be built for one hemisphere or the other and sailor's habits modified.

A book I read about caboats mentioned one which had an assymetrical hull, and I suspect this same deliberate assymetry was put into Baltimore Clippers, one a race secret, the other for use in illegal trade.

All we really need are small boats that sail well in gusty winds and choppy waters.

Jim Hodges, Wilmington, DE.

Disappointing Evinrude

I've been watching for some time to see what kind of answers the American outboard motor manufacturers come up with to meet the new anti-pollution requirements, whether two-cycle engines can be "cleaned up" or four cycle engines would be developed. Robb White's article in the April 1st issue gives us one skilled observer's observations based on experience and the prognosis looks pretty grim to me.

While the engine apparently ran fine and provided excellent fuel economy, some components failed; components that are by no means new developments. The recoil starter caught the starter rope, jerked the rope so forcefully that the handle was pulled off and projected some distance while at the same time causing injury to the user's (Robb's) hand. In addition, two ignition kill switches have failed in service and had to be replaced. Finally, as I understand it, it is Robb's perception that the anti-corrosive coating on the lower unit is less effective than his earlier experience. Apparently the reaction of an Evinrude representative to the recoil starter problem was the familiar, "We've never had a report of that type of failure before."

I find this very disappointing news. I had one of the Evinrude 6hp twins which gave excellent service for a long time and I wonder if Evinrude may have lost their focus. Robb evidently believes that a Honda or a Yamaha would be more reliable than the new Evinrude and from his reported experience I believe he is right.

Garry Osborn, Stamford, CT

Useful Information...

CWB Has Historic Boat Plans

A number of plans for famed designer Ted Geary's sailing models, plus one set for a full size boat, are now available from the Center for Wooden Boats, thanks to the efforts of the *Pirate* Restoration Committee. *Pirate*, an R-Boat built in 1926 at Lake Union Dry Dock Co. in Seattle, was donated to CWB last fall and is being restored through the efforts of a dedicated bunch of R-Boat enthusiasts, led by Scott Rohrer. The sale of the model boat plans is just one way that money is being raised for the restoration. Plans available are:

Pirate Pond Boat: A single sheet plan for building this 39" scale sailing model designed in 1927. Construction is simple bread-and-butter method. Plan includes construction sections, rigging plan and sail plan. Templates for lifts and profile full-scale. \$50.

Olympia: An inch-to-a-foot model of a Six Metre yacht, 36" long, designed at Geary's Los Angeles office in 1932 to commemorate the Olympic games being held in L.A. that year. The Six Metres and Eight Metres were the two big keel boat classes at the Games. Bread-and-butter construction, full scale lifts and profile. Very good print with helpful rigging details. \$20.

Class C Model Yacht: Designed by Geary in 1922, this monster is 72" long! No sail plan on drawing but a total sail area of 2200sq is calculated. Graceful sheerline and lovely long overhangs. This boat resembles Geary's controversial racer, *Spirit II*. Full-scale drawing. \$30.

S/V Pirate Plans. Beautiful, sharp prints scanned from two original ink-on-linen drawings for the 39' R-Boat *Pirate*. The sail plan (1/2"=1') includes the original rigging plan and outboard profile of this famous racer. The construction drawing (1"=1') shows profile and plan views as well as deck plan. Two drawing set. \$50

The Center for Wooden Boats, 1010 Valley St., Seattle, WA 98109-4468, (206) 382-2628, <Shavings@cweb.org>, www.cwb.org

Adventures & Experiences...

Still Enjoying Sailing

At 79 going on 80 I still enjoy sailing, rowing, sculling and at times even cruising on my 18' canoe yawl Nord Vinden #1, built by William Clement's able hands and refined in detail by me.

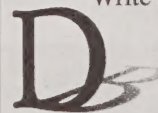
Harry Broady, Monroe, WA



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Phin and Joanna Sprague sold out all the space at their 12th Annual Maine Boatbuilders' Show in Portland, Maine, mid-March, leaving last minute wannabees awaiting possible cancellations so that they might get in. The crowds were there Saturday and Sunday, but Friday was a bit quieter than usual with a serious snow/sleet/wind storm blanketing eastern New England. Our booth was empty on Friday, we stayed home to look after the greenhouse, a power outage with nobody around to fire up the generator would have killed thousands of tiny seedlings just getting underway.

All those who stopped by to talk with us on Saturday and Sunday displayed the enthusiasm for the show that we've come to expect, golly you do really like being there. We do too, but after twelve years it's harder to reach those highs. The been there, done that thing creeps in. The driving motivation for us is still

Maine Boatbuilders' Show 2000

By Bob Hicks

the opportunity to meet so many of you in person, and to view in one place what small boat builders are doing.

This latter aspect is the one from which I distill this report for all of you who did not attend. Amongst over 250 exhibitors of boats and related gear and services I find what I want to bring you, and I guess those of you familiar with how this turns out from bygone such reports over 12 years notice that I favor those builders who I know and who know me and do business with me. They pretty much represent what you'll find at the show, had I cho-

sen others the resulting impression would not have changed much.

Each year a few of you remark to me that the show seems to be becoming more "commercial". There are more suppliers of all the myriad maritime gear and services exhibiting. There are more builders of larger (still relatively small however) powerboats and yachts. There are more boatyards and marinas. But still this is the one place where you'll see more small boats and their builders than anywhere else we know of. It sure isn't even close to becoming a tedious consumer boating show with all the glitter and huckstering.

So here's my set of cameos from this year's Maine Boatbuilders' Show. If you were there with your small boat(s) exhibited and are not included here, let me know what you have, I'll maybe do a follow up if there's any significant response.



Michael Severance (at right) was more than happy to talk about his Kittery Point tender as the orders came rolling in.



Barbara and Michael Porter assess reactions to Michael's tour de force steamboat design/project, *Quiet Presence*.

Taking Firm Orders

As the crowds thinned out mid-afternoon on Sunday, I found Michael Severance of Bay of Maine Boats quite euphoric about the show. "We've taken firm orders for six of our boats this year," Michael told me, "with many, many more expressing interest." Well, not just hope for the future, but firm orders in hand. Michael had an expanded exhibit space this year to better display his fiberglass Kittery Point Tender and Piscataqua Wherry. In the exhibit next to him was a lovely traditional wooden skiff, and Michael pointed it out, "I love that sort of boat, but what I'm doing is more affordable for most," by way of rationalizing his show success. Not because his product is cheaply made either, the Bay of Maine boats are top quality work. Bay of Maine Boats, P.O. Box 631, Kennebunkport, ME 04046.

On to Design

At the other end of the size/cost range we found another Michael, Michael Porter, with the steamboat *Quiet Presence* that he had spent close to a dozen years designing and building for Dodge Morgan. Michael wasn't taking orders for the steamboat, but rather using it as an example of the sort of marine design work he is now concentrating upon. No more building, says Michael. *Quiet Presence* was a tour de force in design for Michael, starting with that "clean sheet of paper" Michael designed the entire boat and all its systems. And then he built it. Hence close to a dozen years, working alone. Michael Porter, 573A Soule Rd., Chebeague Island, ME 04017.

Hey, Pedal Power!

Looking for that “new angle” on a show report, I found it at the Ozone Watercraft display with the Schadler brothers of Gilsum, NH and their partner Casey Pratt from Rockland, Maine. They had novel looking sea kayak fitted out with, you guessed it, a pedal powered propellor. If you’ve read my recent commentaries about my growing obsession with pedal power for small boats you can imagine the surge of enthusiasm that I experienced when I ran across this. These four young men have done their homework on pedal power, and have developed a slickly engineered pedal power drive unit which can drop into most small rowing or paddling boats, albeit with a slot cut into the bottom first to accept their unit.

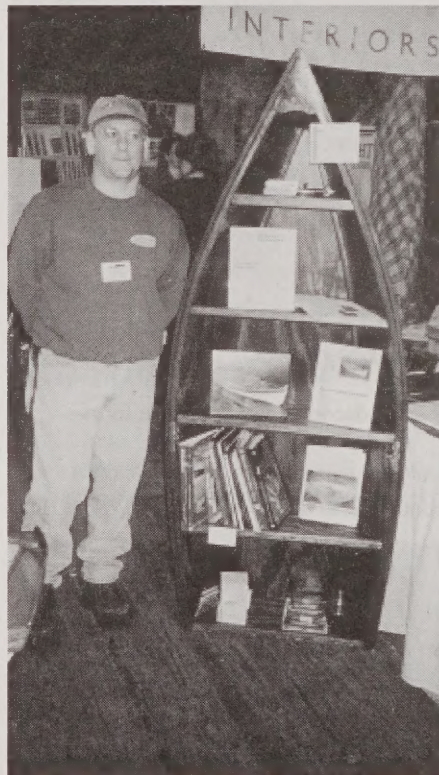
They also designed a 17’ sea kayak equipped with their pedal drive unit. The kayak sports a significant amount of “hogging” along its keel line. Not a molding mistake, it is intentional, Tom Schadler explained to me that they wanted the long waterline for maximum hull speed. I recalled, for their entertainment, that old story about hogged old schooners picking up speed over the years the more they hogged. We’ll have more on this boat as soon as we get out on the water with it later this spring. Ozone Watercraft, HCR 32 Box 52, Gilsum, NH 03448.



Youthful entrepreneurs and innovators Casey Pratt and the Schadler brothers, Mitchell and Arn, with their drop-in pedal power unit set on a tank of water for test pedalling. It sure churned up a lotta water in the tank when some test pedallers went at it.

You Came All the Way From Where?

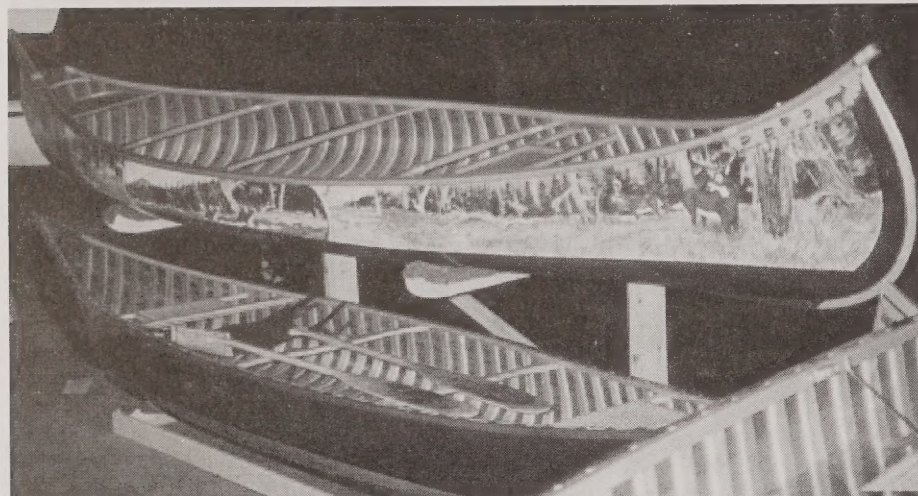
From Appleton, Wisconsin in this case. Bill Ryno brought his nicely done glued lapstrake sliding seat Annapolis Wherry, along with his Flattie Bookshelf. Yep, bookshelf. We know of the old canoes that end up cut in half and turned into bookshelves, we’ve even seen old college racing shells so recycled. Bill has carried this notion to the point of offering a manual for building new a flattie bookshelf. It’s a real little skiff actually, built just like a larger version suitable for use on the water. Bill says anyone building his bookshelf will learn what he needs to know to go on to build the real thing. The comprehensively illustrated 24 page manual is offered at \$10. Brightwood Boat Company LLC, 1731 S. Peabody St., Appleton, WI 54915.



Bill Ryno brought his Flattie Bookshelf along from Wisconsin, as long as he was coming anyway to show us all his nice sliding seat Annapolis Wherry.

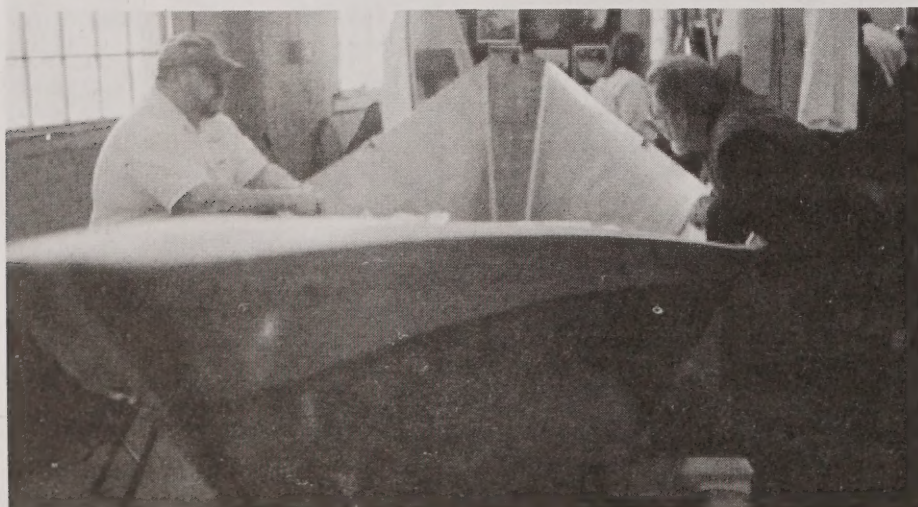


Pert Lowell's son in law Ralph Johnson (middle left) carries on with Pert's Town Class sailboat building, now over 60 years and counting. Looking on by Ralph is veteran small boat builder Dick Shew of South Bristol, Maine.



To beautiful to use? Jerry Stelmok's canoes are now art in decoration as well as in form.

Designer Paul Bennet (left) and prospect study the commodious interior of his new Woods Hole Dory.



The Townie's Still in Town

It's been over 60 years now since Pert Lowell's 16' lapstrake sailboat, originally designed for summer camp fleets in the '30s, acquired its name, "Townie" when it was accepted officially in Marblehead, Massachusetts yachting as the only Town Class boat, but it stubbornly lives on. Pert's gone, but his daughter Joanne has seen to it that his handiwork hasn't disappeared. Her husband, Ralph Johnson, runs the business today in the same old boatshop on the Parker River in Newbury, Massachusetts. Ralph told us he had orders already this year for four of the fiberglass versions, developed by Pert in the '60s in response to the onset of fiberglass boatbuilding. Ralph's also gotten real busy with his mast hoop business in this era of ever more tall ships. The orders just keep on coming, he's the only source today for traditional steamed oak hoops in sizes from dinghies to the *U.S.S. Constitution*. Pert Lowell Co., Lanes End, Newbury, MA 01951.

Art All the Way

The canoe has long been extolled as an art form amongst small boats, its graceful lines developed by aborigines for function also offer visual rewards aesthetically. Highly regarded builder of traditional wood/canvas canoes, Jerry Stelmok, is now embellishing his already artistic creations with graphic art. Jerry displayed one of his limited collector's edition Millennium Sojourner 16' canoes with scenes of the northwoods graphically painted along the topsides. Is this too beautiful to use? I didn't catch up with Jerry to ask. Island Falls Canoe, 220 Stagecoach Rd., Atkinson, ME 04426.

Itsa Big One

Paul Bennett of Shoestring Shipyard isn't one to rest on his laurels. His ongoing pursuit of simplicity and frugality, with designs for home builders entitled "Bootstrap", "Frugal", and (coming in June) "Humble Peasant", suggest a focus on economy and ease. What's happening is growth now, bigger boats. Paul had his really big 18' Woods Hole Dory on display, this is one big dory indeed. When I leaned over the side to look within, it was a long way down. This boat is Paul's response to requests for a simple plywood dory ala Phil Bolger's Gloucester Gull, only bigger. Much bigger it seems. Paul's latest can accept three rowers if desired, with 800lbs of carrying capacity they can take along a lotta gear too. Shoestring Shipyard, P.O. Box 117, Sagamore Beach, MA 02562.

Doubled Up

Harry Bryan listened at last year's show to comments about his Fiddlehead decked canoe and showed up this year with a lengthened version set up for two to paddle. Harry's the guy who brought us that fin powered boat a few years ago, a novelty and effective, but apparently a bit too far ahead of its time for conservative small boaters. For those desiring to share paddling time with another in a wonderfully stable, easy handling boat, Harry's offers a much, drier and more stable choice than your traditional canoe, and just as handy and portable. Bryan Boatbuilding, 329 Mascarene Rd., Letete, NB E5C 2P6, Canada.



Designer/builder Harry Bryan (left) with his new doubled up Fiddlehead double paddle canoe, Harry's response to last year's boatshow suggestions.

Built Like a Plane

Platt Monfort was back this year with a nice display featuring his unique geodesic small boat designs. Platt's designs use tiny wooden stringers, kevlar strands and heat shrink dacron covering to produce boats 8'-16' long that weigh in closely matching their lengths in pounds. Ultralite applies here. Like in ultralight aircraft. I'm always reminded of the model airplane days of my youth when I look at Platt's hulls, but his do carry one across the water nicely. Monfort Associates, 50 Haskell Rd., Westport, ME 04578.



Platt Monfort (at left) is as enthusiastic as ever for his innovative small boat construction concept, even after all these years confronting establishment wisdom on how small boats should be built.

Whazzat, Phin?

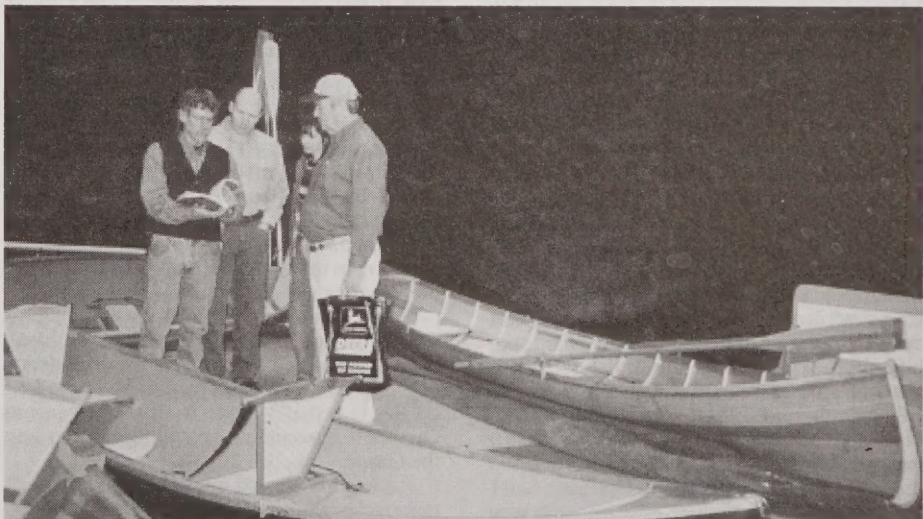
Show organizer/promoter Phin Sprague has a closer look at Ron Rantilla's Front Rower. Ron has soldiered on, and now has his Front-Rower developed to the point where it can be operated by any combination of legs and arms one might happen to still be blessed with, or find functional. Ron continues to face resistance to acceptance of his solution to rowing's one really aggravating aspect, facing backwards. What he has come up with just doesn't fit the establishment wisdom. Aquamotion Systems, 30 Cutler St., Warren, RI 02885.



Lessee now, just how does all this work? Phin Sprague takes a close look at Ron Rantilla's Frontrow forward facing rowing system.

Perseverance Has Prevailed

Steve Kaulback was advertising his beautifully built Adirondack guideboats on our pages way back when we started, at that time the typical starving small boat builder. Well, he persevered and now has established a reputation as the builder of the finest of Adirondack guideboats. With his leading customer Paul Neil out winning everything he enters in rowing racing, Steve can hardly believe that maybe those starvation times are gone. The Adirondack Guideboat, P.O. Box 144, Charlotte, VT 05445.



Steve Kaulback looks up some history on his Adirondack Guideboats for some prospects amidst his handiwork, top of the line wooden construction at right, entry level fiberglass in the foreground.



Laden and ready to resume my voyage at Lévis, Quebec on August 7, 1999

Paddling 'Round The Gaspé Peninsula Part II

By Reinhard Zollitsch

Finals were this morning, tests are corrected, grades made out, the gear is all packed, the boat on the car. Nancy and I are off again to Québec/Lévis. Official start of the trip is early tomorrow morning, August 6, 1999.

This time I had all the charts I could get, large scale, but better than road maps. However there are large stretches of the St. Lawrence for which there were no charts other than detailed charts for the major harbors. Again I was chartless for a total of 130 miles. Enlarged road maps would have to do again, and I would navigate by church steeples again, which are well marked and very visible on prominent landmarks.

The boat felt more sluggish this time. I had crammed food and gear for 25 days into two crates and dry bags, all properly tied down in the boat and six gallons of water. A neat feeling not to have to stop at a supermarket in every port, but be self-contained, just add water.

With my experience at St. Antoine de Tilly still vividly in mind, I tried harder to find overnight spots where I would not be stranded 1/2 mile off shore at low tide and would have to portage in or out the next morning. The first two overnights happened to be in small ports with marinas where I was quietly and unobtrusively tucked away in a low-visibility corner, while still enjoying the deep water and launching ramp.

Berthier sur Mer was very welcome the first afternoon when the wind increased to 20-25, i.e. whitecaps and streamers. I learned that the islands off Berthier, La Grosse Island specifically, were used as the "Ellis Island of Canada", the quarantine islands for newly arriving immigrants. A tourboat takes curious visitors over there, or maybe the grandchildren of the immigrants who were processed there and started a new life in Canada.

With a 4am high tide, which by the way

did not progress its usual 50 minutes each day but stayed there till I got into the open Gulf of St. Lawrence, I got up with the tide and was in my boat at 5:30, just before sunrise. This way I could get my boat in the water without a major portage, could take advantage of the ebb tide and enjoy the relative calm of the early morning. I really began to enjoy this routine, even though it meant I had to pack almost all my gear the night before, including making and packing my lunch PB and jelly sandwich, and forego my morning coffee. Cold cereal with powdered milk was quick and easy and sufficient.

St. Jean de Port Joli, "Happy Harbor", was my second stop, but then extended mud or rather "rock flats" had to be negotiated, at times five miles out into the ever-widening St. Lawrence. Fortunately the weather was half-way OK, because I felt very forlorn four to five miles offshore with nothing but mud and rock to my right. This is not a place to be stranded.

Anse de Sainte Anne, St. Anne Bay, was a massive expanse of shallows where I almost got stuck right in the middle, when I suddenly noticed that the water to my left was also shoaling and running dry. I sprinted to the last open tidal stream and made it out finding myself almost on the opposite shore, so it seemed, but not quite.

Hot and tired from all the sprinting and paddling in the shallows, I stopped behind the breakwater off Orignaux Point, where a friendly fisherman offered me his fishing shack right on the rocks for the night. I was delighted and felt honored by the confidence of the old man, who seemed to be impressed by the fact that I made it all the way from Québec to here and was planning on rounding the Gaspé.

I eagerly carried my gear up to his shack to move in, when I noticed it was locked again.

I figure the old man had watched me unload, then turned to go home, and as he had done for I don't know how many years had automatically clicked the padlock shut, without really noticing it. So it was plan B: I pitched my tent right smack in front of his shack and enjoyed a spectacular sunset.

The next day was one of my hardest and most difficult days. I made good progress, but then the tide ran out again furiously, leaving the entire area from the town of Kamouraska to the string of long islands totally dry. I had to go outside of everything again. By then the tide had turned and was picking up speed, in some areas where I definitely did not want to be, up to eight knots. But I had the wind at my back, that helped, but only to a certain degree.

20-30 feet off the steep shore of the islands, the tide began to develop a rip. So I had to hug the rocky shore as close as possible, just far enough away to avoid the backwash and power my way against the tide along this narrow eddy-like corridor around one island after the other. I was sweating it out and working hard and my adrenalin was running. It was a challenge, a real one at that, a no-mistake situation.

I finally made it, inching my way around the last long island, La Grande Isl. Kamouraska will be a swearword in my vocabulary for a long time to come, but I was eventually rewarded with one of my most scenic stopovers on Le Cap, where I found a small grassy area between two small headlands with the Le Gros Pèlerin Isl. outlined in my tent doorway. Yes!

Rivière du Loup was a good service stop with phone, water and bathroom, but the breakwater at ebb tide was a doozy. The inside sneak worked again. Then past the only commercial harbor I saw along the entire St. Lawrence shore, Cacouna, and into major shallows building from the right. On the left a long thin incredibly green island or spit of land was making out. I was off the chart again so I could not tell whether that island was connected to shore with a bar, or whether I could just make it across. This was also the place where I first saw those huge arctic gray seals which one finds either north of the British Isles or at the mouth of the St. Lawrence. Big husky fellows with broad shoulders, distinctly heavier than our Atlantic harbor seal, with a big rounded-off torpedo-like head without the usual dog-like nose ridge.

I made it through with the flood tide running with me most of the way, one big eddy behind Isle Verte, one of the early homesteading islands. The island was gently tipped towards the south, supplying perfect growing conditions for early settlers. A bit further down the river and also a bit further out was Isle Basque where there used to be a Basque fishing station, just across from the rich Saguenay River and fjord, attracting not only fish but beluga and other whales.

I found my absolutely perfect spot for the night on a tiny island between Isle Verte proper and the town of Isle Verte. It had a small flow-through beach towards its NE point, i.e. water was coming in from two sides with just enough dry ground at high tide in one corner for my 5'x7' tent. The 4pm high tide was just right with about 12" of rise as a safety margin. However the 4am tide, as I found out at Port Joli, is about 1' higher. It was close, but I tried it. I could always move up the rocks, if it came to that. My boat was already perched, i.e. sus-

pendent in air along the rocks.

The tide and seaweed were right up to the little dike that I had built around my tent. I loved it and pushed on before sunrise, feeling I had finally gotten into the swing of things, had adjusted to the harsh conditions of the St. Lawrence and could handle them with prudence.

A calm morning and a good mood carried me rather swiftly past Basque Island and then to a long stretch of nothing, that is the towns, the road, civilization as we know it, just disappeared and instead there were miles and miles of steep shore with jagged points and headlands, and huge glacial boulders extending way out into the river. The waves and swells were breaking nicely on those rocks giving away their whereabouts. But I was still off the chart and grew a bit apprehensive. I had no idea what was around the next corner. Where could I take out in an emergency? Not on this type of shore for sure.

The high from yesterday quickly vanished and I was all eyes and ears while I hopped from point to point. Suddenly I came to a point with two people on it. I had to verify my position. So I shouted towards them so they could hear me over the breaking waves: "C'est Pointe a Cives, n'est ce pas ?" And I loved their one word answer: "Oui". "Bon" was my return as I paddled on knowing I was still on track.

But soon there was another point, much bigger and badder than all the others before, and since I had been in my boat for almost eight hours, I decided to leave that problem for tomorrow and think about it for a while and hope it would shrink with time. Fortunately there was a beautiful crescent cove right before Cap a l'Original (Moose Point) at the small town of St. Fabien with a small road running down to what looked like a public landing. Perfect, I'll take it. It turned out to be the launching site of an Avon type tourboat showing passengers this cape and the next one, Cap Corbeaux (Raven Point) and maybe even Bic Island a bit further off shore.

But everything worked out fine, and I had a wonderful early morning start the next day. And what spectacular scenery it was. By far the most impressive so far. I've got to show it to Nancy some year, I thought as I paddled into the sunrise rounding the sheer jagged cliffs on my right. The mountain range and headlands appeared like a black silhouette against the blinding early rays of the rising sun.

The tide was running out, the wind was calm for a change and I was enjoying myself immensely until I ran out of water just before Rimouski and had to stay outside of Barnabé Island. I stopped at the NE tip for an early lunch, admiring the speed of the catamaran ferry boat coming out of the harbor, when suddenly my boat was sucked off the ledge, then flushed back onto it, where it was left sitting high and dry for a moment.

I had my hands full saving my lunch, field glasses and boat from the horrendous wake of the ferry. I tossed my lunch higher on the rocks, slung my field glasses around me and put the boat on the next big wave to float it back into its element. Now I understand why small boaters are complaining so much about the Bar Harbor, Maine to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia cat-ferry which tears across the Bay of Fundy at a speed of 40+ knots. Small boaters beware!

After a brief stop at the ferry dock for a



My precarious overnight camp near Isle Verte.

Paddling point to point towards Gaspe.



phone call and to replenish my water, I was on my way again, till after nine hrs in the boat I had had it for the day. Then suddenly I saw a huge banner gate in the water in the bight of Sainte Luce, the finish line for this year's world sea kayaking championship. What a great finish for my day I thought as I went through it and headed for the beach near the breakwater beside the church.

Sipping my coffee that afternoon I was thinking about the race from across the river in Forestville to here, 28 miles of open water, I am impressed. Then more reading, mostly Farley Mowat's new book *The Farfarers*, to stay in tune with the surroundings, and more writing in my trip log.

After a beautiful day yesterday, I knew I was going to pay for it somehow. Towards evening the wind picked up, then it tried to force my tent to its knees, but it stayed up. Then came the wind shift, and the waves were suddenly crashing on my beach, and the tide was rising, and I noticed about 4 in the morning, that I was distinctly too close to the water. The waves were running up the beach stretching their fingers towards my tent and

depositing sea-weed right at my door as a warning. It was close to high tide, but I could not take chances. One wave in my tent and everything is wet for the rest of the trip, especially my sleeping bag. So I hastily packed up my gear and tossed the dry bags into my boat. It was raining to boot by now, and I had to don my Goretex suit to take down the tent. What next I thought. I opted for two granola bars and face the elements before it got much worse.

I was barely settled in my boat with sprayskirt tightly cinched around my waist, when the flood gates of heaven opened. I steered a compass course real close to shore, because I could not see a thing. It was so bad it was funny. I got wet to the skin despite my rain suit and had to push on to stay warm. After rounding rather intimidating looking Pointe Mitis, dancing around the lighthouse and through the ledges and ledge islands, I finally ran out of steam and had to stop for lunch. By then the rain had stopped, but I was still shivering. Only five more miles to Sable Bay, and I had covered another 25 miles.

Then the sun came out blazing hot and I

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got everything dry, including my sleeping bag which had gotten wet after all. The next day was uneventful and I could cover the 28 miles to St. Félicité in 8.25 hours total time. The shoreline had flattened out, and the road and houses came right down to the big river. But Québécois rural architecture is nothing to write home about. It is very plain and utilitarian, only the churches stand out, often as miniature copies of European cathedrals, but with shiny aluminum roofs. Just before St. Félicité I saw my first pod of whales, about five, surfacing a couple of times on their way out into the open bay. My whalewatch that afternoon from my high perch near the town ramp was unsuccessful.

The toothy shore at Cape Reynard.



The next day the scenery changed abruptly, steep shores and one headland after the other. When I finally saw the 100 or so huge wind generators on the hill, with a lighthouse at the point, I knew I had reached Cap Chat. The giant three-bladed propellers were all turning swiftly in the strong westerly wind, and I could clearly hear the whirring noise over the noise of the breaking waves. What a visual intrusion on the landscape, as well as a noisy disturbance of the peace and quiet. I made it around the point holding my breath, then beached my boat about 1/2 mile down on a beautiful warm sandy stretch. Just what the doctor ordered, after 30 long miles. Life was great that afternoon.

But then I paddled off the chart again, for 60 miles to be exact. It was more of what I had encountered yesterday; steep mountains and one point after the other. After a while they all looked the same and were difficult to identify. To Cap Reynard was 25 miles, or three

churches and a light-house on the right. It was beautiful, but eerie and lonely.

In Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, or "Mountain Annie" in my lingo, I met three sailboats from Connecticut, the *Yankee Lady*, *Misty* and *Second Wind*, who were on an even bigger adventure than I. They had started in Connecticut, went up the Hudson River into Lake Champlain, and on, like me to here, and planned to round the Gaspé and eventually, next year that is, Nova Scotia and back to Connecticut. Which should prove that New England, including parts of Canada, is an island. After my brief service stop at the marina, we left about the same time, and I did not think I would ever meet up with them again, but I did, three more times, before I left them behind in the fog around Gaspé.

Cap Reynard loomed tall above me with a darkening sky behind it. But I was happy to have covered 300 miles since Québec. This was the halfway-point around the Gaspé, well almost, and people had already named a Cape after me. (Just kidding.)

It rained all night, the morning was dark and gloomy, and the tops of the mountains and headlands were enveloped in a shroud of thick fog. But by 8 I thought I could do it. I set up the boat near the water on rollers, secured everything well, waited for a big wave, pushed the boat with the returning water into the river, jumped in, at least with one foot and butt, paddled like hell through the next couple of breaking waves. Then I could relax, get the other leg in, zip up the spray skirt, check that I did not leave anything behind (would that ever be a bummer!) and get out of there and into deeper water. My boat with all the gear for 25 days is simply too heavy to hitch myself into the water like a seal, sitting prim and proper in my cockpit.

It was an exciting day, but I was glad to see the imposing face of Mont St. Pierre and find the little harbor of Mont Louis 25 miles down the coast. It is very reassuring to find the name of the harbor on a sign on the boat ramp, where I parked my boat amongst the handful of fishermen's boats. As you most likely know, fishing for groundfish is practically over in these waters. It is quiet out there, except for a few handliners in small clinkerbuilt open outboards. No lobster boats and lobster buoys either in August. Just empty ocean, beautiful in its starkness.

I had caught up to the Connecticut sailors, and I was to share the next harbor, Grande Valley, with them also. By then I was finally back on my chart, and my confidence grew somewhat. What was unnerving for me though, were those five to ten mile long stretches where the road went right along the St. Lawrence with a 30' concrete retainer wall straight down to the water. That made it impossible for me to take out in an emergency. But I made it fine to the Grande Vallée breakwater, having chalked up another 27 mile day, even ahead of the three sailboats.

Later that afternoon, the entire town in cars, motor and mountain bikes would drive onto the breakwater and gawk at the three sailboats from the States, a major attraction for this little out-of-the-way town. My boat was as usual camouflaged on the beach as white driftwood, and my tent was a little green speck on a small spot of grass tucked away in some corner. Nobody stopped to chat, nobody knew I was there. I liked that.

(To Be Continued)

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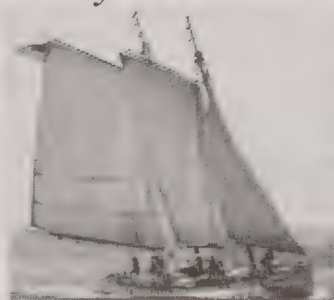
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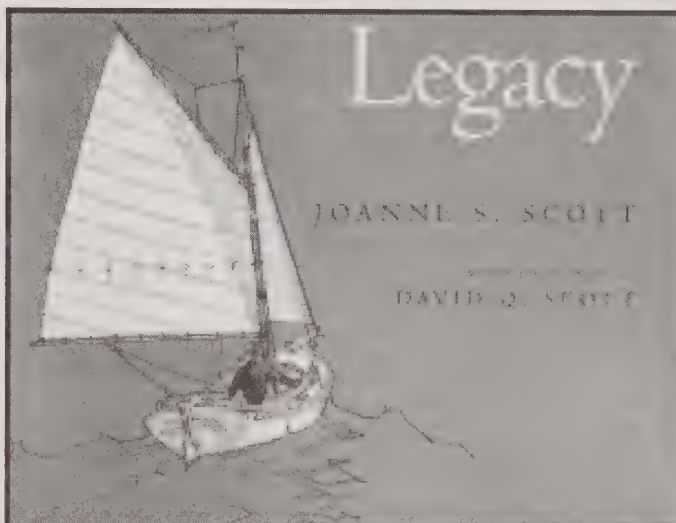
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During the afternoon, while rowing out of the cut-off behind an island, I caught sight of a flatboat floating in the contour of a distant bend. There was something familiar in her appearance, and, as I drew nearer, I recognized the pile of nets, the rusty stove, and the civil but silent crew. She was the same flat which had left Hickman, Kentucky, the morning I had departed from that town with my basket of pies. This time the crew seemed like old friends. River life makes all men equal. A pleasant hail now greeted me, and the duck-boat was soon moored to the side of the flat. As we floated along with the current, sipping our coffee, the captain told me his history.

The war had reduced him from affluence to poverty, and in order to support his family, he had built a scow and penetrated the weird waters of Reelfoot Lake, from which he was able, for several years, to supply the citizens of Hickman with excellent fish. The enterprise was a novelty at that time, and there being no competition, he made four thousand dollars the first year. After that others went into the business, and it became profitless. His mind was now bent upon a new field.

Hearing that the people of northern Texas were destitute of a regular fish-market, he had provisioned his flat for a winter's campaign, and intended floating with his men down to the mouth of Red River, where he would be towed by a steamer through the state of Louisiana to the northeastern end of Texas. There entering Caddo Lake, which is from fifty to sixty miles long, and where game, ducks, and fish abound, he would camp upon the shores and set his nets. The railroads which penetrated that section would afford means for the rapid distribution of his fish.

The party, anxious to arrive at their scene of action, floated night and day. The society of an educated man was so delightful at the time that I remained beside the flat all night. A lantern was hung above the bow of the boat to show the pilots of steamers our position. Whenever one of these disturbers of our peace passed the flat, I was obliged to cast off and pull into the stream, as the swash would almost engulf me if I remained tied to the side of the large boat. I could only sleep by snatches, for just as I would be dropping off into the land of Nod, the watch upon the flat would call out, "Here comes another steamer," which was the signal for me to take to my oars.

The next day was Sunday, but the flat kept on her way. I cooked my meals upon the rusty stove, and we floated side by side, conversing hour after hour. The low banks of the river showed the presence of levees, or artificial dikes, built to keep out the freshets. Upon these dikes the grass was putting forth its tender blades, and the willows were bursting into leaf. We passed White River and the Arkansas, both of which pour their waters out of the great wilderness of the state of Arkansas.

Below the mouth of the last-named river was the town of Napoleon, with its deserted houses, the most forlorn aspect that had yet met my eye. The banks were caving into the river day by day. Houses had fallen into the current, which was undermining the town. Here and there chimneys were standing in solitude, the buildings having been torn down and removed to other localities to save them from the insatiable maw of the river. These pointed upward like so many warning cenotaphs of the river's treachery, and contrasted strongly in the mind's eye with the many happy family circles



Four Months In a Sneak-Box

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

Chapter 7 - Part I Descent of the Mississippi to New Orleans

A Flatboat Bound for Texas — A Flat-Man
on River Physics — Adrift and Asleep —
Seeking the Earth's Little Moon —
Vicksburg — Jefferson Davis's Cotton
Plantation, and its Negro Owner — Dying in
His Boat

which had once gathered at their bases around the cheerful hearths.

About ten o'clock in the forenoon the proprietor of the flatboat decided, as it was Sunday, to run into a bend of the river and tie up for the day. That night the banks caved in so frequently that I was in danger of being entombed in my sneak-box; and I rejoiced when morning came and the dangerous quarters were left behind. My flatboat companions made known to me a curious feature of river physics well known to the great floating population of the western streams. If you start with a flat-boat or raft of timber from any point on the Ohio or Mississippi rivers at the moment a rise in the water takes place, and continue floating night and day without interruption, you will in a few days overrun the effects of the rise, or freshet, and get below it. A little later you will discover, at some point a few hundred miles down-stream, that the river is just commencing to swell, as the result of the freshet upon which you originally started.

During Tuesday and Wednesday of January 11 and 12, I was at times with the flat, and at times miles away from it. Near Skipwith Landing, Mississippi, we passed large and well-cultivated cotton-plantations, but the river country in its vicinity was almost a wilderness.

My sleep had been much broken by night-travelling, and about nine o'clock on Wednesday evening I fastened my boat to the flat, and determined to have two or three hours of refreshing slumber. An hour's peaceful rest followed, and then a snorting, screeching stern-wheel steamer crossed the river with its tow of barges, and demoralized all my surroundings, driving me against the flat, and shooting

water over the deck of my craft. Only half awake, I cast off from the flat, and thought that I was rowing down-river as usual; but I had dropped back into my nest just for one moment, and was in the land of Nod. I felt in my sleep that I was floating down the Mississippi. I was conscious that I had left the flatboat, and that steamers, snags, and eddies must be looked out for, or disaster would come quickly upon me.

I knew I was asleep, and tried to rouse myself. I seemed to be watching the moon, which shone with silver glory upon the glistening waters, and made the dark forests, rising wall-like on the banks, even darker by comparison. Then I seemed to enter the fields of astronomy, moving through the atmosphere still pulling at my oars. My mental vision stretched across the Atlantic, and enveloped the old astronomical observatory of the French city of Toulouse. It was the hour of sunset, and the learned Director Petit was at his post carefully adjusting his telescope, eager with the hope of identifying an undiscovered meteorite, the presence of which had been suggested by certain disturbances among the celestial bodies.

The savant carefully pointed his instrument to the neighboring regions of the setting sun, when suddenly I saw him start, and heard him mutter, like a philosopher of old, "Eureka, I have found it!" Only a ray of light had flashed across the field of his telescope as an asteroid shot into the gloam of the sun. Its movements were so rapid, its disappearance so sudden, that it was impossible to obtain another glimpse of the unknown body. The god of day had enveloped the satellite in curtains of powerful light, so that no eye but that of its Creator could gaze again that night upon the little stranger which had been seen for the first time by man.

The astronomer moved away from his instrument and the wonderful machinery that had guided it in its search for the asteroid, slowly muttering. "The sun robbed me of a second sight of my discovery, yet only at this hour can I hope to get a glimpse of it. The difficulties attending this observation are the tremendous velocity with which it travels, its very small mass, and the rapidity with which, at the hour of sunset, it passes into the shadow of the earth. I will, however, calculate its orbit, and search for it again; for I have this evening seen what no human eye has ever beheld, I HAVE SEEN THE EARTH'S LITTLE MOON." While I watched, entranced, the astronomer, aided by his assistants, labored over multitudes of figures hour after hour, day after day; and from these computations an orbit was constructed for the Little Moon.

Their work was finished; and as they left the observatory, a shadow, which had thrown its dark outlines here and there about the professor during his investigations, assumed the proportions of a man; and I saw for an instant the brilliant French writer, Jules Verne, while a voice in the musical language of France fell upon my ear: "Ah, Monsieur, it IS true, then, and we have a second moon, which must revolve round our planet once in three hours and twenty minutes, at a distance of only four thousand six hundred and fifty miles from our terrestrial abiding-place!"

Then the professor and his figures faded out of my vision; and I seemed to be observing a little moon revolving with lightning rapidity round the earth, while I felt that I had, in some way, been sucked into its orbit, and

was whirling around with it. Suddenly, with a keen sense of danger pervading my whole nervous system, I awoke. Yes, it was a dream! I was in my boat, gazing up into the serene heavens, where the larger moon was tranquilly following her orbit, while I was being whirled round in a strong eddy under a high bank of the river, with the giant trees frowning down upon me as though rebuking a careless boatman for being caught napping. And where was the flat? I gazed across the wide river into the quiet atmosphere now full of the bright light of the moon,—but no boat could be seen; and from the wild forest alone came back an echo to my shouts of “Flatboat, ahoy!” For hours I rowed in search of my *compagnon de voyage*.

As I hurried along the reaches of the river, every island cut-off, every tow-head, and every nigger-head, was inspected. I even peered into the mouths of dark bayous, thinking the party might have tied up to await my arrival, as the larger and deeper craft floated faster than my little boat. All search, however, proved fruitless. No flat could be seen. My endeavors to find my quondam friends had been so absorbing that things above my line of vision were not observed, when suddenly the bright moonlight revealed to my astonished eyes a lofty city apparently suspended in the heavens. By the aid of a candle and my map I discovered that the city and fortifications of Vicksburgh were close at hand, and that it was four o’clock in the morning.

My first view of Vicksburgh was over a long, low point of land, across the base of which was excavated, during the investment of the city by United States troops in the late war, “General Grant’s Cut-off.” By using this cut-off, light-draught gunboats could ascend or descend the river without passing near the batteries of the fortified city. This point, or peninsula, which the Union forces held, is on the Louisiana shore, opposite Vicksburgh. A year or two after I passed that interesting locality, a Natchez newspaper, in describing the change made in the channel of the Mississippi River, said that “St. Joseph and Rodney have been left inland; Vicksburgh is left on a lake; Delta will soon be washed away; a cut-off has been made at Grand Gulf, and by another season Port Gibson and Claiborne County will have no landing.”

Floating quietly in my little boat, and gazing at the city upon the heights, I thought of the bloody scenes there enacted, and of the statement made that “three hundred tons of lead, mostly bullets, had been collected in and around the town since the close of the war.” This lead, it has been asserted, would make nine million six hundred thousand ounce-balls. Of course, in this statement there is no mention of the lead buried deep in the earth, and that lost in the river.

Entering a great bend, the swift current swept me so rapidly past Vicksburgh that a few moments later I was among the islands and tow-heads of the river. At noon the plantation of Mr. Jefferson Davis was passed. It was situated twenty-five miles below Vicksburgh, and prior to February, 1867, was on a long peninsula with the estate of Colonel Joseph E. Davis and one belonging to Messrs. Quitman and Farrar. Then came the overwhelming river, sweeping across a narrow neck of land, and transforming the cotton-plantations into an island territory. In the old days of slavery, Colonel Joseph E. Davis, brother of the ex-president of the late Confederate

States, had a body-servant named Ben Montgomery. He was the manager of his master’s estates while a slave, and was so industrious and honest in all his dealings, and so successful in business, that after the war he was able to purchase his master’s plantation for three hundred and fifty thousand dollars in gold.

While I lingered in the Davis cut-off to lunch, a boat-load of white men passed me on their way to the plantation of Jefferson Davis, which they said had also been purchased by Ben Montgomery of its former owner, who then resided in Memphis. One of the men said: “Mr. Davis will convey the property to Ben Montgomery as soon as he makes one more payment, and Ben told me he was about ready to close the transaction.”

Montgomery was described as being fairly educated, and possessing the presence and address of a gentleman. His neighbors credited him with being “a right smart good nigger.” It is a singular fact that these large landed estates should have become the property of the former slave so soon after the war. Ben Montgomery died recently, leaving an example to his colored brethren worthy of their imitation.

From Davis’s Cut-off I followed Big Black Island Bend and Hard Times Bend, past the now silent batteries of Grand Gulf, down to the town of Rodney. I went ashore near the old plantation of an ex-president (General Taylor) of the United States, being attracted by a lot of dry drift-wood which promised a blazing fire. While cooking my rice and slowly developing an omelet, I calculated upon the chances of finding the lost flatboat. It was now evident that she was behind, not in advance of me. It was about four o’clock, and I determined to await her arrival. At half-past six o’clock clouds had obscured the sky, and it was impossible to see across the water, but I continued to watch and listen for the flat. The current was strongest on my side of the river, and I felt certain the boat would follow it and pass close to my camp. Her lantern and blazing stove-pipe would reveal her presence.

Suddenly a man coughed within a few rods of the shore, and out of the gloom appeared the dark outlines of the fisherman’s craft, but like a phantom ship, it instantly disappeared. It was but the work of a moment to embark and follow the vanishing flat. I soon overhauled it, and received a warm welcome from its occupants, who had supposed that after the steamer had driven me from them I had sought refuge in a creek to make up my lost hours of sleep. We floated side by side all night, disturbed but once, and then by the powerful steamer *Robert Lee*, which unceremoniously threw about a pail of water over me, gratuitously washing my blankets.

The next day, January 13, we passed Natchez, Mississippi, about four o’clock A. M. This city, founded by D’Iberville in 1700, is geographically divided into two parts. “Natchez on the Hill” is situated on a bluff two hundred feet above the river, while “Natchez under the Hill” is at the base of the cliff, and from its levee vessels sail for foreign as well as for American ports. Its inland and foreign trade is extensive, though it has a population of only ten or twelve thousand. The aspect of the country was changing as we approached New Orleans. Fine plantations, protected by levees, now lined the river-banks, while the forests of dense green, heavily draped with Spanish moss, threw dark shad-

ows on the watery path.

We arrived at the mouth of the Red River about dark, and my companions were fortunate enough to find a steamer at the landing, the captain of which promised to take them in tow to their distant goal. We parted like old friends; and as I rowed in darkness down the Mississippi I heard the shrill whistle of the steamer which was dragging my companions up the current of Red River into the high lands of Louisiana.

Up Red River, three miles from its mouth, a stream branches off to the south, and empties into the Gulf of Mexico. This is the Atchafalaya Bayou. At Plaquemine, about one hundred and thirty miles below Red River, and on the west bank of the Mississippi, another bayou conducts a portion of the water from the main stream into Grand River, which, with other western Louisiana watercourses, empties into the Gulf of Mexico. There is a third western outlet from the parent stream at Donaldsonville, eighty-one miles above New Orleans, known as the Bayou La Fourche, which flows through one of the richest sugar-producing sections of the state. Dotted here and there along the shores of this bayou are the picturesque homes of the planters, made more attractive by the semi-tropical vegetation, the clustering vines, blooming roses, and bright green turf than they could ever be from mere architectural beauty, while their continuous course along the shore gives the idea of a long and prosperous village.

The guide-books of the Mississippi describe the Bayou Manchac as an outlet to the Mississippi on the left, or east bank, below Baton Rouge, and the statement is repeatedly made that steamboats can go through this bayou into the Amite River, and down that river to Lake Pontchartrain and the Gulf of Mexico, leaving, by this route, the city of New Orleans to the west. This is, however, far from the truth, as I shall presently show, for it had been my intention to descend the Bayou Manchac, and follow D’Iberville’s ancient route to the sea. I soon found that the accomplishment of my plan was impossible, as the dry bottom of the bayou was FIFTEEN FEET ABOVE the water of the Mississippi.

Pursuing my solitary way, I rowed across the Mississippi, and skirted the shore in search of a camp where I could sleep until the moon arose, which would be soon after midnight. During the afternoon I had crossed the southern boundary of the state of Mississippi, and now the river ran through the state of Louisiana all the way to the sea.

About nine o’clock I found a little bayou in the dark woods, and moored my boat to a snag which protruded its head above the still waters of the tarn. The old trees that closely encircled my nocturnal quarters were fringed with the inevitable Spanish moss, and gave a most funereal aspect to the surroundings. The mournful hootings of the owls added to the doleful and weird character of the place. I was, however, too sleepy to waste much sentiment upon the gloomy walls of my apartment, and was soon lost to all sublunary things. These dark pockets of the swamps, these earthly Hades, are famous resting-places for those who know the untenable nature of ghosts, and who have become the possessors of healthy nerves by avoiding the poisonous influences of coal-gas in furnace-heated houses, the vitiated air of crowded rooms, and other detrimental effects of a city life. In such a camp

the voyager need fear no intrusion upon his privacy, for the superstitions rife among men will prevent even Paul Pry from penetrating such recesses during the wee sma' hours. Of course such a camp would be safe only during the winter months, as at other seasons the invidious foe, malaria, would inevitably mark for its victim the man who slept beneath such deadly shades.

At midnight the light of the moon illuminated my dark quarters, and I stole noiselessly out of the bayou into the river, rowing until sunrise, when the small port of Bayou Sara was passed. It was soon left in the dim distance, and the little white boat floated ten miles down a nearly straight reach in the river to the frowning heights of Port Hudson, a place that figured prominently during the late war.

The country round Port Hudson is thickly settled by descendants of the old Acadians, who came down the great rivers from Canada in the early days of Louisiana's history. Entering the mouth of the False River, on the west bank of the Mississippi, the traveller will penetrate the heart of an old and interesting Acadian settlement. If his mind be full of poetic fancies, and his eyes in search of Gabriels and Evangelines as he travels along this part of the Mississippi, his ears will be startled by the unmistakable Yankee names that are given him as representing the proprietors of the various estates he passes. Here and there the old French names appear; but in almost every such instance its possessor is a bachelor, and with him its musical accents will die away.

Searching into the cause of this patent fact, I discovered that the creole women, descendants of the old Acadians, appreciated the sterling qualities of the Anglo-Saxon race, and found in them their ideals, leaving in a state of single blessedness the more indolent, and

perhaps less persuasive, creole gentlemen. The results of these marriages are the gradual extinction of old family names; and in the not very far future the romance connected with these people will be a thing of the past, and the traveller, instead of thinking—

"This is the little village famed of yore, with meadows rich in flocks, and plenteous grain, whose peasants knelt beside each vine-clad door, As the sweet Angelus rose over the plain," will be introduced to Mrs. Hezekiah Skinner, and partake of her baked beans.

My informant in these matters was an educated creole gentleman, and I must have the honesty to give his remarks in regard to these persistent "Yankees," who, he said, "were always successful with the fair maidens, but invariably selected those who owned fine plantations, having in love, as well as in war, an eye to the main chance."

About the middle of the afternoon I ran the sneak-box on to the sloping levee of Baton Rouge, the capital of Louisiana; and, locking the hatch, went to the post-office for letters, and to the stores for provisions. Returning to the levee, I found a good-natured crowd had taken possession of my boat, and at once availed myself of the local information in regard to the chances of a passage through Bayou Manchac, which was only fifteen miles below the town. Each told a different story. One gentleman said, "You will have to get four niggers to lift your boat over the levee of Mr. Walker's plantation, and put it into Bayou Manchac, which is about one hundred yards from the banks of the Mississippi. Its mouth was filled up a long time ago, but when once in the bayou you can float down to the Amite River, and so on to the Gulf." Another voice contradicted this statement, exclaiming, "Why, the bayou is dried up for a distance of at least eight miles from its head." At this point a well-dressed gentleman advanced, and quietly said: "I live on the Bayou Manchac, and can assure you that after you have hauled your boat through the Woodstock Plantation of the Walker family, you will find water enough in the bayou to float down upon to the Amite River."

The crowd now became fully alive to the discussion of the geography of their locality. Each man who favored me with an opinion on the Manchac question contradicted his neighbor; which was only a renewal of old experiences, for I always found LOCAL knowledge of geography and distances of little value. As the debate ran high, I thought of D'Iberville, who had thoroughly explored the short bayou several generations before, and who might now have enlightened these people in regard to a stream that ran through their own lands. D'Iberville was, however, born in Canada, and probably had more time to look into such matters, or he would not have travelled several thousand miles to explore Louisiana.

I thanked the company for their interest in the discussion, which, like the questions before a debating society, had ended only in opinions. I promised to let them know the truth of the matter if I visited Baton Rouge again, and pushing out into the current, pulled towards Woodstock Plantation, where I arrived soon after dark; but fearing to land on account of the dogs, whose reception of a stranger in the dark was, to say the least, unceremonious, I tied up to a high bank, and "turned in" for the night.

Having left the wilderness and its pro-

tecting creeks and islands, I was destined to feel all the annoyances attending a camper in a cultivated and settled region. The steamboats tossed me about all night, so that morning was indeed welcome, and having refreshed myself with a dip and a déjeuner, I climbed the bank, and was rewarded with the sight of a noble mansion, with its gardens of blooming roses, and lawns of bright green grass. This was the Woodstock Plantation, of which I had heard so much. I leisurely approached the large establishment, breathing an atmosphere laden with the fragrance of roses and orange-blossoms, which seemed to grow sweeter with every step. Finding an old negro, I sent my card to his master, with the request for information in regard to the Bayou Manchac.

The young proprietor soon appeared with the "Report of the Secretary of War," 27th Congress, 3d session, page 21. December 30, 1842. This pamphlet informed me that the bayou was filled up at its mouth by order of the government, in answer to a petition from the planters of the lower country along the bayou and Amite River, to prevent the overflow of their cane-fields during freshets in the Mississippi River. We walked to a shallow depression near the house. It was dry, and carpeted with short grass. "This," said Mr. Walker, "is the Bayou Manchac which D'Iberville descended in his boat after having explored the Mississippi probably as far as Red River. The bed of the bayou is now fifteen feet above the present stage of water in the Mississippi." A field-hand was then called, who was said to be the best geographer in those parts, white or black.

"Tell this gentleman what you know of the Bayou Manchac," said Mr. Walker, addressing the negro.

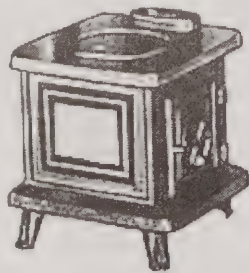
"Well, sah!" the darky replied, "I jus hab looked at yer boat. Four ob us can hf him ober de levee, an' put him on de cart. Den wees mus done cart him FOURTEEN miles 'long de Bayou Manchac to get to whar de warter is plenty fur him to float in. Dar is some places nearer dan dat, 'bout twelve miles off whar dar is SOME warter, but de warter am in little spots, an' den you go on funder, an' dar is no warter fur de boat. Den all de way dar is trees dat falls across dc bayou. Boss, you mus go all de fourteen miles to get to de warter, sure sartin."

Mr. Walker informed me that for fourteen miles down the bayou the fall was six feet to the mile. At that distance from the Mississippi, sloop navigation commenced at a point called Hampton's Landing, from which it was about six miles to the Amite River. The Amite River was navigated by light-draught vessels from Lake Pontchartrain. The region about the Amite River possesses rich bottom-lands, and many of the descendants of the original French settlers of Louisiana own plantations along its banks.

Mr. Walker then pointed to a long point of land some miles down the river, upon which the fertile fields of a plantation lay like patches of bright green velvet in the morning sun, and said: "Below that point a neighbor of mine found one of your northern boatmen dying in his boat. He rowed all the way from Philadelphia on a bet, and if he had reached New Orleans would have won his five thousand dollars, but he died when only ninety-five miles from the city, and was buried by Adonis Le Blanc on that plantation."

(To Be Continued)

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Birgitte, Kirsten, and the Staten Island Ferry

Our Danish friend Birgitte came to New York on theater business. She brought her daughter-in-law, a different Kirsten, with her. Late on a cold clear January night Lynn and I drove to the Lower East Side and met them as they emerged from a theater. We drove directly to the ferry dock. We chatted and walked around the boat on the way to Staten Island. Coming back we stood close together on the front deck and marveled as the lights of the Statue of Liberty and Manhattan twinkled against the black velvet winter night. Farther ahead, the blue necklace of the George Washington Bridge sparkled from the palisades.

The Gloucester Gull

In 1975 I saw a small ad in the back of a boating magazine. The ad was selling plans for a rowing dory called the Gloucester Gull. The grainy black-and-white picture showed a man rowing and a clean-cut bow wave rising from the gracefully curved stem. The overall shape of the boat was very appealing. I didn't do anything at the moment, but the idea of building such a boat kept bouncing around in my daydreams. It was 1981 before I sent a few dollars for the plans. I studied them, made material lists, and went through the days dreaming of what it would be like to row this boat and pondering construction details.

In January 1990 I finally decided to make some sawdust. I laid out the dimensions of the stem on a huge old piece of a piano crate. It may have been hackmatack, I'm not sure, but it was clear of knots and very dense. I set the angles on the bandsaw table and construction was officially underway. The finished piece had a lovely curve that encouraged me to continue. I put a few dollars in my wallet, grabbed my material list, and went to the lumberyard.

I love the stories in *WoodenBoat Magazine* where old Zeb the boat builder goes out to his forest and selects pieces for the current project. The authors haughtily describe the boat as having been built of "native materials." Well, the only "native materials" you'll find in Northern New Jersey are at the local home improvement center.

I first bought a handful of 2x4s and a few sheets of inexpensive flake board. I laid 2x4s out on the garage floor and expanded the shape of each building frame from the plans to the flake board. The frame defined the ghostly inverted shape of the boat.

To avoid the hassles of a trailer, I planned to transport my finished boat on my car's rooftop. The plans called for 3/8" fir plywood for the sides and 1/2" for the bottom. To save weight and my back, I decided to depart from the plans slightly. I substituted 5mm lauan plywood. The plans specified oak for the chines and gunwales, I ripped them out of ordinary fir 2x4s. I stitched the pieces together with galvanized steel screws and epoxy.

I covered the outside of the hull with heavy fiberglass cloth and polyester resin. I used automobile primer and a white lacquer top coat. I bought a gallon of oil base paint from a local chain store. They assured me that it was of the finest quality. As soon as it dried it shrank and cracked so badly that I had to laboriously strip every bit of it. I finished the interior with Rustoleum primer and top coat. The pine seats and gunwales received honey maple stain and polyurethane varnish.

Around mid-April I set her on sawhorses



Adventures of a New Jersey Boat Nut Part 17 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

in the driveway, and was really pleased with what I saw. The topsides were white and shiny, the interior was light tan, and the glossy varnished seats and trim emphasized the beautiful shape. Two polished sets of bronze oarlocks were the finishing touch. On each side at the stern I applied the name *Katy* in gold leaf. *Katy* is my niece. I ran to Sears and bought oars, PFDs, line, and a small anchor.

Lynn and I launched her on the Hudson River at Palisades Interstate Park near the George Washington Bridge. Yeah! No leaks. The waves were as high as two feet but *Katy* lived up to her seagoing heritage and sliced through them neatly. We waved to the passing Circle Line boat. At Ortley Beach on the Jersey shore she didn't do as well. My brother Blaise finished bailing out rain water and, as he stepped on the gunwale to go ashore, *Katy* rolled out from under him, spilling him into the drink and refilling with salt water.

I took *Katy* for a few short trips on Barnegat Bay, and though she was really easy to row, I quickly lost interest in the effort. She spent several years unused, hanging from hooks in Blaise's garage. This past June (1998) Lynn and I put her on the roof of my car and drove to the Small Craft Weekend at Mystic Seaport. We launched her there and bobbed around in company with a fleet of homemade boats of all descriptions. The event is a boat swapping party. You can sail mine if I can sail yours. Inspiration struck. I had decided to sell the boat but didn't want to face the agony of placing an ad, answering calls, negotiating, and

all that goes with it. I donated her to the boat-house at Mystic.

The total cost of construction was \$500, including a new portable circular saw and a few other small tools. I'd sent for "Dynamite" Payson's book *How to Build the Gloucester Gull Dory*. I didn't follow all his advice but it was very helpful, particularly because it gave the angles to cut at the chine/transom area. If built to the plans, the boat weighs about 125 pounds. *Katy* weighed in at 71.

She was incredibly easy to row up to her hull speed. I guess the price for this ease is roll stability. My only real complaint about this design is its tippiness. Once it heels over a bit it gets more solid, and loading in more weight helps, too, but I never felt entirely comfortable and relaxed in it. Oddly it is quite seaworthy and I wouldn't hesitate to take it out in the roughest conditions.

The shape is beautiful and it received compliments everywhere. One regret I have is that I used steel staples to secure the glass cloth while applying the resin. As soon as they got wet, they rusted and stained the paint. I should have taken the time and effort to locate bronze staples.

I recently read that Phil Bolger put this brainchild of his on paper around 1950.

Dad's Ashes

My father died in 1993. According to his wishes, his remains were cremated. Mom had his ashes and wanted to put them to rest. She discussed it with my sister Elena, my brother Blaise, and me. We all agreed that Dad would have liked it if we disburshed his remains at sea. I was nominated to make the arrangements. I asked around at Point Pleasant, but wasn't able to find a boat and captain for the mission. Lynn and I spent some afternoons along the Hudson River waterfront. We met a man at Lincoln Harbor Marina in Weehawken. We explained our needs, and he agreed to provide his services. He owned a 30' powerboat named *Rubicon*. Its hull was red.

The appointed date and time was a crystal clear September evening. The western sky was a deep, cloudless blue and the windows of the Manhattan skyline reflected the setting sun's brilliant gold. Captain John was dressed in a nice suit when we arrived dressed in more casual clothes. He changed. Our party consisted of Mom, Blaise, his wife Sue, Elena, her friend Ben, Lynn, and myself. Blaise told me later that as we passed the end of the marinas new piers Captain John said to him, "I don't know if we can do this. Look at that sign." The sign read "NO WAKE ZONE."

We proceeded up the river almost to the 79th Street boat basin. We turned south and placed a floating wreath of flowers on the water. As we continued slowly we spooned the ashes over the stem, drank champagne, and spread flower petals on the surface of the water. Our host handed Mom an Absolut martini in a chilled stemmed glass. By the time we'd finished our "ceremony," night had fallen and the lights of midtown and the theater district were ablaze. We put on some speed and everyone's hair was streaming back in the breeze, backlit by the city lights.

Dad spent most of his career commuting from New Jersey, through the Lincoln Tunnel, to play his trombone for Broadway's musical shows. We all agreed that he would have been very pleased with our arrangements.

(To Be Continued)

Battle for the Waves...1958

By Bob Hicks

In the early years of publishing this magazine I had occasion to visit E.L. Goodwin, owner of Cape Cod Shipbuilding in Wareham, Mass. Whatever I had intended at that time to use from this visit as an article for publication apparently didn't happen, for I cannot find such in our back issue files and memory long since has failed me on the subject.

At the time, Mr. Goodwin gave me his carbon copies of an exchange of correspondence he had had in 1958 with a feature writer for *Hitchcock's Wood Working* magazine. These have recently surfaced in a file cleanout in this office after years of being forgotten.

The writer, one N. Nash, who worked for the Great Eastern Lumber Company in Glens Falls, New York, had penned a polemic against the onslaught of fiberglass boats entitled "Battle for the Waves". Mr. Goodwin, by then six years into exclusively fiberglass boatbuilding, considered Mr. Nash's reasoning and viewpoint wide of the mark of the looming reality of the future of the wooden boatbuilding industry.

So he took up his typewriter and what follows is a fascinating insight into how it was when production wooden boat building was backed to the wall by the arrival and acceptance of fiberglass boats.

April 18, 1958

Hitchcock Publishing Co.
222 E. Willow Ave.
Wheaton, Illinois

Gentlemen.

Reference:
Hitchcock's Wood Working, Vol. 60 - No. 4 - April 1958
"Battle for the Waves" by N. Nash

I would like to introduce myself as a wood-worker, both during and after business hours. At home I maintain a workshop where I build furniture and many items in wood. As a businessman, I operate a boatbuilding plant that started in 1899 and where, until 1948, only wooden boats were built. I firmly believe that we all must move with the times, and as much as I dislike learning a new business, I started in fiberglass in 1948. For the next four years I built both wood and fiberglass; for the last six years I have not built a wooden boat. Yet I have more carpenters on the job and they are better paid and more secure in their jobs than if I had stuck to wood. Our plant in working to capacity on a 52-week basis. I feel that I could expand and double my business, but for personal business reasons I prefer my present situation which, I think, is set for a long pull.

Rather than claiming that wood is the best, I think it would be to your advantage to study the use of wood in modern fiberglass construction. Our first models, or "Mock Ups", are the finest kind of wood and woodwork procurable. We use wood (teak or mahogany) trim to give a conventional appearance to our boats. (This might disappear by popular demand, due to the extremely high cost of refinishing varnish work these days).

I would like to take issue briefly with Mr. Nash on some points. One might be led to believe that he was writing what you might like to hear.

1. "Figures don't lie, but liars figure" is a very old saying. The important figures from the New York Boat Show are that fiberglass has, in a short ten years, taken 95 of the 171 boats shown. A sizeable book could be written on the figures and the reasons behind them. We haven't the time.

2. Seaworthiness is definitely not a matter of aluminum, wood or fiberglass. It is a matter of design and the proper engineering in the material selected for construction.

3. The Navy reported on early tests on fiberglass that it was eight times stronger than the same weight in wood.

4. Wood is self-buoyant, etc. Then why isn't the *Queen Mary* wood? The answer is that the lightness of wood offers an advantage in a canoe or a very small dinghy, but once you get over a certain size, which is about ten feet, fiberglass is the lighter and has the advantages claimed by Mr. Nash for wood. For example, our 15' Stormy Petrel, weighing 265lbs, equals in strength and size 15' wooden boats weighing 500lbs to 600lbs. On the 27' launch we built for the Army, their official report claimed the fiberglass boat weighed enough less to carry 14 more passengers and still make four knots more than a wooden boat.

5. Fiberglass boats are cheaper today than a well-built wooden boat and down almost to the price of the flimsy plywood construction. They definitely offer more for the dollar, due to the lack of upkeep. A fiberglass boat will pay for itself in ten years due to its low upkeep cost.

6. In case of an accident, any intelligent owner can repair his own fiberglass boat quicker and cheaper than wood. To the owner who does not want to do his own repairs, trained fiberglass men are to be found in most boat-building centers and will increase. We have a letter today from Bethlehem Steel Company stating briefly that fiberglass boats are here, and what do we suggest about repairs? Our answer will be that we will do that part of their work, or we will train their men.

7. In useage, small boats used on rocky beaches have their rubstrakes renewed from time to time. Fiberglass boats need the same treatment by applying a ply or so to the worn areas. More owners can do the fiberglass job and the material is more readily available in most areas. Have you tried lately to get a nice clear piece of white oak that will bend on a keel of a skiff or dinghy?

8. With fiberglass, designers have much more scope. With wood, you are limited to curves around which wood will bend.

9. Fiberglass, not wood, due to the shape which can be molded in the boat, will in a well designed boat give you a smoother and more vibration free ride. This problem has always been, and will always be, more a matter of design than the material used in the construction.

10. With the same horsepower, fiberglass can give you more speed because the designers can have more freedom and more strength can be had in less weight in all but very small boats.

11. Fiberglass does not rust, and tanks for flotation in most well built fiberglass boats last as long as the boats. They also offer flotation

and safety far beyond that found in wooden boats. Few wooden boats will float motor, lead keel, ballast and centerboard with any degree of certainty, not to the extent of being a good piece of lifesaving equipment.

12. Well designed and well built fiberglass boats are bringing resale prices never approached in wooden boats. The Cape Cod Bullseye, four years old, sells for 80% of the present day cost which is very slightly below the purchase price; try and buy one.

13. Females "in the know" definitely prefer fiberglass so they can have some of Friend husband's time usually spent fitting out a wooden boat. This is an era of more play, less work.

14. The safety of lapstrake construction is a debatable point. Some of our early fiberglass boats had an outside surface that looked like, and performed like, lapstrake construction. This was done for the same reason that the best sheet roofing is corrugated. At least two of our largest builders of fiberglass outboard boats use this construction today.

In brief, it is a mistake to grade a boat entirely by the material used in construction. We have many poorly designed and built fiberglass boats, and anyone who claims we have not had plenty of the same and worse in wooden boats hasn't wrung much water out of his socks, fresh or salt!

You must move with the times. Fiberglass is here to stay until something better turns up, and it will, but I have a sizeable investment in timberlands and am seriously considering the purchase of more.

Yours very truly, E.L. Goodwin, Cape Cod Shipbuilding, Wareham, Massachusetts.

May 16, 1958

Mr. E.L. Goodwin
Cape Cod Shipbuilding Co.
Wareham, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Goodwin;

Thank you for your interesting and detailed letter in regard to the article "Battle for the Waves". We appreciated the thought that went into your rebuttal.

I am sending along your comments to Mr. Nash and believe that he will want to write to you about some of them. As our article pointed out there is a battle for the waves and your letter indicates that there is a battle with many opinions as to the best material for boat building.

Sincerely yours, E. McDaniel, Editor,
Hitchcock's Wood Working.

May 19, 1958

Mr. E.L. Goodwin
Cape Cod Shipbuilding
Wareham, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Goodwin;

The editors of *Hitchcock's Wood Working* magazine have sent to me today your letter addressed to them dated April 18.. I shall study it very carefully and write you about it in due course.

You have paid me indeed a very great compliment, by not only reading my literary efforts but taking the time and trouble to object.

You will have noticed in my original article that I particularly sought out the Penn Yan Co. for my interview, because they are only a few miles from the Corning Glass Works. Penn Yan is one of the oldest boatbuilding concerns in the country. They have spent a great deal of time and money on fiberglass boats. If they had found it possible to do so, they would have gladly changed over to fiberglass, because they could have saved a fortune in freight alone.

The case with Chris Craft is also very illuminating. After spending another fortune building and advertising fiberglass boats, they are now soft pedalling this type of construction and are returning more and more to wood, which incidentally includes plywood construction. In my article I mentioned that a considerable amount of plywood is being used.

You will hear from me again in a short time.

Cordially yours, N. Nash, Great Eastern Lumber Co., Glens Falls, NY.

August 4, 1958.

Mr. E.L. Goodwin
Cape Cod Shipbuilding Co.
Wareham, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Goodwin:

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you!

You have paid me a tremendous compliment. Not only did you read my article "Battle For The Waves", but you also gave it some thought, and you took the trouble to write a long and formidable letter about it to the Editor of *Hitchcock's Wood Working Magazine* (my, but what a parameteric pen you have!).

"The Battle For The Waves" has now entered the shooting stage. This was exactly my purpose. I wanted people to sit up and ask questions, examine the evidence from both sides and then arrive at a verdict.

It is now again my turn to aim and fire.

What am I aiming at? I'll be frank. I am waving the Flag of Wood. My aim is to show that wood is good when used as it should.

Where do I get my ammunition? In my dual capacities as sales manager of the nationally famous Great Eastern Lumber Co. Inc., of Glens Falls, New York and columnist for *Hitchcock's Wood Working* I have the extraordinary good fortune to be able to roam the entire country almost at will. Hardly a month goes by, that I do not uncover a little-known

but highly significant incident which clearly establishes the fact that wood has never nor will ever be outmoded, as long as woodworkers use their creative imagination.

The lumber and woodworking industries have let a lot of business slip away by not meeting head-on the claims of rival products. The fearless editor of *HWW*, however, performing a valuable public service by publishing stories, facts and figures which demonstrate the superiority of wood for certain purposes. Unfortunately, there are too many editors who can or will not show the same independence of spirit.

Item: Several months ago, *HWW* published pictures the latest type marine helicopter whose powerful twin rotors used spruce and maple for its blades. Ah, how proud everybody in our industry must have felt!

Item: One of the country's largest manufacturers of prefabricated houses has switched back to wood windows, because the "other kind" gave too much trouble.

Item: 85% of our nation's housewives came to the conclusion that wooden kitchen cabinets are preferable.

Item: Two out of every three motel operators prefer wooden furniture and paneling.

Item: Wall-to-wall carpeting is an insidious breeding ground for household pests, which cause \$200-400 million worth of damage annually. Not to mention the incalculable health hazards. Therefore, hardwood flooring is considered safest and most sanitary.

Oh - I could go on and on - and I will, providing the brave Editor of *HWW* is willing to continue publishing my stories.

Which brings us right back to the high running waves of my original story. As you well know, Mr. Goodwin, my story was based on an interview granted to me by Mr. R.J. Buckley, Vice-President of Penn Yan Boats, Inc., of Penn Yan, N.Y., and verified by other boat manufacturers.

Penn Yan is one of the most outstanding boat manufacturers in the country and Mr. Buckley is considered an expert and distinguished personality in his field. That was one of the reasons why I singled them out during the boat show.

The other reason was this. Penn Yan Boats Inc. is only 50 miles from the country's leading manufacturer of fiberglass for boats. An investigator immediately asks this question: Why is Penn Yan - one of the oldest boat manufacturers in the country - so sold on wooden boats? What do the Penn Yan people know that the others don't?

Naturally, I discussed your letter with them, as well as with other boat manufacturers, and this is our reply:

1. The non-wood boat manufacturers have done a bang-up job of promotion. Too bad our wooden boat manufacturers did not attempt a similar program, aided and abetted by the lumber producers. That's why I suggested they band together and form an association similar to the Wood Office Furniture or Wood Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Associations. I have even prepared a little slogan for them: "United We Sail, Divided We Sink" which I would let them have for free.

2. We fully agree that, as you say: "Seaworthiness is a matter of design." However, we would like to add the words "plus material. Wood - being self-buoyant - is, of course, ideal, and that's a fact.

3. We think your reference to certain

"Navy Tests" was hitting a little below the waterline. Military requirements are entirely different from pleasure boating. We could start a lengthy discussion about fatigue life, or tensile, impact, compression strength etc. But instead of becoming too technical we are enclosing a clipping from the May, 1958 issue of the *New York Lumber Trade Journal*, which contains such highly informative phrases as:

"70 percent of all naval small craft in use at the present time are built of wood..." or:

"Richard Hartley of the Bureau of Ships states wood is particularly suited to naval use...." or:

"Several motorboats and launches have served Uncle Sam for 20 or more years..." or:

"Wood has great strength in relation to its weight and it has the resiliency to bounce back undamaged from severe contact with piers or from the shock of underwater demolition charges. Wood's insulating qualities make boats easier to heat and to cool..." or:

"With wood boats there is no corrosion problem because wood is not affected by sea water as are some materials, nor does it lose its strength by aging. Because lumber is widely available it is possible to perform repairs, if necessary, in very remote areas of the world..." or:

"To quote Mr. Hartley, 'In a finished or unfinished state, wood is naturally eye-appealing and is easily maintained in such condition.

4. Why - you ask - is the *Queen Mary* not made of wood? Because - we say - wood unfortunately does not grow to the proper size. Perhaps, if the the unfortunate *Andrea Doria* had been built of wood, the self-buoyant material... this tragic disaster might have been, if not avoided, maybe minimized. Incidentally, at this time we have not heard of any ocean liner being built of fiberglass.

5. Boats come in all price ranges, regardless of materials used. However, the manufacturers of fiberglass will be the first ones to admit that a good fiberglass hull is not cheap.

As far as vibration is concerned, there can be no doubt that wood is the better material, for the same reason that pneumatic tires give a smoother ride than solid rubber wheels on a car.

6. Fiberglass easy to repair? Not at the present time, as you yourself state. However, it is highly encouraging to learn that your industry has started a program for training repairmen for fiberglass boats, for whom there is apparently a need. Let us hope that your training program will be more successful than those of the automobile, TV, air conditioning and appliance manufacturers.

7. You say that some repairmen have experienced difficulties in securing lumber for boat repairs. Would that it were so. Unfortunately, lumber has not been moving too well lately, and inventories in lumber yards all over the country are at an all time high.

8. It is true that fiberglass allows some intricate looking and sometimes startling superstructure designs. But this is only like the frosting on a cake.

However, the most efficient power boat bottom design is a simple shingle of proper length and width. In other types it is a faired oval bottom design - and wood - as grown or as plywood, or as laminated wood, accomplishes it admirably.

9. Now we are coming to what is probably the most important point of all, namely,

which type of craft will put more pleasure into boating. The laws of physics are quite explicit about that. Wood is a natural vibration damper. Fiberglass, like metal, transmits vibration. There are cases on record where the vibration in fiberglass boats caused decks, seats, coamings, and even transoms to crack loose.

10. Your remarks concerning speed are contradicted by the fact that the small boat speed records are held by wooden boats. Wooden boats took the beating of the 25,000 mile test run by Kiekhaefer. It is the opinion of many experts that fiberglass would have vibrated to powder within two days.

11. Put a motor, a lead keel, ballast and metal centerboard in a fiberglass boat and it'll sink quicker than a wood boat. Put the same amount of flotation in each and they both stay up - the wooden boat higher in the water. We are talking mainly about the thousands of power jobs being sold each year, and not about the comparatively small amounts of sailing jobs.

12. I am not surprised to hear the good news that your boats, Mr. Goodwin, have a high resale value. From your letter I can see that you are an exceptionally thoughtful man who likes to go to the bottom of things. Ah - but there's the rub. You are the exception rather than the rule.

13. Eye-appeal is a powerful sales stimulant. But the public has a frightening habit of rejecting extremes and flashiness after the novelty wears off. Just ask Detroit's car mak-

ers.

Have the manufacturers of wooden boats been too conservative? Should they have shown more daring, originality, and imagination in their designs and colors? How much must be sacrificed for the sake of styling? Should boat manufacturers copy the car makers' mania for yearly model changes?

Granted perhaps, that the public knows what it wants. But is it good for them? Will they want it again next year?

14. Like anything else, some lap-strike boats are well built. Others are horrible examples of how not to build a boat. So-called lap-strike fiberglass boats are but copies of a well-known wood boat builder's hull. Strength of hull had nothing to do with it. In fact, one of the plastic lapstrike manufacturers spent several years learning that his so-called laps cracked at each lap corner, and he now inserts plastic covered wood ribs to hold the boat together.

This brings me nearly to the end of my reply to your letter, Mr. Goodwin. However I suspect that I have not been able to change your opinions to any large degree.

Yet, there is one thing we both can whole-heartedly agree upon, and that is: No boat should be graded entirely by the materials used.

I can well understand why my original article "Battle for the Waves" came rather as a shock to you. Nobody expects Lumber to fight back.

But this is all going to be changed. A new spirit of urgency and militancy has come over our entire industry. This movement is spearheaded by the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association, who will spend in excess of \$1,000,000 in the next 12 months campaigning for "Wood - the New Building Material".

You had better sharpen your pen, Mr. Goodwin. If you didn't like my article, I shudder to think what your reaction will be when you hear what the NLMA has to say.

Again I repeat. I am proud that a man of your caliber and distinction has done me the honor to comment at such great length on my literary efforts. As I started out to say: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Cordially yours, N. Nash, Great Eastern Lumber Co. Glens Falls, NY

August 20, 1958

Mr. N. Nash
100 W. 72nd St.
New York 23, NY

Dear Mr. Nash;

Have your letter of August 4th, and am afraid that, being in the writing business, you have a distinct advantage. Really think that you missed the entire point of my earlier letter in which I pointed out that I, personally, am a woodworker, have sizeable investments in growing timber, and believe that such a magazine as *Hitchcock's Wood Working* should realize that the fiberglass boat business is aiding the use of wood rather than detracting from it. Consequently, they should be very fair in their statements, and not take the attitude that everything in wood is good, and everything in fiberglass is bad.

In our own case, we are employing more woodworkers today than we did 15 years ago, or immediately after we finished our war work in World War II. We are much better able to pay them the high wages which they demand, and our credit when we buy various kinds of wood seems to be excellent. These, in my opinion, are the most important points. The other details are incidental, but for the sake of a good argument, I will answer your letter with my opinions, point for point.

Frankly, I am much more concerned as to whether this country will be able to produce sufficient lumber to supply its needs, rather than believing that wood is going to be outmoded. Whether they will continue to use it in its present form, or whether they will get it into a fabulous machine and spew it out in boats, furniture, panelling, etc., remains to be seen, and if I were allowed to prophesy, I would guess that the latter might be true chiefly because apprenticeship in woodworking seems to be going entirely out of style.

If I were in your shoes and had something to do with a large amount of money to be spent for advertising or promotion on wood, I would look into the matter of encouraging young men to develop an ability to handle wood. The change from wood to metal spars is chiefly because wood spar makers are just not available in the country today.

I resent your mentioning boats and cars in the same paragraph. We never believed from the first that fiberglass cars would be satisfactory, and refused to take any part in their construction. These reasons have nothing to do



Wooden Boat is Navy's Oldest

It's modern, it's old, it's tops in service! That's the description of the oldest boat in the service of Uncle Sam's Navy, a streamlined 50' admiral's barge.

Now flying the flag of its sixth admiral, Rear Admiral Harold Davis Baker, commandant of the Potomac River Naval Command, the barge will continue to serve other admirals in the years to come because in spite of its 46 years, it is still seaworthy and shows no signs of decay or rot.

This sturdy and durable barge is built of wood as is 70% of all naval small craft in use at the present time. Its hull is sound and "eye sweet" and the appearance and tightness of the swept teak deck are like new. Yet the barge has "lived" through three wars aboard the battleships Louisiana, Utah, Florida, Arkansas, and New York.

The graceful lines of the boat and the soundness of its hull make it a strong rival for even the newest barge. No portion of

the hull structure has been removed or replaced because of deterioration or mechanical damage.

Built in 1912 at a cost of \$12,000, the boat has undergone minor alterations and has had its original gasoline engines replaced by 105-horsepower diesels, but it still has the cedar planking; the white oak keel, stem, frames, timbers and deck beams; the Oregon pine clamps and bilge stringers; and the teak deck and cabin which the builders, Herreshoff Manufacturing Company of Bristol, RI, used in its original construction.

Such a testimonial to the durability of wood has led Richard Hartley of the Bureau of Ships to state, "Wood is particularly suited to naval use." Supporting that statement he points out that, in addition to the admiral's barge, there are several motorboats and launches which have served Uncle Sam for 20 or more years.

with wood, but really come under the controversy between steel and fiberglass.

The *New York Times*, a year ago at Larchmont Race Week, had headlines on the story where the fiberglass Raven rammed by a wood Lightning that was nearly demolished, was able to finish the race and turn out with temporary repairs the following day and ended second in the series. The Lightning was out for more than a week. We cannot concede that fiberglass is difficult to repair or expensive; we have too much evidence to submit if we had the time to prove our point. It is very simple for the woodworking boys to claim otherwise, but they do so only with lack of current knowledge of fiberglass repair kits and repairs in general.

We quote from a letter recently received from Jim Willis of Manset, Maine, who operates a fleet of small boats in connection with his sailing school. As a result of a bow and beam collision in a brisk breeze that would have laid a wood boat up for weeks, he phoned us a description of the damage which was a hole some 6" in diameter above the waterline of the boat. He phoned us in the afternoon and we mailed out a repair kit that night. The following afternoon the boat was back in commission with a total of four hours of inexperienced labor charged to the job, and the letter comments that the next time he would do it in two hours.

Along these lines we are enclosing a Repair Manual by Owens-Corning, as well as a recent bulletin from the Bureau of Ships, which I have not had time to read but which I believe might be of interest to you. Please note that this is not just an opinion by an individual who happens to wear a Navy uniform, but a report from the Bureau of Ships.

Please don't confuse our issue with kitchen cabinets, hardwood floors or furniture. We would like to confine it strictly to boats so that we can be on a subject in which we claim some knowledge.

We know Mr. Buckley of Penn Yan boats and have every respect for his opinions. We also can assure you that if we had made the mistake of sticking to wood some eleven years ago we no doubt would have had some rather pertinent reasons.

Your reasoning, however, about the location of the leading manufacturer of fiberglass is entirely in error. You, no doubt, refer to the Owens-Corning Company with headquarters at Elmira, New York, and I am frank to state that you could hang around that plant for many years without getting any information concerning the construction of glass boats which would be any more important than what you might pick up at any cocktail party.

The firm who manufactures the reinforcement for fiberglass boats is the Owens-Corning Fiberglass Corporation, with head offices at 598 Madison Avenue, New York, New York, with plants producing the material in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, and laboratories and a new production plant coming in or near Providence, Rhode Island. Just no connection between the personnel in one corporation and the other.

Furthermore, the re-inforcing agent as manufactured by Owens-Corning is only one of many component parts which go to make up a fiberglass boat. The real "know how" in boat construction is not available from any one company, in spite of the many textbooks which might lead you to believe to the contrary.

Each individual builder, like ourselves, has developed a technique in manufacturing boats, and this is either good or bad, depending generally on the length of time the individual has been in the fiberglass boat business. The source of his materials has very little to do with the quality of the boats. It is also interesting to know that, in practically all cases where personnel leaving Owens-Corning or the various resin companies to enter the fiberglass construction field, the enterprises have ended in failure.

The buoyancy of wood over other materials has very little to do with the safety of the boat. Since in almost all cases when a boat becomes larger and has a marine engine installed, or outside ballast, the items heavier than water used in the construction far outweigh the buoyancy in wood, requiring some type of buoyancy other than wood. To provide this in wood boats brings up many difficulties; first the inability to make wood airtight under various climatic conditions; second the introduction of rot in areas sealed off for buoyancy purposes.

Since we have spent many years working in peacetime mostly on pleasure boats, and in wartime entirely for the armed services, we cannot agree that the requirements are entirely different. Some differences, yes, but the requirements are basically the same. I am rather surprised that the average of wood boats in use by the Navy is not more than 70%, because they have had practically no appropriation for new small boats since fiberglass really got out of a development state.

I might add that I sat all day Monday of last week in conference with the Chief of the Bureau of Ships on this very subject, and it is rather fresh in my mind. They made a release at that time which will, without doubt, appear in the reports of the various trade associations, that if the small boat builders are going to be prepared to build small boats in the next emergency for the Navy, they should become acquainted with plastic construction and repair.

We are very proud of the fact that we have boats fifty years old built of wood and still in service, but before you can bring that up as an argument, we have to learn how long the fiberglass boats will last. Our boats built 11 years ago when we started seem to be in as good shape structurally as they were at the time they were built.

Fiberglass is far superior to wood in resiliency and ability to bounce back undamaged, as is best illustrated in the glass surf casting rods used almost exclusively in heavy surf casting these days.

Wood, of course, does not corrode, but it does rot, and I was taught when I went to school that this rotting started before the tree is cut, and under most conditions, when exposed to the weather, continues on its downward way until it is useless. It is a continuous fight from the time the wood goes into the boat until the boat is scrapped to keep the wood protected with anti-fouling paint against worms, varnish and paint against weather. It is estimated under today's conditions that a new boat built of wood costs annually 10% of its original cost for maintenance, with fiberglass less than 1%, so that in ten years a fiberglass boat saves her own cost in maintenance.

Boats of the *Queen Mary* type, or the largest being built 100 years ago, were built of wood so that I would say today the *Queen Mary* is built of steel because steel is both

cheaper and stronger per pound than wood, and just the same as a wood boat, she will sink under certain conditions. There is no question in anybody's mind, familiar with boat construction, that if the *Andrea Doria* had been built of wood, she would have gone to the bottom just as she did, and by this time the worms would have finished the job so that there would be no talk of salvage. The only large boats of this type that have ever floated after being wrecked and filled with water have been vessels carrying a cargo of lumber or other items lighter than water.

We are not advocating an ocean liner to be built of fiberglass for one reason only, and that is a matter of cost. With a base cost of fiberglass material at \$1 per pound, and steel at \$.15 per pound, a fiberglass boat builder is rather at a disadvantage where steel boats are practical.

As to price on today's market, a good fiberglass boat competes in first cost with a good wood boat, but does not compete with the cheaper plywood. The chief reason why fiberglass, properly built, is a better material to eliminate vibration is that it is laminated in one piece and caulking does not have to be held in place, which is usually the problem under severe vibration in wood construction. The wood itself is not the first to let go. The caulking comes out and starts the leak and the fastening in the wood begins to loosen; conceded that wood will absorb and take up a lot of vibration, but this does not keep the boat afloat.

The resiliency of the fiberglass, as explained in connection with the fishing rod, is in our opinion an excellent vibration damper, and we have not known any of our boats to disintegrate and become powder, either after being used for a long time with high-speed and powerful engines, or with heavy, extremely rough, 3-cylinder diesel engines. The repair job we trust we have covered.

We repeat that those that are still in the small boat business are still having a difficult time procuring such items as Sitka spruce spar stock, properly seasoned white oak, white oak bending stock, and white cedar boat planking. Without these items and the men who know how to put them together, it is rather hard for me to visualize a good wood boat.

I have to admit, along with the buying public on today's market, to liking a proper amount of frosting on the cake, and it is interesting to note that this frosting is very often converted into useable space not available in wood construction where space-taking frames are required. You say there are cases on record where vibration in fiberglass boats caused decks, seats, coamings and even transoms to crack loose. It is only obvious that in all the wood boats that have been built by novices and semi-experienced people, this same situation has happened thousands of times. Please remember that from the beginning we are not claiming that any fiberglass boat is a good boat. Our claim is that on today's market, fiberglass is by far the best material for the construction of boats up to sizes suitable for steel.

Having spent considerable of my business life working for the speed king, Gar Wood, I have some knowledge of speed records in boats. Please consider, however, that fiberglass lends itself only to production boats. It would be a very wealthy man indeed who could afford to build a mold for an individual race boat. Consequently, we don't expect any

records from fiberglass boats in the foreseeable future unless such a record is confined entirely to stock boats. It is our feeling, however, that should anybody have the money to build the mold, that we would like to take on a contract to build an individual race boat with an unconditional guarantee on our part that it will not vibrate to powder within two days or two years.

In your paragraph 11, you are technically correct simply because the wood in the hull of a boat has some buoyancy, whereas fiberglass itself is heavier than water, but when you consider the difficulty of adding flotation to a wood boat, and the simplicity of building in air tanks that will not rot out in fiberglass boats, there is no question that most parents wish to buy fiberglass boats, either sail or power, when the matter of safety or non-sinking is of foremost importance.

My comment to number 13 is, "The Lord help the individual company or organization that endeavours to teach the public what it should want. The present situation of the Detroit auto manufacturers is rather a good example."

Number 14 covers a man who came to our business from the automobile business and had very serious growing pains, and as far as I know, still has them. Latest reports show great improvements in the boats.

As to the proposed advertising, I lived through a small period in the automobile business when Buick of General Motors was taking full pages in the New York newspapers,

advertising the dangers of 4-wheel brakes at a time when the next year's cars were already in production with 4-wheel brakes. Possibly you do not remember when cars had brakes only on two wheels. I must say this did a great deal to shake my faith in advertising of any type, and I repeat that I believe if you would spend your million dollars in training woodworkers, you would result in more wood being used. I don't expect, however, that such a suggestion will get even the smallest consideration.

Have a certain pride in the clipping which you sent me concerning the 50' Admiral's Barge. Some few years ago we purchased the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company, who built this boat, and the rights to all their designs. Sidney Herreshoff, son of the famous Nathaniel, is now working with us as a consultant and, no doubt, drew the lines for this particular boat.

May we suggest that you pay us a visit at a time when we can, we hope, bring you up to date on what is going on in the fiberglass boat business.

With best personal regards, sincerely yours, E.L. Goodwin.

PS: Note the sinking of the *Revenoc*, the Conover yacht, last January in Florida waters; and the sinking of the Gold Cup racer, and the Coast Guard picket boat which she rammed, all indicate clearly what happens to wood boats. This past weekend in my town the Coast Guard rescued two passengers from a sinking Chris Craft 22' cruiser, wood, etc.etc.etc.

Epilog

As the new millenium arrived, E.L. Goodwin is no longer with us, but his Cape Cod Shipbuilding lives on, successfully building to order a range of fiberglass sailboats from 9' to 44', based on those Herreshoff designs that "Les" Goodwin had (with remarkable foresight) acquired, as well as Sparkman & Stephens and Phil Rhodes designs. A third generation of the Goodwin family is now working in the family enterprise, with second generation Gordon Goodwin President.

"Les" Goodwin was born in 1899 and died in 1995 at age 95, two years after he "retired" at 93, chiefly due, according to his son Gordon, to the failure of his hearing. I can of course only speculate, but it must have been a great satisfaction to him to see his version of what was going to happen in the boatbuilding industry come to pass.

Gordon Goodwin told me that this year Cape Cod Shipbuilding's entire production run of Herreshoff 12-1/2s and Bullseyes is sold out, they have a run of a dozen Cape Cod Mercurys in production, and will soon be starting a 30' Olin Stephens designed Shields One Design.

And what, I wonder, ever happened to *Hitchcock's Wood Working* magazine, or the Great Eastern Lumber Company?

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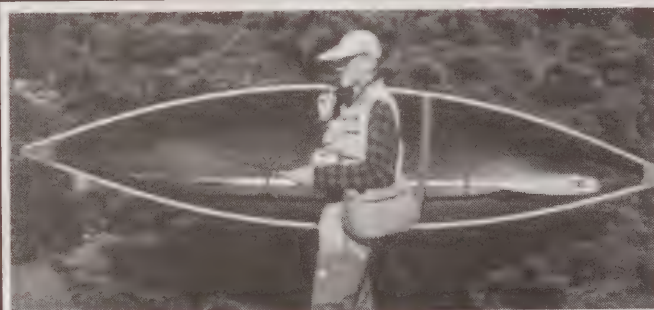


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Joel Flather, owner

I have a cousin who has been a paraplegic since the late sixties. He has full use of his arms and a good little bit of the rest of him too, like his head. After Dick got out of the hospital and got to where he could make that wheelchair do a little bit of what he wanted it to and got his equipment rental business percolating up a little money, he decided to rig up a boat to suit him.

He bought one of those wide buttheaded aluminum skiffs and a twenty horse outboard. He built some good floorboards and a fold-up ramp in the bow sort of like an LCM. With that rig, he could push his boat off the trailer, flop his ramp down and roll over the bow and back to the stern and run the engine right from his wheelchair and he could push up to the bank and get out just as easily. It was a good working rig and everything would have been fine except Dick is sort of a reckless and careless person by nature.

One time he and his wife decided to go way up into the wilds of some of the dead lakes. Those are places where a lot of the rivers around here sort of lose their way in thickets and swamps after they get out of the hills and into the flatwoods. The fishing is very good back in there because the people are usually pretty scarce so places like that are attractive to folks like Dick and me. It is possible to get stranded in all those creeks and sloughs and lose your way and feed a lot of mosquitoes before you can get back out.

There is a legend about a man named Tate who got tangled up in some of that kind of country between the Ochlocknee and Apalachicola Rivers in the panhandle of Florida. Like a lot of those kinds of places it is hard to tell which river system "Tate's Hell Swamp" is actually associated with. Might be "Whiskey George Creek" for all I know. Anyway, this old Tate went back in there around the turn of the last century for some reason or other and couldn't figure out which way was the right way and stayed lost back in there for about a year (exact dates and duration depends on who is telling the story). When old Tate finally came staggering out, his hair as white as snow where it had been black as smut before, and he was skinny and set up by skeeters and had scratches all over his shanks, no shoes, no hat, clothes in rags. When they said, "Damn, Tate, where you been all this time?" He answered, "I've been in Hell boys," and keeled over and died.

Well, it didn't happen to Dick quite as bad as that, but he did get himself in a bunch of trouble back in there. He and his wife were about twelve miles back in the wilds in his excellent rig. He had just checked the gas to make sure he hadn't burned more than half of it and they were thinking about heading back to the semi-civilization of the boat ramp because they already had a mess of those big old stumpknockers and red bellies when all of a sudden, the drone of the engine ceased so abruptly that the silence was deafening.

Dick said it went "Moom, moom, moom, moom, moop." The boat finally eased to a stop and they could hear the crickets, cicadas and frogs singing their afternoon song, birds in the bushes, bream popping the bugs on the surface of the water and the little diminishing wavelets of their passage slapping on the steel gas tank of the outboard motor where it was floating upside down about a quarter of a mile back.

So Dick got his paddle and sculled back

The Time Dick Almost Lost The Outboard Motor

By Robb White

there to find out what he could. I don't know if it is a regional thing or what, but fresh water fishermen (some professionals) around here used to scull over the bow of the boat. Some of them used a special little short paddle and rested the shank of it up their forearm while they zigged and zagged the blade in the water and some of them (like me) use a full-length paddle and sort of hold the shaft between their neck and collar bone. You can hold a boat pretty well against the current (or a little breeze) while you dangle your worm in one little likely spot after another but it is another almost lost art now that most of these people (some professionals) have degenerated down so completely to those electric trolling motors.

I got off the track there for a little minute and left Dick and his wife in that terrible fix way back in the swamp where old Tate roosted with the moccasins and alligators. I told you that Dick was smart and one of the smartest things he ever did was to pay attention to one of my tirades about how stupid it is to trust an outboard motor, so he had his oars. Too bad he didn't pay attention to the one about how you need to make a little ritual twist on the clamp screws every time you think about it and not trust any little nylon cord hooked up to an eyebolt to hold twenty horses when they hop off the transom and take off on their own.

Which I have to digress one little more time. One of my uncles snatched the whole seat out from under himself with a chain in one of the first fiberglass boats ever made after the engine wiggled off that slick gel-coat. It dropped him in the bilges so hard that it broke his coccyx. He said it hurt so bad that he almost lost consciousness and then, to make matters worse, when he came to, he had to paddle that heavy, wide fiberglass boat about five miles with a heavy fiberglass paddle. He was a regular fiberglass man there for a little while.

Finally his tailbone stopped hurting so bad but about three weeks later he got to where he couldn't pee and it turned out that the thing was loose in there and had wandered over wedged up against some of his plumbing. Cost him a bunch of money to get straightened out and he never did find that outboard motor. It was easy for Dick to find his though with that big red buoy marking the spot.

When they got back where the gas tank was floating, they discovered that it was still hooked up down there. That's unusual too because I have found out that most outboard engine problems are because those little half-assed clip-on gas hose things ain't but about half clipped on or else have clipped the "O" ring about half in two and are letting air in the line so what the engine is getting is about half air. Enough of that too.

They tried to pull the engine up with the gas hose but could tell that it would pull off before they could grab it. Then they spent about half an hour trying to hook it with the anchor but when Tate's mosquitoes started

finding out the good news, they realized that it was time to get serious with this retrieval project or else get those oars and start trying to pull that unmanageable, butt headed tub back to the ramp.

Dick got out of his wheelchair, climbed over the side, took a deep breath and followed the hose down to the engine. Luckily the water was shallow enough so that he could press his butt down in the mud and barely lift the engine up high enough so that his wife could grab it. It took two or three frantic tries and Dick was so stuck in the mud after each attempt that he almost drowned trying to scramble loose so he could come up for a breath of air but they finally got the heavy engine back in the boat.

Now Dick is a good, old-style intuitive mechanic, meaning that he don't have to have the book or any set ritual to get started doing what what he has to do. The skeeters were eating them both up when he got back in the boat and it was getting dark so he couldn't see what to do to get this engine running so he decided to just clamp it on the stern and make one try to start it without even taking the spark plugs out.

But when he tried to pull the rope, the engine was locked up from all that water it swallowed when it hopped off the transom running like that. Dick said that by then, he was wiping those mosquitoes off by the bloody handful so he just pulled on the rope steadily, as hard as he could and gradually he got a little and then a little more as the water in the cylinders leaked past the rings.

Finally he had struggled both cylinders through a couple of compression strokes and it got to feeling sort of normal and he pulled it a bunch of times like you have to do a chainsaw and squeezed the gas line bulb and worked the choke and all for a long time while his wife slapped the skeeters off both of them. He wound up having to cut the gas line near the engine end and used the fuel bulb to squirt gas into the venturi of the carburetor while he pulled and finally the engine backfired a gout of flaming gas into his lap and acted like it wanted to run so he gnawed the one-shot hose clamp off the titty of the connector fitting, hooked her back up and cranked up and headed for home. Unfortunately, in accordance with Dick's luck, they had squirted too much gas around the outfit back there and it gave out a good bit short of the ramp and had to row anyway.

When he told me about it later on, we went and had a look at the engine (fresh water, good as new). We figured that spark-plug-in purging operation wouldn't have worked if the engine had had points. Us old die-hard square-nut mechanics can say what we want to, but electronic ignition is a good thing. It is a cop-out not to like it because we don't understand that little "module" like we do points, condensers and spark coils. What I understand about those is that they are, all three, treacherous, them and the wires and the plugs. I would certainly rather carry an extra module than a flywheel puller even if I don't understand what it is.

Dick said, "Hell, if it hadda had fuel injection, it might have beat us back to the ramp." While we were out there looking at his motor, my attention span ran out and I starting looking at Dick's beard (he has a beard about like a "ZZ Top"). "Damn, Dick, ain't them a few white hairs up there by your ears?"



May I Suggest My DD-18 For the Island Trail?

By Dennis Davis

Ben Fuller's piece "In Search of the Ideal Island Trail Cruiser" in the March 15th issue prompts me to suggest my DD18. This is a very easily driven little boat with ample space aboard for camping and a good turn of speed even when fitted with the two small lugsails and, of course, plenty of buoyancy. Stability is excellent and I think with a conventionally sited daggerboard she will go well to windward and be ideally suited to the Island Trail.

This one should appeal to those who want to build a simple boat for camp cruising. The 15'0" DD18 is essentially a hard chine plywood sailing canoe, but the big difference is that the aft positioned dagger board and twin sails allow ample flat floor space for two adults to sleep under a tent hung from the two masts. Construction is straightforward stitch & tape using four and half 8' x 4' sheets of 4mm thick plywood.

The prototype DD18 in the photos was built by Hugh Webb, a hobby boatbuilder. The sails and paddles/oars can be supplemented if required with a little extra power in the form of an outboard motor, so a well can be incorporated aft of the mizzen mast thwart. For rowing one or two removable thwarts can be fitted.

On her maiden sail in F3-4 winds the DD18 proved herself very amenable to being steered with the twin balanced lug sails. In less ideal conditions a conventional rudder controlled by an endless line should nicely overcome the difficulty of positioning the tiller, although builders may have their own ideas on this. However, the prototype does not go well to windward with the aft DB and equal area sails. A larger mizzen (schooner main) might improve things, so builders may prefer a more conventional position for the board. This will not interfere unduly with the deck space available for sleeping.

The DD 18 will carry two adults and two or three youngsters with room to spare for gear. Buoyancy is incorporated under the floor and at both ends. The finished weight of the boat will largely depend upon the materials used but should be within the capacity of two adults to carry and launch, as is the case with the prototype.

LOA 15'0"
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Sprit Boom Interference??

By Jim Michalak

Readers may recall this prototype photo of my AF3 design. This boat was built by Herb McLeod in Edmonton, Alberta. The rig shown in that photo was with a sail he had on hand, 107sf vs the 96sf version of the original design. The clew of this first sail is cut higher than the blueprint sail.

The sprit boom shown in that first photo was mounted higher than what I had on the drawing. It's an interesting point in that the higher snotter mounting is thought to give better sail shape. Maybe so, but from my experiences with having the spotter tackle needing adjusting at difficult times, I always show the spotter mounting at an easy arm's reach. It only comes apart when conditions are really bad and if you need to stand up on the deck of a small boat to fix it you will have two serious problems instead of one.

Also the prototype boom had a curve in it to reduce the "interference" caused on one tack when the sail must drape over a straight

boom. Some try a double wishbone such as used with windsurfers to accomplish the same thing. Either boom is a lot more complex to build than a straight pole and in the case of

the curved boom a second halyard is needed to support the boom. Is all that worthwhile?

After the first year's use, Herb wrote me that his friend Gordon was building an identical AF3. Gordon's boat was completed with the 96sf sail per the blueprint with a straight boom. I thought having the two boats, identical except for the sails, might make for some interesting experiments. But Herb sent more good news. He had converted his boat back to the 96sf sail, the two sails made at the same time by the same sailmaker. (The second photo shows that blueprint rig and also features Maggie the Dog looking out through the oar port.)

I wrote to Herb suggesting the two boats be sailed side by side, one boat rigged as a "righty" and the other rigged as a "lefty", that is with the sprit booms rigged on opposite sides of the sails. Then a good comparison of the interference effects of the sail draping over the boom might be seen.

I had tried such a test a long time ago with my Birdwatcher sailing beside Dan Knoedler's Dovekie in a very light wind. It appeared to us that the boat with the sail on the upwind side of the sprit boom, i.e. with no sail interference, always had the advantage. But those two boats are quite different. I've also thought that those armadas of racing Sunfish that we used to see (no more, where did they all go?) must have settled the interference argument every Sunday but that they kept the answer a secret.

Herb wasted no time. A week after my suggestion he wrote back: 'Went sailing with both AF3s today. The conditions varied from fog to sun with winds from 9km/hr to 24km/hr (6mph to 15mph), temperatures varied from 18 to 24C. When one small storm cell passed through the winds were probably considerably higher. We went sailing for six hours and I rigged my AF3 as a lefty and Gord left his as a righty. The boats were sailed with full sail (no reefing).

Results: At the wind speeds we had we could not detect any discernable difference between the boats in speed on any point of sail, on either tack, and we tried them all. Also there was no difference in pointing ability on either tack (we were consistently tacking to 90-95 degrees on my compass)."

Well, there you have it, the only test I've seen of the interference of the sprit boom on the sail. It appears that in the real world it is not a factor. But I'm sure that won't keep folks from inventing all sorts of "improved" booms.

Plans for AF3 are \$30.

Jim Michalak, 118 E. Randall, Lebanon, IL 62254, www.apci.net/~michalak



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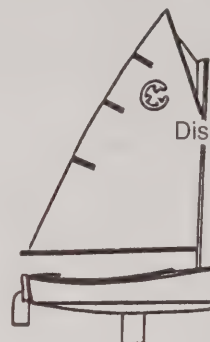
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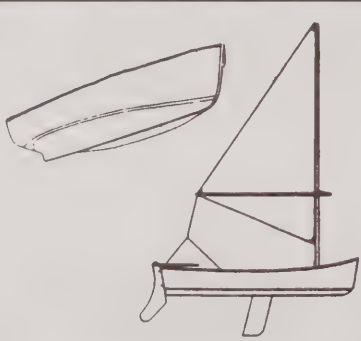
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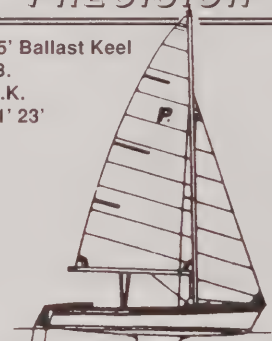
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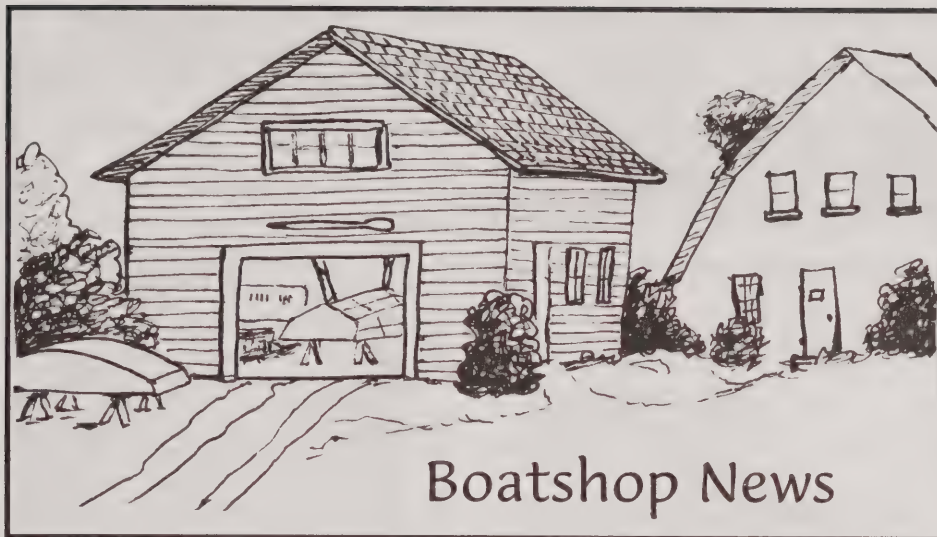
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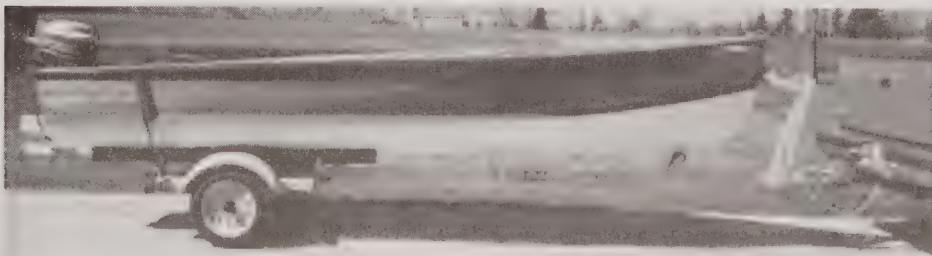
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By Gil Cramer

In addition to my usual canoe restorations I am now restoring boats up to 16' in molded plywood, lapstrake, cedar strip and canvas. Herewith are photos of three recent restorations I have done.



1954 Henry Brothers Canadian style cedar strip runabout.



1949 Penn Yan 14' Trailboat.



13-1/2' lapstrake row/motor boat, before and after.



Redd's Pond Boatworks

1 Norman St., Marblehead, MA 01945

By Thad Danielson

In the last year at Redd's Pond Boatworks I have rebuilt a Jim Steele Peapod, repaired and recanvassed an Old Town canoe, replaced the cockpit sole in a Rozinante and cut a cove under her sheer, rebuilt a Snipe, built a gaff rig for an old 13' catboat, done expensive work on the restoration of a Herreshoff S boat, sold a Triangle sloop to Finland and shipped the boat and her rig in a container and then found another Triangle for restoration. These are the bigger jobs of the year during which there were numerous smaller jobs, getting out a part, turning a spindle, reefing and caulking seams, or supplying boat lumber and fasteners. There also were the four dinghy rail jobs, and one rail installation on a bigger boat. A few winter days were spend developing my website.

I have a Norwegian Pram started that I worked on at the Salem Maritime Festival, otherwise this has been one of those restoration years. Quite a few people have talked to me about new construction projects, from dinghies, dories, and whitehalls, to Quiet Tune and Alerion II, but these have not happened yet. Some years have been all new construction and some have been all restoration. The good thing recently has been the way work has come in steadily, interesting projects on good boats.

One of the important jobs in building traditional wooden boats is finding and maintaining sources of wood and other materials. I have always liked working with sawyers and lumber suppliers to keep stock on hand and have sources for special purposes. Right now I have a couple of thousand board feet of good eastern white cedar, a good selection of white oak, and working stocks of spruce, cypress, mahogany, teak, pine, butternut, and hackmatack knees. For bending, I look for fresh sawn straight grain flitches from white oak butts. I have one especially good source for those in Jim Aaron of Shutesbury, Massachusetts.

The classic boats I like have the look and feel of wood from keel to sheer. The resilience, strength, and beauty of the wooden hull contributes greatly to its performance in the water. The integrated structure of the wooden boat developed over thousands of years to provide safe and comfortable passage on the waterways of the world. To experience these capabilities we have to keep building and maintaining these vessels. The boats speak for themselves if we will listen.



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This further stretch, by another 4', was intended for three rowers without a cox, and for a wide variety of combinations of rowers and passengers; hence the multiple oarlock sockets and movable seats. The very slim lines produced by the long stretch reduce the penalty of the dory shape in comparison with more complex models; these boats can be

Bolger on Design

Three Man Light Dory
 040500

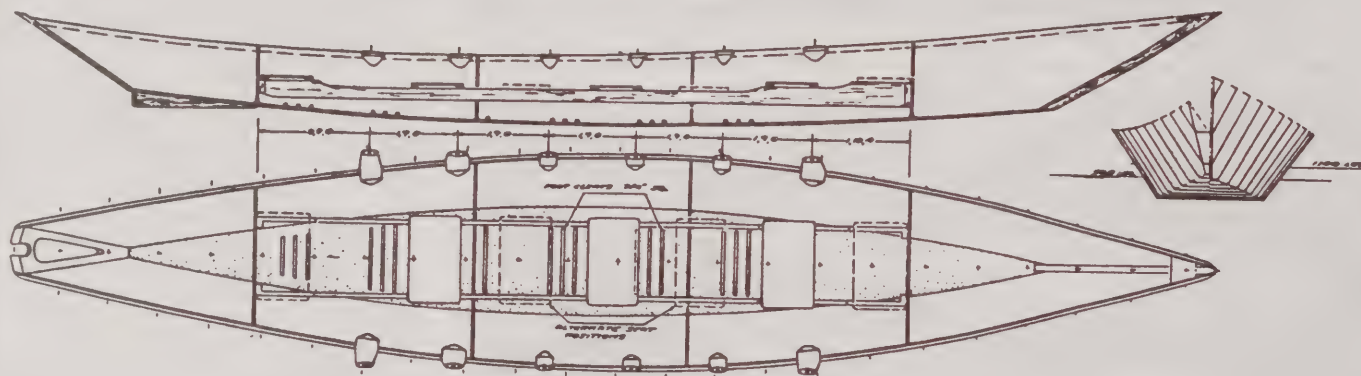
Design #555, 23'6" x 4'0"

rowed quite fast. Again, there's an improvement in steadiness over the shorter and lighter boats, and they can carry more weight in proportion to the added length. The longer boats punch through a small chop without being stopped, but they're not as dry because they're not so lively in pitch; they don't lift as lightly over an oncoming crest with any given load.

These boats would run quite well with an outboard motor in a well inboard of the stern, but a square sterned boat, that is, one

with the stern the same size and shape as the midsection, would be better with almost any motor if it wasn't overloaded.

They could be sailed. They're like some of the "clipper dories" of a hundred years ago and would sail quite fast with an active and alert crew. But they would not sail either as fast or as safely (an old-timer said to me when, as a boy, I was admiring a beautiful Chaisson sailing dory, "Don't fool yourself. They're no sea boats under sail.") as a modern boat with a stern shape better suited to fast sailing. Given a better stern shape, a boat with a narrow bottom and flaring sides, like this, can sail very fast, but her crew has to be both expert and tireless. The vast majority will go faster, to say nothing of safer, with a boat with more initial stability and more buoyancy below the gunwale. A relatively minor point is how a reasonably efficient rudder can be worked into a stern like this. There are not, and won't be, any plans for a sailing rig for this design!



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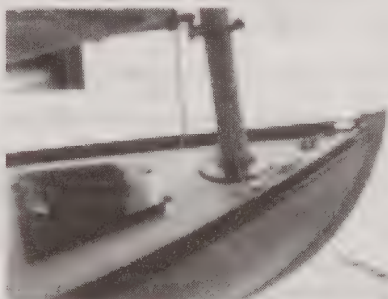
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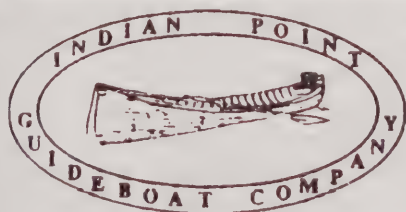
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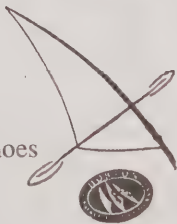
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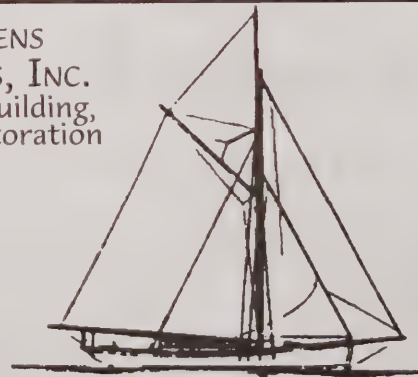
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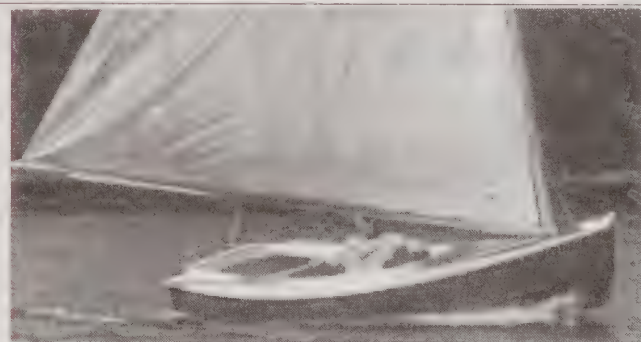
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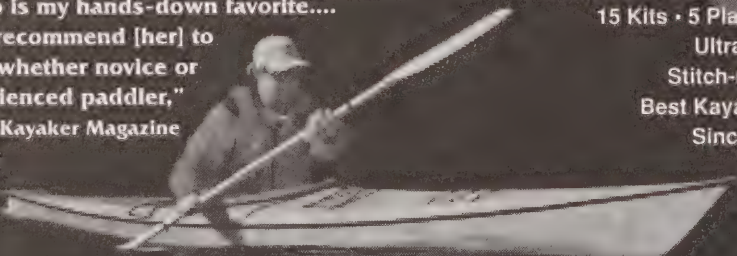
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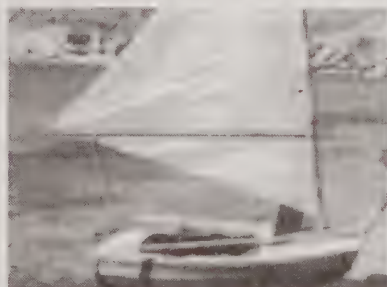
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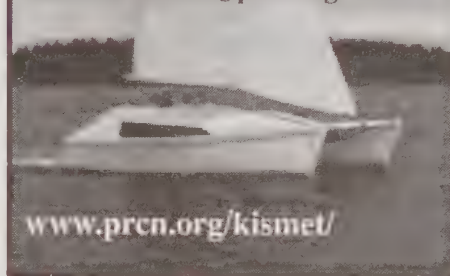
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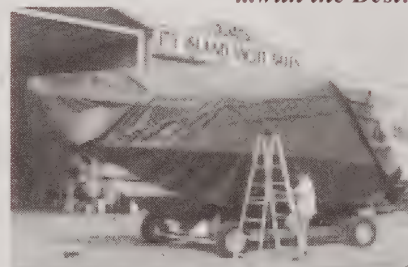
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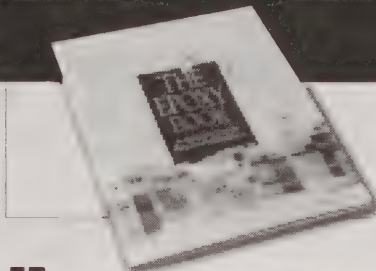
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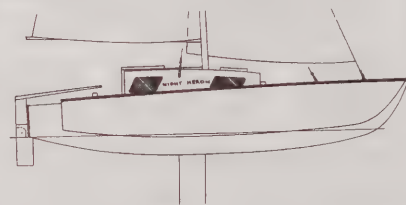
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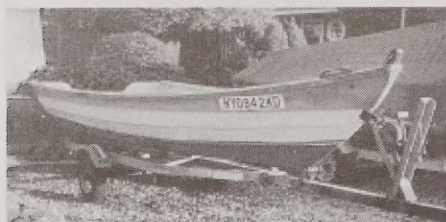
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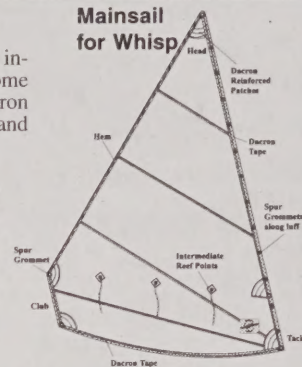
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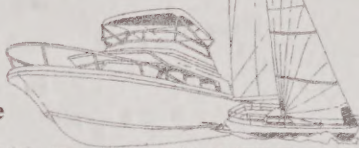
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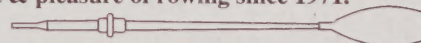
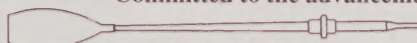
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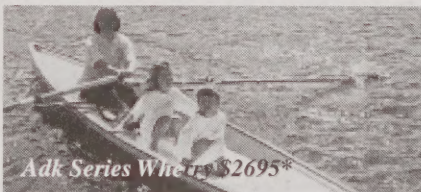
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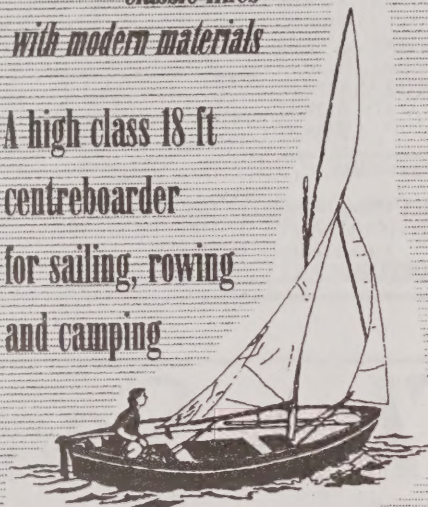
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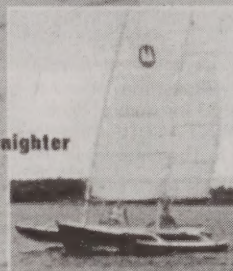
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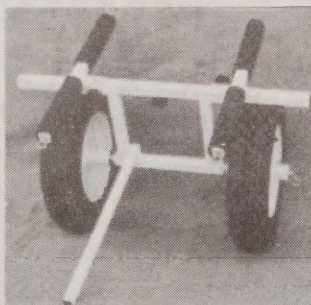
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