

Special Features This Issue
"Mystic Small Craft Workshop"
"John Gardner's Exploration of Hull Design"



messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 22 - Number 6

August 1, 2004



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On the Cover...

"Is it my turn yet?" The kids were everywhere at the Mystic Small Craft Workshop, enlivening the whole weekend of small boat appreciation and enjoyment.

Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor



On the "You write to us about..." pages in this issue you will find a letter from Robb White announcing that he has established a website, with his reasons for so doing. They're not the conventional wisdom as you will discover. Robb has been just as disinterested in an internet presence as I have been. Robb and I are akin in our lack of enthusiasm for instant communications, Robb even more than I for he has no phone he can be reached at.

I have been dabbling around a bit with the internet culture for some time now and my experience to date has convinced me that I am still not missing much. I realize that those who are addicted to instant communication at any time, with anyone, anywhere find my relative inaccessibility quaintly, if not downright irritatingly archaic. But I like it.

Messing About in Boats has a website, have you seen it? I haven't. Bythesea.com set it up as a sort of quid pro quo for using articles out of the magazine on their own site. What has it done for me? It brings in a trickle of new subscriptions, welcome but not significant in our overall circulation picture. Mostly it brings requests for back issues or reprints of articles from them from an index posted on it that a devoted reader did up for me in 1998. While I am happy to oblige with photocopying these requested articles, they are just added small tasks for me requiring time taken from more urgent tasks.

We are also posted on the bythesea.com site and this does bring in more new subscriptions, about 10%-15% of all received, so again, while welcome, they do not represent a major source of new readers. And through our cooperation with duckworksmagazine.com we offer subscribers, new or renewals, the option of credit card payment over the internet, resulting in a handful of responses monthly.

We just concluded (in late May) a brief experiment in which I really thought the internet would be useful, e-mailing issues to overseas readers who wait up to six weeks for surface mail delivery of their magazines and pay more for postage than for the magazine. Two interested German subscribers were unable to receive the e-mail version, the file was too large for their capacity to absorb it. Our lone subscriber in New Guinea, probably the remotest reader we have, was able to receive his but it took hours downloading and tied up his business phone line too long. So...

A while back I commented on this page that we might offer this "e-zine" version for any subscriber interested in the U.S. and three readers responded. One said, "great!" One said he was sick of staring into computer

screens and preferred to curl up in a chair or on his boat with the print version. The third was aghast that I'd even consider such thing.

My experiences to date indicate to me that I am well in tune with most readers, that a print magazine and letters in their mail serve their needs adequately. They must be, like me, content to take the time to write or read a letter or await a print copy of the magazine. I view the convenience of the internet as just another means for those addicted to it to reduce their time spent communicating with others, apparently feeling time pressures in daily life that I do not.

What I notice also is how these speeded up communications, including the last minute cell phone call from the highway somewhere, encourage the procrastinators to wait until the last possible minute and then send urgent communications requesting immediate attention since they are running so late. I have no fax and no answering machine, but if I am in the office I personally answer the phone and am happy to accommodate their urgent pleas (usually relating to a last minute ad or event announcement).

Those who resort to sending something at the last minute for my attention to our e-mail address, set up for subscription fulfillment purposes only, might as well have mailed it, for I usually gather up these e-mails weekly or so when my daughter and I meet to deal with business matters. That e-mail address is monitored only part time as we set it up only for routine subscriber matters such as address changes or delivery problems, which we deal with on a weekly basis, not daily.

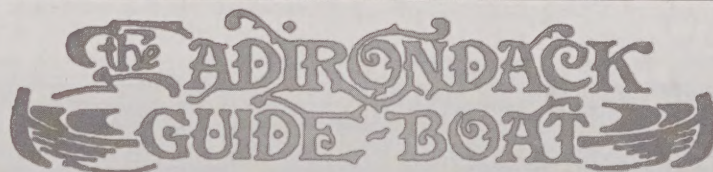
A while back my outlook was viewed as being analogous to that of the Luddites, anti-progress rioters of early 19th century England. A reader sent me a book about the Luddites and from it I have determined that I do not fit that mold. They were actively destroying factory machines they viewed as taking away their livelihoods. I am not anti-progress and do not oppose today's communications superhighway, I just don't use it.

As a quasi-public figure editing a magazine, I face a potentially very large crowd of those who might wish to communicate with me for any reason at all, much larger of a crowd than any one of you is likely to encounter in your own internet adventuring. But, my being accessible by mail and, when I am in the office, by phone, serves very well those who feel a real need to communicate with me, yet provides me with days free of unanticipated interruptions, days of relative peace and quiet, in which to get on with whatever it is I have, or want, to do.

The ADIRONDACK GUIDE-BOAT



16' Cedar Guideboat



June 18-20 No Octane Regatta, Blue Mtn Lake, NY
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July 16-8 Adirondack Living, Lake Placid, NY
July 17-8 Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, VT
July 30-1 Aug Champlain Valley Folk Festival
July 30-1 Aug Finger Lakes Antique Boat Show NY
July 30-Aug 1 Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, VT
Aug 6-8 Antique & Classic Boatshow Clayton NY
Aug 6-8 Hildene Arts Fest, Manchester, VT
Aug 13-15 Maine Boats & Harbors, Rockland ME
Aug 20-22 Lake Placid Art Fest, Lake Placid NY
Sep 10-12 Port Townsend Wooden Boat Fest WA
Sep 23-6 Norwalk Boat Show, Norwalk, CT
Sep 24-6 Eastern States Expo, Springfield MA
Oct 1-3 Hildene Arts Fest, Manchester, VT
Oct 8-10 Stowe Arts Festival, Stowe, VT
Nov 4-7 Philadelphia Museum of Art Craftshow
Nov 5-7 Fine Furnishings Show, Providence, RI
Nov 13-4 Adirondack Living, Purchase NY
(Just to be safe, call or e-mail to confirm show dates.)

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"Once you get into one of these boats you won't want to get out." Vogue

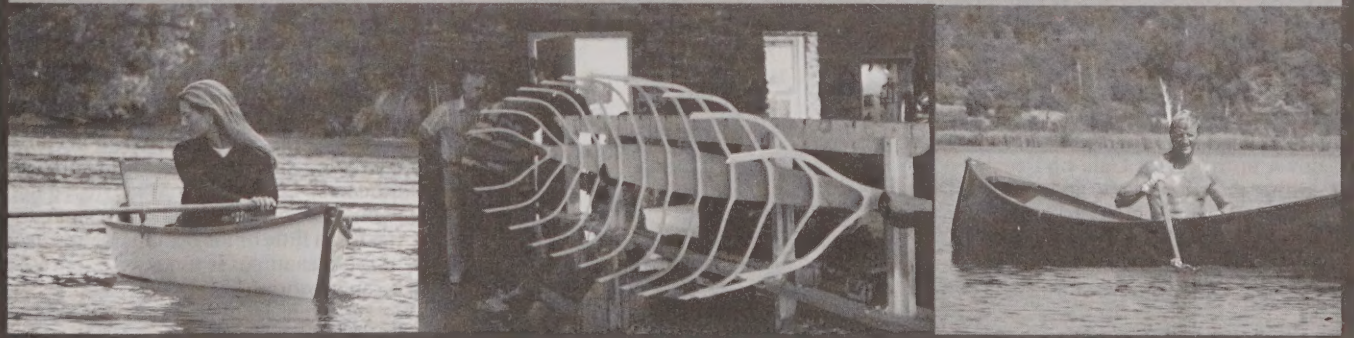
"Truly, these are boats you can hug." Popular Mechanics

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15' Kevlar Guideboat



You write to us about...

Activities & Events...

22nd Annual Boston Antique & Classic Boat Festival

Over 40 vintage sailboats and motor yachts will sail into Salem (MA) Harbor the weekend of August 28-29 for the 22nd Annual Boston Antique & Classic Boat Festival. Beautifully restored by their owners, these elegant wooden vessels of yesteryear will be on display to the public at Hawthorne Cove Marina. In the spirit of the event, some skippers and crews sport vintage garb; others display period decor and table settings on their craft. Many proud owners invite the public aboard for a personal tour, regaling their visitors with colorful anecdotes and yams of memorable voyages.

While the Tall Ships extravaganza is a hugely publicized event capturing headlines and drawing millions, our "short ships" festival is engaging in its own right. It offers a great variety of vintage boat types to see, both power and sail. These are, for the most part, private yachts owned by individuals rather than institutions. And the experience is much more intimate, the public doesn't have to wait in line for hours and they get to chat and make friends with owners and crew.

Boats don't need to be in show condition, we just want to gather together the grand old craft and those who love them. We owe a lot to individuals who have the imagination and fortitude to rescue, restore, and maintain these beautiful boats which are, after all, our maritime heritage. If they don't bother, we lose it! Those interested in further details can call me at (617) 666 8530.

Pat Wells, Somerville, MA

Information of Interest...

Shipwrecks on the Massachusetts North Shore

The winds, currents, and shifting sandbars of Bigelow's Bight, the area of coastal waters stretching from the Gulf of Maine to Cape Ann, Massachusetts, and east to Jeffrey's Ledge, have led to scores of shipwrecks and the loss of many lives. The Newburyport Maritime Society explores both historic and modern day shipwrecks in this region in a new exhibit entitled "Shipwrecks: Backyard Snapshots."

From 1772 to 1936, hundreds of vessels were lost off Plum Island, with a large cluster of shipwrecks occurring at the mouth of the Merrimack River where every major storm would cause the entrance of the harbor to change. Included in the exhibit is a map of these wrecks, many of which were chronicled in documents and photographs on display. Salvaged artifacts from a number of the wrecks, including the brig *Pocahontas* which went down in the Great Gale of December 1839, killing the entire crew, and the schooner *Jennie M. Carter* which ran aground on Salisbury Beach in April 1894 causing the loss of the of her six crew members, including the captain's young niece, are also on display.

Even with modern day navigation equipment and GPS, shipwrecks remain a relatively common occurrence on "the Bight." In December 2002, the *Seawind*, a tugboat out of Gloucester bound for the Chain Bridge in Newburyport, lost control in rough seas and grounded itself and a barge loaded with construction equipment on the south jetty off Plum Island. Five crewmembers were rescued by helicopter and the barge remained grounded for months until it was dismantled in the spring of 2003.

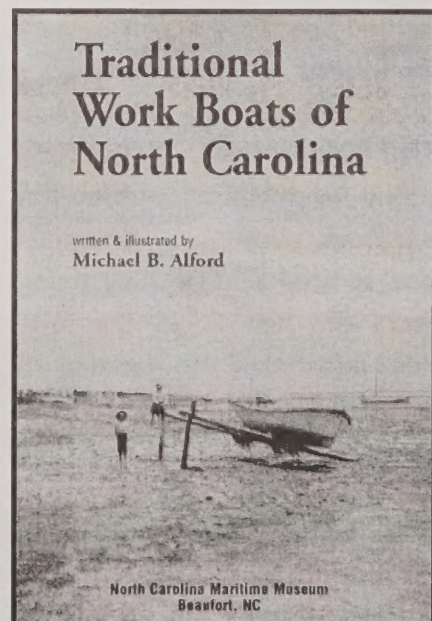
"Shipwrecks: Backyard Snapshots" will be on display through the fall in the NMS' Custom House Maritime Museum at 25 Water Street in the historic downtown part of Newburyport, Massachusetts.

The Newburyport Maritime Society (NMS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and interpreting the maritime heritage of the lower Merrimack Valley. The NMS owns and operates the Custom House Maritime Museum in Newburyport and Lowell's Boat Shop Museum in Amesbury, showcasing over four centuries of maritime history in the region. For more information, call the NMS at (978) 462-8681, or visit www.themaritimesociety.org.

Traditional Work Boats of North Carolina

The N.C. Maritime Museum has published a revised new edition of *Traditional Work Boats of North Carolina* by Michael B. Alford, curator of maritime research at the museum until his retirement in 1996. The original edition, published in 1990, quickly became the "first stop" for researchers and others interested in the state's watercraft. It went out of print several years ago and there has been a steady flow of requests since.

The publication is now available (in paperback) from the Museum Store for \$7.95 plus shipping and handling. Please contact the store at (252) 728-7317 or via email at <Sharon.Resor@ncmail.net> to order your copy.



Projects...

A Birdwatcher in Argentina

At least eight years ago my friend Hector Silvetti in Argentina built my \$200 Sailboat. He had trouble getting payment for the plans to me, finally sent U.S. currency wrapped in aluminum foil to foil X-ray machines. Argentina was, and still is, in a financial crisis. He had to scrounge materials. For example, he got paint by painting the church steeple for it, etc. He was living in an apartment building, built the boat on the balcony, and used the fire hose to lower it to the ground.

He and his wife cruised as much as a week at a time in the boat and went foreign across the River Plate to Uruguay. He wanted to build something larger. I got Birdwatcher plans from Dynamite Payson and sent them to Hector. He built her and is sailing her, which generated this story.

"Birdwatcher is sailing splendidly while the weather permits. Fall wonderful in the lakes area. The woods showing red and golden leaves. No snowfalls yet. Skiff sailed aplenty, too.

"Faced a real problem with the new Coast Guard Commander here. Just hit the ceiling when he, while "inspecting" the yachts at the Nahuel Huapi Sailing Club, saw Birdwatcher ready to sail.

"He just stated that it was not possible to allow such a "floating greenhouse" (his words) to sail the Lakes Area. He asked me to close the cabin top, to have a self bailing cockpit, and to place the mast and board at the centerline of her.

"I could have killed him but I talked him into having a sail with me. It was a nightmare but, at last, after capsizing Birdwatcher on purpose and scaring the hell out of him, he admitted that I knew what I was doing. We are by now almost close friends!

"My wife is still chuckling when she sees him. Those Bolger designs can inspire unusual reactions."

Dave Carnell, Wilmington, NC

Improved Boatbuilding Pleasure

Two things that have improved my boatbuilding pleasure several fold are worth mentioning in *MAIB*. The first is the "Digital Kitchen Scale." For 20 years I have been frustrated with Gougeon Brothers Mini-Pumps when they pass an air bubble. Maybe I have been doing something wrong, but inevitably at just the wrong time I get half a charge. Target sells digital scales in the \$15 to \$20 range. Pouring is faster and easier and accurate to one-tenth of an ounce. West's™ new liquid colorant is a repeatable snap with a good scale.

The second is ProChine 3 software by New Wave Systems. I am currently building a 15' sailboat that I call a Geezers Beach Dart. Amazingly, I designed it myself using this ProChine 3 software (\$195). You are allowed 24 saves as a free demo. I used 14 saves to design this boat. I should have read the documentation first as I had to make some significant fairing shifts on the fly. I plan now to buy the software for my next boat, but I'm reading a little of the documentation each day in the meantime. It turns out there is a step by step tutorial. Free!

Dwight Jacobus, Louisville, KY

Robb's on the World Wide Web!

I have been forced to get me a web page out of self defense. What happens is that when an internetter searches for my name on one of these online phone books, they come up with my sister's phone number because it used to be listed under my father's name back before he ran off to California in 1956 and, despite the fact that she had it unlisted some three or four years ago, it'll still search up.

She is like me in that she does not use the phone for incoming calls but, instead of the bleat of a fax machine, the caller gets this awful sounding man on her answering machine explaining that nobody is home and not to call again. These poor people trying to get in touch with me think that horrid voice is me and that I am just fooling around, so they persist.

One time a man came all the way down here from Michigan or some place and stayed in a hotel and called and called. He had two numbers, hers and my fax machine. He stayed for days trying to break through the defenses. He didn't have a fax machine or he could have been easily successful but he did have the damned internet. Somehow there is a "service" on there that will navigate a person directly to the front door of the house that contains the cursed telephone (!) and this man followed the directions and sat out there in my sister's yard and called both numbers repeatedly on his cell phone using the handy "redial" feature.

Finally he got around the fax machine because Jane was waiting for a call to choreograph the complications of grandchildren activity scheduling and she beat the machine to the phone. The man explained how he was trying to find me and she asked him where he was. "I am right here in your dooryard," he explained. She could hear my sister's dog barking in the background.

That's one reason but the other is that someone has laid claim to my father and has a web site explaining all she knows about him and his books and movies and all. She also entertains a "Robb White chat room" which is not monitored so it is full of filthy graffiti like an abandoned warehouse. I wouldn't want anybody to come up with that and think it had anything to do with me.

There is yet another reason. On my web page (www.robwhite.com) I explain exactly how to get in touch with me so there will be no more wasted effort by internetters (non-internetters do not encounter all these difficulties). I also post, from time to time, short documents and photographs to dispel myths about my lack of credibility. There is one thing internetters among your readers need to know, though. This is a one-way street. I do not have an email address so there can be no direct contact except by the same old routes. I don't even maintain the site. A buddy of mine over in Mississippi does that for me. I have to get my son to email him what to do. I might be the only person in the World Wide Web who has a web site without being connected. Let me disconnect myself right now and go to the coast.

Robb White, Thomaston, GA

Robb White, Boatbuilder, Thomasville, GA



Dear Web Site Visitor,

This is the official Robb White Website. The reason it is here is to straighten out confusion. There are several Robb Whites but I am the one who writes boat stories for various magazines and who wrote the book *How to Build a Tin Canoe*. I am not allowed to sell the book because of some legal rigmarole but you can get it here.

I do not have any email capability nor do I talk on the telephone. Aside from writing me a plain old letter to P.O. Box 561, Thomasville, GA 31799, the best way to communicate is by a fax to (229) 226-2524. If you search the online phone books, you might

come up with a Robb White in south Georgia, but that is not me and that woman is tired of having to drive to my shop to tell me that somebody is desperately trying to get hold of me.

My father's name was Robb White and there is a web page devoted to him at <http://www.gnatinc.com/whitebooks.html>. That web page invites chat. This one does not.

I am gone to the coast and I give you joy of a similar adventure.

Robb White

<http://www.robwhite.com/>



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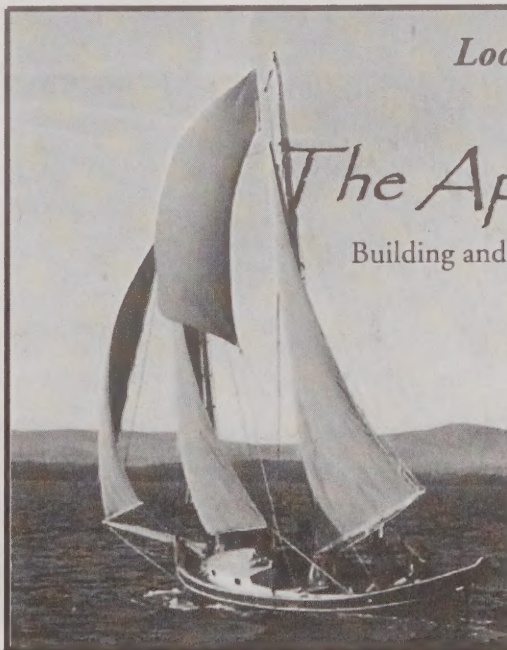
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When we arrived at Mystic Seaport at 10:00 AM and walked through the Seaport to the site of the Small Craft Workshop at Lighthouse Point, we remarked on the scarcity of people encountered on the grounds, perhaps due to the Seaport having just opened for the day. Arriving at Lighthouse Point, we noted that the assembled multitude was somewhat thinner on the ground than in past years. "True," organizer Peter Vermilya responded, "there are fewer participants this year." Then his face lit up some and he added, "but there are more boats." It appears that those who chose to pay the \$50 fee (up from \$30 a few years ago) were those motivated to bring boats they very much wanted to show off and share with fellow small craft addicts.

Enjoying the pleasures of a simple rowboat.



Mystic Small Craft Workshop

By Bob Hicks

The fleet came to about 70 boats of nearly as many types (an enduring attraction of small craft gatherings). After spending the day looking them over and schmoozing with their owners/builders, I decided to present in this year's report an index of the complete entry so you could look it over and grasp the variety of craft this enthusiasm covers. The information varies from entrant to entrant

depending upon how much each felt impelled to include on his/her application form.

As I organized the statistical layout, I was impressed with how many owner designed/built boats were included. Owner built has long been a staple of this meet, but the design aspect is on the grow. Nine budding designers displayed their handiwork. One chose to design his own boat but had someone else build it, And 24 built their own boats.

The owner designer creations were as follows:

Walter Baetjer floated the smallest craft, a 7'6" flat iron skiff.

Ken Benson had two very similar small kayak types which he had designed for youth building and adventuring at summer camps, similar to the Camp Chewonki program.

Steve Kaulback brought one of his gorgeous cedar Adirondack guideboats. Steve's so successful now that he spends most of his time on the road marketing his production of over 100 boats a year, a small builder success story.

John Clark had a 15' kayak built completely of foam board, fiberglass covered. Very light indeed.

John Sutphen's traditional lapstrake peapod celebrated its 20th year, John built her in 1973/74.

Ross Miller had a brand new skin boat, Dacron skin that is, which he said he would have plans for home builders in due course.

Allen Head's two big bateaus, well, one labeled a pulling boat, were impressive in size at 19' and 21'6".

Phil Kendrick designed his own 15' sharpie sloop but farmed out the building.

I won't venture to list boat by boat the two dozen home builds nor the 25 whose owners neither designed nor built them. They are in the listing on the following pages and pro-

vide still the critical mass for such a gathering to generate the spontaneous enthusiasm that lights up just about every face on the site.

I do tip my hat to Bulkeley Smith, who brought his Bart Hawthaway Rob Roy double paddle canoe to the event for its 24th consecutive year, its presence bringing to mind dear departed Bart, always such a presence at this meet, which he single handedly opened up to "other than wood" construction small craft a quarter century ago.

The owner (I didn't confirm this one) built Guillemot strip kayak with its veneers glued on as pieces of a picture puzzle rather than as the flowing inlays was, naturally enough, referred to as the "puzzle boat."

Bryan Hammond was looking for some help in tracking down the history of his 1935 Beals Island double ended skiff, which sat on its trailer radiating its old timey fragrance of recently applied oil/tar finish.

At the high tech end was Doug Martin's sliding seat Echo Islander recreational shell, a swoopy sleek boat he designed and has built by his brother-in-law's East West Boats in molded fiberglass.

Almost as high techy was Long Haul's 16' Klepper clone. That's not fair, Mr. Klepper

for years in New York City, Dieter Stiller, has assisted in this new and improved version of the timeless Klepper, no longer restrained by the conservative German manufacturer's outlook on what is a proper boat.

Amongst the offerings of the weekend were rowing opportunities in the *Charles W. Morgan* whaleboats and the gig *General Lafayette*, a discussion of a 20' plywood glued lap research vessel under construction in the John Gardner Boatshop, and overnight accommodations (by prior registration) on the *Joseph Conrad*. Sunday morning brought the cruise downriver in the small craft to Mason's Island for morning coffee and, for the first time in 15 years, a guided tour of the Watercraft Storage Area.

We did not stay overnight for Sunday's doings, we always used to enjoy that downriver cruise in whatever we brought. The cost of overnight accommodations around Mystic has gone through the roof since the big gambling resort opened up a dozen miles away on an Indian reservation and all the motels/hotels for 50 miles around responded by plundering the pockets of the high rollers before all their money had been gambled away.



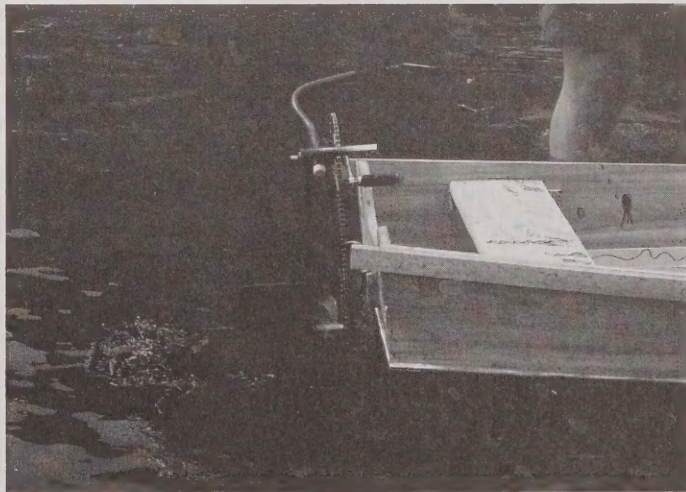
The "puzzleboat", an unusually veneered Guillemot stripper kayak.



The "Mouse Boats" were back.

Kid's Program

An enthusiastic bunch of kids gathered in the White Boat Shop, where John Gardner once plied his trade, to build a boat which they later launched and proceeded to propel around the waterfront with its unique bicycle crank driven propellor. Reverse appeared to be the preferred travel direction.



The Boats at the Small Craft Workshop

Owner Designed & Built

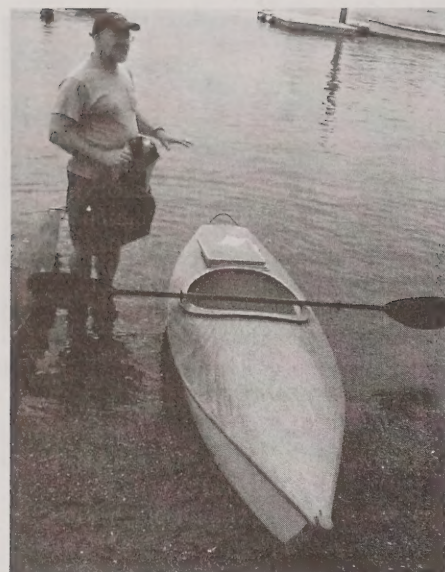
- 7'6" Flat Iron Skiff, marine ply/epoxy. Owner Walter Baetjer, Portsmouth, RI.
Owner designed & built 2001/02/03. At SCW 2003.
- 12' Laughing River Camp Kayak, ply skiff constr. Owner Ken Benson, Southbury, CT.
Owner designed (for youth summer camp construction & tripping) & built 2003.
- 12' Laughing River Paddle Boat, ply skiff constr. Owner Ken Benson, Southbury, CT.
Owner designed (for youth summer camp construction & tripping) & built 2003.
- 15' Adirondack Guideboat, cedar. Owner Steve Kaulback, Charlotte, VT.
Owner designed & built at Adirondack Guideboat, Inc. Charlotte, VT.
- 15' Kayak, foam board/FG/epoxy. Owner John Clarke, N. Eastham, MA.
Owner designed & built 2003/04.
- 16' Double Ended Peapod, lapstrake wood. Owner John H. Sutphen, Mystic, CT.
Owner designed & built, 1973/74. At SCW 2000/01/02/03.
- 17' Kayak, Dacron skin, wood frame. Owner Ross Miller, W. Mystic, CT.
Owner designed & built 2000/03.
- 19' Pulling Boat, glued lapstrake planked wood. Owner Allen Head, Concord, NH.
Owner designed & built 2003.
- 21'6" Batteau, lapstrake pine planking. Owner Allen head, Concord, NH.
Owner designed & built 2000.

Owner Designed

- 15'1" Sharpie Sloop, plywood plank on frame. Owner Philip Kendrick, S. Berwick, ME
Owner designed, builder Dale Cottrell, Northport, ME, 2002. At SCW 2002/03.

Owner Built

- 8' Mini Kayak, ply. Owner David Colpitts, Hartford, CT.
Designer Gavin Atkins, owner built 2001.
- 9'6" Nutshell Pram, mahogany ply/epoxy. Owner John Thew, Norfolk, CT.
Designer Joel White 1984, owner built 1996. At SCW 1997/98/99/02/03.
- 10'5" Fat Sailing Kayak, tack & tape ply. Owner Andrew Anderson, Haworth, NJ.
Designer T.F. Jones 1996, owner built 2003.
- 11'2" Shellback Dinghy, glued ply. Owner Frank W. Stauss, JR., Sewell, NJ.,
Designer Joel White 1984, owner built 2001. At SCW 2001/02/03.
- 12' Canoe, ply & epoxy (CLC kit). Owner Douglass Oeller, Germantown, MD.
Designer Chesapeake Light Craft, Annapolis, MD, owner built 2004.
- 12' San Francisco Pelican Skiff, marine ply. Owner Chauncy Rucker, Mansfield Cntr, CT.
Designer William Short 1989, owner built 2003/04
- 12'3" Bevin Skiff, ply. Owner Uri Herzberg, Bridgewater, NJ.
Designer Joe Youcha 1998, owner built 2001.
- 12'6" Rowing Skiff, wood. Owner Randy Levesque, Columbia, CT.
Designer Walter Ansel, Mystic CT, owner built 2002/03. At SCW 2003.
- 12'9" Fishing Cayak, molded fiberglass. Owner Joel Flather, Little Compton, RI.
Designer J. H. Rushton, 1880. Builder Joel Flather, Little Compton, RI 2004
- 13' Kayak, glued ply. Owner Frank W. Stauss, Sewell, NJ.
Designer Chesapeake Light Craft, owner built 2003/04.
- 13' Sailing/Rowing Skiff, lapstrake wood. Owner Thad Danielson, Marblehead, MA.
Traditional design, owner built at Redd's Pond Boatworks, Marblehead, MA 2003/04.
- 14' Jellyfish. Owner Andrew & Roger Chorba, Downingtown, PA.
Designer Mystic seaport, owner built 2003.
- 14' Mystic Jellyfish. Owner Sam & Kathy Whitbread, Clinton, CT.
Designer Mystic Seaport 2000, owner built 2003.
- 15' Dory Skiff, cedar planked. Owner Rob Barker, Easton, PA.
Designer John Gardner 1930, owner built 1995/ At SCW 1994/96/97.
- 15'3" 6 Hour Canoe, glued ply. Owner Walter Baetjer, Portsmouth, RI.
Designer Mike O'Brien 1977, owner built 1997.
- 15'6" Rowing Skiff, ply. Owner Norman Smith, Granby, CT.
Designer Phil Bolger for Dynamite Payson 1970s, owner built 2002. At SCW 2002/03
- 16' Adirondack Guideboat, traditional wood. Owner William Maher, Granville, MA
Traditional design, Blue Mt. Lake Museum, owner built 1992 At SCW 1998.
- 16' Georgian Bay Kayak, glued strip ply, Owner Steven Bauermeister, S. Berwick, ME.
Designer Rob Macks, Laughing Loon Kayaks, Greenfield, MA, owner built.
- 16'6" Sailing/Double Paddling Canoe, strip wood. Owner Myron Young, Laurel, NY.
Mystic Seaport plans, owner built 2002. At SCW 2003.
- 16'8" Chesapeake Two Sail Bateau, traditional wood. Owner Tom Papell, Deer Park, NY.
Designer Walter Simmons from Chapelle, owner built 1999. At SCW 2001.
- 17' Guillemot Kayak, cedar strip. Owner Uri Herzberg, Bridgewater, NJ.
Designer Nick Schade, Guillemot Kayaks, owner built 2002

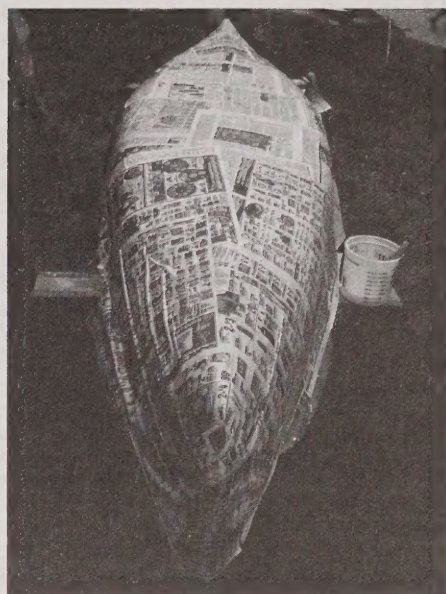


From the top: Ken Benson's Laughing River Camp Kayak is for youth building/cruising adventures. Animated discussion over John Clarke' foamboard hulled kayak. For many years "Mr. Klepper" in New York City, Dieter Stiller was on hand extolling the Long Haul folding kayak.

- 17' Sailing Wherry, cedar planked. Owner Kevin Rathbone, Larchmont, NY.
Designer R.D. Culler 1969, owner built 1976. At SCW since 1995.
- 17'9" Annapolis Wherry, lapstrake glued ply. Owner Dave Lynch, Essex Jct. VT.
Chesapeake Light Craft plans, owner built 2001.
- 18' Disko Bay Kayak Replica. Owner Richard Nonas, New York, NY.
Owner built.

The Rest of the Fleet

- 10' Rob Roy Double Paddle Canoe, molded fiberglass. Owner Bulkeley Smith, Noank, CT
Designer & builder Bart Hawthaway, Weston, MA, 1980. At SCW since 1980.
- 11'11" Pulling Boat, traditional wood. Owner Mystic Seaport.
Builder Mystic Seaport 2000.
- 12' Brockway Skiff, galv roofing nail fastened ply. Owner Merrill D. Dunn, Higganum, CT.
Designer & builder Earle Brockway 1963. At SCW 2003.
- 12'10" Sailing Pea Pod, molded fiberglass. Owner Wayne Donelson, Ashburnham, MA.
Traditional design, builder Peter Silva, S. Dartmouth, MA 1987 At SCW 2000/01/02.
- 13' Jellyfish. Owner Mark Juska & Brandon Aviram, E. Lyme, CT.
Designer Mark Starr, builder Mystic Seaport Teen Workshop 2003.
- 13' Sailing Peapod, glued lapstrake ply. Owner Bill Rutherford, Metuchen, NJ
Designer D. Hyland 1997, builder K. Clark, Plymouth, NY 1999. At TSW 2000/01/02/03.
- 13'5' Chamberlain Dory Skiff, traditional lapstrake wood. Owner Mystic Seaport.
Builder Mystic Seaport, 1971.
- 13'6" Melonseed, glued ply lapstrake..Owner John Guidera, Vineland, NJ.
Designer & Builder Tom Jones, Tuckahoe, NJ 1996. At SCW 2002/03.
- 14' Peapod, traditional wood. Owner Mystic seaport.
Designer John Gardner, builder Sylvester Costelloe, 1971.
- 14'7" Rangeley Lake Boat, lapstrake wood. Owner Mystic Seaport.
Designer C.W. Barrett, builder Mystic Seaport 1978.
- 15' Bolger Gypsy, plywood. Owner Mike Wick, Moorestown, NJ.
Designer Phil Bolger.
- 15' Delaware Ducker, glued lap ply. Owner Pete Peters, Washington, PA.
Builder Workshop on the Water, Philadelphia, PA 1995. At SCW 2003.
- 15'6" Double Ended Skiff, lapstrake ply. Owner Stephen M. Weld, Jr, Milton, MA
Designer I. DeLapp, builder J. Brooks, Mt. Desert, ME 1992. At SCW 2001/02/03.
- 16' Dory, cedar lapstrake. Owner Bryan Ross Hammond, Oakdale, CT.
Designer & builder Freeman Beal, Beal's Island, ME 1935. At SCW 2003.
- 16' Folbot Sailing Cayat. Owner Floyd Beam, Ben Salem, PA.
Designer Folbot Corp. 1963. Kit.
- 16' Gloucester Gull Dory, glued ply. Owner Tom Shepard, Pittsgrove, NJ.
Designer Phil Bolger.
- 16' Long Haul folding kayak, wood frame, fabric cover. Owner Gail Ferris, Stony Creek, CT.
Designer Mark Ekhart, Builder Long Haul Kayaks 2003.
- 17' Macgregor Decked Sailing Canoe, lapstrake wood. Owner Mike Wick, Moorestown, NJ
Designer Ian Oughtred, builder Tony Dias, 1988.
- 17' South Greenland kayak Replica. Owner Richard Nonas, New York, NY.
Builder Harvey Golden.
- 17'2" Double Ended Rowing Boat, traditional wood. Owner Mystic Seaport.
Designer & builder John Gardner 1981.
- 17'3" Swampscott Dory, pine/oak. Owner Douglas Oeller, Germantown, MD.
Builder Hugh McLean, Halifax Maritime Museum, Nova Scotia 1997.
- 18' Sliding Seat Recreational Shell, molded fiberglass. Owner Doug Martin, Eliot, ME.
Designer Doug Martin 2001-04, builder East/West Custom Boats, Eliot, ME 2004.
- 18'6" Core Sound Sailing Skiff, traditional wood. Owner Tim Lane, Otsego, MI.
Designer Hampton Mariners' Museum, builder WoodenBoat School Class 2003.
- 19' Double Ended Pulling Boat, traditional wood. Owner Groton CT TSCA
Designer & builder Chiticamp 1995.
- Dyer Dink, molded fiberglass. Owner Merrill D. Dunn, Higganum, CT.
Designer & builder Dyer Boats, Warren, RI 1960s.



From the top: Paper canoes persevere, the Seaport has a program ongoing covering stringer frames with the comic strips. Nick Schade of Guillemot Kayaks had his prototype surf kayak on display. Family boating in a lovely Whitehall. From left: Steve Kaulback launches another tryout of his classic Adirondack guideboat. Bryan Hamond was looking for the history of his 1935 Beals' Island dory. He's at (860) 705-5458.

John Gardner wrote about boats for 54 years, often two columns per month, and was published in eight different journals. He also wrote letters, prefaces, introductions, and papers which appeared in professional journals and other serials. Though he regarded it as a position in name only, he was listed as Technical Editor on the masthead of the *Maine Coast Fisherman* and *National Fisherman* for 46 years.

The format of his columns varied. He selected from a potpourri of reader-inspired topics as in his regular column, "Comments Here And There," which first appeared in July 1971 in the *National Fisherman*. He reported on events, workshops, and professional meetings. He wrote individual, stand alone columns about specific boats. Or conversely, each month's installment would be part of an ongoing series of how-to-build instructions covering one model, or an in depth exploration of a more general topic, such as environmental concerns or hazards of the workplace. Among his 85 book reviews are some real gems. Many of these columns became the core of the six books that he wrote, the first published in 1977.

John was a respected one man advocate for traditional small craft and kept them in the public eye over all that time for an international audience. He was a boat builder, a teacher, and a working journalist. This summary of a specific body of his work, produced over a narrow period of time, is meant to set the research in perspective, within a personal and historical context, and suggest its significance in a larger continuum.

In his forty-seventh year John Gardner became a father and from Jean's birth in the spring of 1952 was smitten with his daughter. His wife Beatrice was managing their Western Avenue home in Lynn, Massachusetts, where John was working as a patternmaker on the night shift for General Electric and indulging in daytime visits to Boston libraries. He sought to supplement his income, having ventured into the world of publication when he submitted his first piece to the *Maine Coast Fisherman*, which was published in May of 1951.

He was an educated, self-motivated man, switching gears with the winding down of the war effort, glad of a job. After Jean's birth he was driven to write more. He took his cue from Howard I. Chapelle, whom he had admired since devouring his articles in *Yachting* in 1932-1933 and credited with his interest in boat design. In *American Small Craft*, published in 1935, Chapelle urged records be made of American sailing craft of fisheries and commerce. John had been studying wooden boat construction traditions of the North Shore of Massachusetts since obtaining work at Graves of Marblehead in late 1941.

He had been working in the boat yards alongside men like Dan Grant, whom Chapelle consulted for his breakthrough book for amateurs, *Boatbuilding*, published in 1941 by Norton. These were not the craft of John's Pasamaquoddy Bay upbringing and he was fascinated, especially after teaching himself to draw boat lines, and subsequently measuring William Chamberlain's gunning dory in 1942, the first hull he "captured."

In a letter to *Maine Coast Fisherman's* Mail Buoy in June of 1951, Chapelle urged John to publish more dory lines. He sent pho-

John Gardner's Exploration of Hull Design for Inshore Fisheries

"The Boat Everyone
is Looking For"

By Sharon Brown

tographs of his 39' Pinkie, *Glad Tidings* (built by Robert Sawyer in 1937) and 15' peapod for John's September column. This led to a meeting at the Peabody Museum in Salem, which continued over dinner at the Hawthorne Hotel where Chapelle was staying. Shortly after their get together, Chapelle proposed John for a Guggenheim grant to continue his dory research. A similar grant in 1950 enabled Chapelle to study at England's National Maritime Museum in Greenwich and he, in turn, proposed John, thinking it would boost John's dream of a book on dories.

But John's family obligations tugged, he "wasn't ready" and on August 23 he wrote the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation on New York's Fifth Avenue, lamenting his regrets. The secretary, J.F. Mathias, promptly replied, "We shall be pleased to present an application from you for consideration of the Committee of Selection at a later time when you can see your way clear to submit one." Over the years John explored various means of supporting his research, but once wary of the application process in general, he never filed for a Guggenheim.

Chapelle was not pleased by the outcome of his gesture, and in his October 1951 letter to editor C. Owen Smith, he set the stage for future columns. "The MCF is to be congratulated on Mr. Gardner's article on the peapods. I hope the good work will continue for there is so little known about many of the fine small boat types of the past. I hope we may see plans and descriptions." John engaged "Chap" as he called him, in discussions of traditional small craft, maintained an active exchange of correspondence, and reviewed his books, including *American Small Sailing Craft* published by Norton in 1952 (MCF February 1952).

It is not surprising that he was inspired by Chapelle's paper presented at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations International Fishing Boat Congress in 1953. The proceedings were edited by Jan-Olof Traung and published, *Fishing Boats of the World: 1* (Fishing News Books Limited, London) in 1955 and reviewed by John (MCF July 1958). In his paper, Chapelle drew attention to the lack of available technical information on the commercial vessels of 45' length over all (LOA) and less which represented, at that time, the largest component of North American fishing fleets.

John was further motivated to enhance his income in order to handle the mortgage on a "new" home, the first for his young family, when they moved from a suite in his mother-in-law's home in the busy, industrial town of Lynn to a small home with a suburban sounding address on Glen Park Avenue

in the more residential town of Saugus. As his daughter Jean explains, at the age of 4-1/2 years, in August of 1956, she left her Grammy's for the hospital and a tonsillectomy and after a short stay went home to Glen Park, overnight or so it seemed.

The house was small, built into the side of a hill, a little unusual in layout, and needed work, but it afforded a yard for Jean and a space for John to store, measure, and build small boats. He could see the potential for an office-workshop which he and Jean would eventually excavate from the hillside, wheelbarrow by wheelbarrow. He had returned to work at the Frederick J. Dion Yacht Yard of Salem in 1954 and the house, costing near \$10,000 was barely affordable on his income of \$88/week. He would hand his small brown pay envelope to Jean, who would claim the change as her allowance and take the envelope with the remaining bills upstairs to Beatrice who astutely managed their finances.

Although closer to Marblehead, Peabody, and Salem than Lynn, John complained that the bus and subway connections from their new home were not that good. It was from this home, about ten miles from Salem Common, that John walked each day to catch the bus, sometimes six days a week. It was his routine to rise at 5:30 A.M. and answer inquiries from readers and correspondence from other colleagues, often detailed, intense, and closely researched replies stretching pages of single spaced typewritten copy.

He kept a close eye on the ticking clock, broke off at the last moment to make his lunch, and rushed out to catch his bus. He rode from his Saugus stop to Central Square in Lynn, with a ten-minute layover, and then from Lynn on Route 1A through Swampscott, past Salem State College on Lafayette Street. While underway he reviewed his notes or cleared his mind, indulging his craving for science fiction. Paperbacks by authors like Isaac Asimov or Ray Bradbury he purchased on a weekly basis. According to Jean, "It is not commonly known, but this was his entertainment." He alighted near Glendale Street and walked about ten minutes to Dion's. Rich St. Pierre remembers him walking into the yard with Fred Dion's housekeeper, his brown leather bag in hand which held his lunch, papers or mail, and paperback.

Each morning he used a boathook to hang his bag over a hook on the shop wall to protect its contents from curious vermin scavenging underfoot while the men were distracted by their work. At the end of the day he reversed the procedure or, Jean recalls, "Mother and I often drove to Salem to pick Dad up from work at Dion's. If the weather was good we would go to Pioneer Village, a nearby park."

Their transportation was a dark green four door 1950 Ford sedan with a huge back window where Jean sometimes slept. Otherwise he generally left the boat yard in late afternoon, returning home in time to finish fixing Jean's supper, especially when Beatrice was working a night shift 5:00 P.M. to 11:00 P.M. at Transiron in Wakefield, where she worked off and on for a number of years. After supper John would read to Jean, do the dishes, and then return to his drawing table until sleep claimed him. He was able to do a hard day's physical labor year round on a few hours of sleep.

John was a great believer in public transportation, and if he was going to Boston Beatrice would drive him to the Wonderland T station on the Blue Line in Revere across from the dog track. Every three weeks, he and Jean would go together to the Boston Public Library. "He was good at sleeping on the subway and would rely on me waking him at the proper station," Jean recalls. "And then he would walk so fast I would have trouble keeping up with him." While he sought reference material, she loaded up with books and was allowed to get as many as she could read in the three-week borrowing period. Renewals were not encouraged. At the age of seven, Stephen J. Meader was her favorite author and at the Sweetser School in Saugus, Mrs. Iona Britt was her favorite teacher.

John was usually thinking ahead, his mind brimming with ideas for writing, the drawings he was working on, and the boats he was hoping to measure. His eye was always focused on an approaching deadline for copy and he was prolific. He was a pioneer in the use of photography for documentation and when he could afford it, and chose his equipment with care. He photographed not only from an aesthetic perspective which revealed his love of these craft, but also as someone eager to document the minutiae of construction.

John was working at Dion's as a boat and yacht carpenter mostly on repairs of vessels that his boss Fred purchased for resale, and haunting the yards and shoreline of the North Shore taking lines and photographing interesting small craft. He was a restless man, he had a hunger for knowledge and a passion to explore, and he began in earnest in the early spring of 1955 to measure boats still on the yard prior to spring commissioning. In February, at the Lynn Yacht Club, he took the lines of a 12'6" Chaisson dory tender, and in March at the Quincy Yacht Club, he measured the Old Station Boat, Boston Light USLHS 70, and in May at Dion's, he took the lines of *Philippa*, the 25'11" Childrens Island Launch built by William Chamberlain of Marblehead in 1927.

In November 1956 at Dion's John took the lines of the 31' LOA V-bottom lobster boat, *Millie II*, designed by Albert Cloutman of Marblehead and built by him and his son, Robert in 1949 for Fred Bartlett. And in December at the same yard, he measured the 32' V-bottom lobster boat, *Bessie Ann*, built in 1947 by Justin Hull of Ipswich for Amerigo Angelina of Beverly. In March 1957 John took the lines of the 43' excursion boat, *Doris M.*, built by J. Hull in 1939 for Daniel Sweeney of Salem who used her as an excursion boat carrying passengers for the Pier Transportation Co. of Salem Willows. And in August of the same year he took the lines of a Maryland Hoopers Island Launch with an old style duck tail stern, from a half-model owned by Marion V. Brewington.

Chapelle spent a year in Turkey for the FAO studying fishing boats, and upon his return in 1957 John visited him at his Maryland home for a week in late summer. There, under Chapelle's tutelage, he studied Chesapeake construction methods and met Chapelle's friend and collaborator, boatbuilder James B. Richardson, of Richardson's Boat Works, Cambridge, Maryland. In the fall, Chapelle became Curator of Transportation of the Smithsonian Institution

in Washington, a position he held for 14 years, retiring on his 70th birthday. John's glowing review of Chapelle's FAO Report No. 706 entitled, "Report to the Government of Turkey on Fishing Boats," appeared in the June 1958 issue of the *Maine Coast Fisherman*. "Very probably it is the most complete background study yet made of a country's fishing craft," he praised.

Over a 26-month period from January 1957 through February 1959, John Gardner wrote 22 articles for the *Maine Coast Fisherman*, 17 of which concerned power boat hull designs for inshore fisheries. The inspiration for this series was seeded in his earliest submissions and the objective was, "The simplest, easiest, cheapest, modern power lobster launch that it is possible to build, and yet a boat that is solid, lasting, seaworthy, and of superior working qualities" (April 1957). "The boat everyone is looking for" could be the contemporary elusive hull the industry still pursues, where speed vs. economy and the scale is tipped by among other variables, the type of fishery, and the product market.

Low cost was not to be achieved by making boatbuilders work faster nor through "the importation of boats from backward or depressed wage areas, either on this continent or elsewhere in the world" (November 1957). And while cost of materials was an important consideration, he believed that the design and method of construction should require a minimum of labor to build and from his experience working on boats, he was familiar with designs that were economical to build and those that were not.

He showed how this challenge had been met in 1903 for a speed launch design, the 25' x 3'10" V-bottom Dolphin, by E.W. Graef for The Rudder's "How to Build" series for amateurs. Though unsuitable for fishing, her easy construction avoided steam bending and difficult bevels, sections and frames were straight, and forefoot deep. With her radical, old lines John illustrated a successful power boat hull designed within similar constraints and introduced the concept of V-bottom hull construction to a readership of New England fishermen more familiar with round bottom hulls.

John favored the use of quantitative data. He presented a selection of interesting hull shapes and explored regional solutions to similar problems of design. He reviewed the low cost Novie lobster boats operating locally out of the Saugus River (May 1957) and the V-bottom, cross-planked crabbing skiffs of Chesapeake Bay (May 1958). He paused to reiterate, a tactic he learned in teacher training and employed throughout his career, and summarized the objective in March 1958: "The original idea was a low-cost lobster boat.

A good boat was required, in fact, one of excellent performance no less, but at the same time one that could be built quickly and easily, and hence cheaply out of inexpensive materials." It would be an easily driven hull, one economical and easy to build, inexpensive and safe to run both at high speed and low, and "the boat had to be exceptionally steady to afford secure, easy footing, even in moderately rough weather unlike the quick motion and roll of some of the older round, slack-bilged models." An admirable goal.

He methodically explored at least 18 hull designs, many which he measured and drew,

interviewed scores of fishermen, and subsequently engaged the readers in what became distilled into a round bottom vs. V-bottom discussion and included input from designers, builders, and fishermen: Edson I. Schock, Kingston, Rhode Island (March 1957), Kenneth L. Smith, Fairfield, Connecticut (May 1957), G.M. Blakely, Beverly, Massachusetts (April, June 1957), Earl O. Beal, Beals, Maine (June 1957), Howard O. Van Namen, Jr., New York, New York (June 1957), H.I. Chapelle, Cambridge, Maryland (April, May, June, November 1957), S.S. Rabl, Baltimore, Maryland (January, March, July 1958), Jim Beal, Darien, Connecticut (February 1958), Nelson J. Lane, Essex, Massachusetts (February 1958), R. Ellis, Andover, Connecticut (March 1958), Allan H. Vaites, Mattapoisett, Massachusetts (April 1958), Philip C. Bolger, Gloucester, Massachusetts (March, July 1958), Nicholas Montgomery, Gloucester, Massachusetts (July 1958), and Charles Schock, Lexington, Massachusetts (September 1959).

The discussion became heated and provoked an unusual hint of sarcasm from John against his critics in defense of his arguments which he carefully elaborated point by point (June 1957). Some grew weary of the topic, but Naval Architect Thomas E. Colvin, then of Waukegan, Illinois, summed it up for the majority when he wrote to the editor. "Being an avid reader of your paper, I look forward with great pleasure to receiving my copy of the *Maine Coast Fisherman* each month. I have followed with particular interest the articles by John Gardner, who should be congratulated on his series" (May 1959).

He introduced the V-bottom hulls of Justin E. Hull (*MCF* January, February 1957; April 1958) and Albert Cloutman (*MCF* January, February, March 1957; see also *Messing About in Boats* November 2003). He compared two of Bolger's models, a newly designed V-bottom 32' sports fisherman, the *Rosy III*, built for Michael Pearlman of Swampscott by Bob Cloutman (*MCF* January 1958) and compared her performance with that of his round bottomed 31' Egg Harbor, built by the Egg Harbor Boat Co. of New Jersey (*MCF* July 1958).

"As far as model is concerned, it doesn't make a hoot of difference. You can duplicate the performance of any round bilge boat with a chine boat and vice versa," asserted Bolger in a letter to the editor (*MCF* June 1957; see Bolger's discussion of the EH 31 in January 15, 2004 issue of *Messing About in Boats*). And John added, "Only when it appears to be a tie between the two types of hull construction, after the widest and most painstaking investigation, can a fisherman afford to allow sentiment to cast the deciding vote" (*MCF* June 1957).

John believed progress in small fishing boat design was slow because there was little leeway for experimentation, unlike yacht design where the yachtsmen could afford more of a gamble than working fishermen (*MCF* March 1958). "Living with the old boat, he [the fisherman] gets ideas for improving it, and when he has the new one built, he wants those ideas tried out." The advent of gas engine powering in the early 1900s accelerated the evolution of fishing launch change in New England and added to construction costs, along with changes in fishing methods. Today the viability of fisheries stocks and the

hardships of earning a living and paying for a boat, in limited entry fisheries with diminishing days at sea, also represent significant variables.

John was an advocate of the small in-shore fishing vessel and believed that it was possible for a man to earn a living with a boat of modest size and engine requirements, a still relevant concept, but very difficult in the face of current regulations and, in some areas, even collapsing lobster populations. Supplementing a shore-based income or the family food budget is more of a reality for some small boat fishermen. Costs of boats, size of powering plants, and licenses are out of sight for many young men or women wanting to enter the profession, as a perusal of *National Fisherman* or *Maine Coastal News* will reveal. But wooden boats are being built and, although not common, it is still possible for a fisherman to build his own as John suggested.

Keeping the reality of the economics in the forefront, that costs must be kept down for the fisherman, he believed that design should accommodate this need. Through his survey he ascertained that V-bottom construction was the way to go, not only were V-bottom hulls less costly to build, but they were stable platforms for long days underway with large cockpits for gear. However, he concluded there were two basic problems with their design, they were wet going into head seas and they were not economical to run. So he sought to reduce the angle of entrance, increase the flare forward, and keep the chine from breaking out of the water as far aft as possible to make them easier driven and dryer.

He came up with two designs of his own, a 33' and a 37' hull, both V-bottoms. Starting with the lines of Justin Hull's *Bessie Ann* (MCF Feb. 1957), John kept the same general dimensions of length overall, beam and draft, and changed the bottom, making the run longer and straighter, changing the position of the chine and suggested cutting expenses by employing a cross-planked bottom, galvanized nail fastenings, and standard sizes of inexpensive native lumber (MCF February, March 1958). The design was subjected to lots of reader comment and not that well received due largely to the cross-plank bottom and depth of the forefoot, and John took it all into account.

In his October 1958 *Maine Coast Fisherman* column John described how he built up the half-model he had made for the 33' V-bottom launch in order to accommodate a larger boat of 36' required by a prospective client who wanted to go winter fishing. Using a plane, spoke shave, and rasp he carved the wood, keeping in mind the lines of previous, successful hulls. "As I sparingly pared off the shavings there were a number of things to watch: (1) It was necessary to lift the chine, yet not to permit the chine knuckle to come above the LWL at any point. (2) To equalize the topsides and bottom as much as possible for easy planking. (3) To get a sharp entrance. (4) To put plenty of lift in the upper bow sections. (5) Not to get the forefoot too deep, yet to have ample displacement. (6) To keep the run of the bottom as straight and as flat as possible. (7) To keep as many of the section lines as possible straight for easy framing."

It was his custom to work from a half-model which he believed to be the best method for visualizing hull form, and while he worked he likened it to playback of a tune

he held in his head of the shapes he had seen and wanted to translate. He was pleased that the lines taken off the completed half-model satisfied his objectives. "This is a boat for North Shore lobstermen. I have questioned fishermen of Salem, Beverly, Marblehead, and other Essex County towns, have studied their boats in and out of the water, have measured these boats and taken their lines, and have repaired and worked on them to the extent of partly rebuilding one new V-bottom this past spring ... This model should make them a good boat. ...none of the characteristics of this model are haphazard. ...this model is the outgrowth of what came before."

John brought to this problem his skill as a boatbuilder, his knowledge of the literature and boat lines, a desire to compare hull designs using quantitative data, and a new working relationship with those he considered giants in the field; i.e., Howard I. Chapelle, Thomas C. Gillmer, and Jan-Olof Traung. Chapelle, a cautious promoter of tank-testing as a research tool, had earlier (MCF February 1958) called for "practical application of results of scientific study to the design and construction of American fishing boats."

In his April column (MCF 1958) John proposed a joint program by architects, boatbuilders, and fishermen which would include documenting outstanding boats of different regions, performance tests under actual conditions, and theoretical analysis by tank tests to recommend changes in hull shape. A collaboration between the three men followed, including tank testing of six work boat designs, publication of the preliminary results in the *Maine Coast Fisherman* in July of 1959, presentation of the results before an international audience at the FAO's 2nd World Fishing Boat Congress in Rome in April 1959, and publication of the proceedings in 1960, including three short articles by John, and his review in *Outdoor Maine* (December 1960). Forty-five years ago it was ground breaking work in fishing launch design improvement.

In June of 1958 John began building a 4' model of a 34' William Frost lobster boat for tank testing at the Naval Academy in Annapolis by Professor Gillmer. The lines for the "M-1 test model" were supplied by N.A. Phil Bolger, who took them off a Frost boat built for a Gloucester lobster fisherman in 1946. It was a volunteer job, exacting work, and John was devoting his evenings and weekends to the job. He began a second tank test model in October, this one from the lines of the 36' lobster boat he designed (and published in the October MCF) but he did not finish the model until the first of January 1959, working 12- and 18-hour days through the holidays so that Gillmer could complete the tank tests by the January 15 deadline for submission of the paper he was to present at the Rome meeting.

Naval Architect Jan-Olof Traung of Sweden joined the Fisheries Division of the FAO of the United Nations in Washington, D.C. in July 1955 and subsequently moved to the headquarters in Rome in early spring of 1956. He was interested in the design and development of small fishing craft for developing nations and from his survey of the literature was familiar with John's work. In 1959, while laying the groundwork for the second World Congress, he visited the Northeast and when he reached Boston, called John.

They met at the Statler Hotel where Traung was staying, and during the interview Traung made John a proposal.

Subsequently John planned to attend the World Fishing Boat Congress himself, April 5-10, stay in Rome for a briefing, and then go on to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) as a teaching boatbuilder for the FAO for a year. He was pulled pro and con with the opportunity, but realized the value and justly felt qualified. It wasn't until the end of January that he learned otherwise. It was a disappointment that he kept to himself, sharing only with those distanced from the scene whom he trusted to honor his privacy. Much to Traung's chagrin and embarrassment with the FAO, John's participation was denied by the U.S. State Department due to the House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC, established 1937) which was in its heyday in the 1950s.

This was the same zealous body that Pete Seeger testified before in August of 1955 and was empowered to approve all overseas government appointments, ferreting out Red sympathizers, real or imagined. John's labor union organizing and his leftist leanings dating from his graduate school days at Columbia in the early 1930s had caught up with him. Traung was able to substitute a Finnish Naval Architect, Erik Estlander (personal communication, July 1998), who in the course of his assignment installed an outboard on a log raft native to Ceylon and put his 10-year-old daughter aboard in order to demonstrate to the skeptical fishermen that it was not dangerous.

And as if his plate were not already full, in January 1959 John began the construction of a boat to slightly modified lines of his 36' lobster boat for a local fisherman. He built the *Stella Z. II* with colleagues at Dion's Yacht Yard for Joseph F. Zdanowicz, a Salem lobster fisherman. Bob Dion and Rich St. Pierre recall John lofting the boat upstairs on the floor above the carpenter shop where it remained for years. John quietly worried over the project, concerned lest the boat turn out to be a poor one, or a costly one, for it would be bad for the client and reflect poorly on his boss, Fred, whom he held in great respect.

Over the late winter the boat took shape quickly and the men followed her progress every day at lunch as it was their custom to sit on the lumber stock stacked alongside on the floor eating their sandwiches and warming their hands with cups of coffee and tea from thermoses. By April the 35'8" x 11' x 3'6" hull, as photographed for the *Maine Coast Fisherman*, was already planked, her 7/8" thick strakes fastened to the frames with 2-1/2" galvanized boat nails, complete save for the garboards, the bottom left open "Virginia-fashion" until the interior was completed. In a break with her "sisters," typically powered with larger, gas-fueled automobile engines, she was powered with an Osco 100hp Ford Marine Diesel with 2:1 reduction gear.

A photograph of her on the ways waiting for launch was featured on the front page of the July issue (1959) and inside, Professor Gillmer's preliminary account of tank tests included that of *Stella Z. II*, one of the six work boats from New England and the Chesapeake whose models were tested in the U.S. Naval Academy tank. By using a thicker, 1-1/8" chine plank, John was able to fair her hull such that her bow appeared smooth; the chine was not obvious, a point he took plea-

sure from. Slight discrepancies in reported dimensions of this vessel can be explained as follows: the half-model carved by John (MCF October 1958) was 36'0" (33'5" LWL) x 12' x 3'; the tank test model carved by John was 37' (LWL 34'5") x 11' x 3' (Gillmer, MCF July 1959); and the size of the vessel launched at Salem was 35'8" x 11' x 3'6" (Ibid., despite the fact that John later described her as 37'). The fisherman commissioning the boat wanted the stem to be less raked than the original model.

Gillmer's tank tests, the culmination of the cooperative work boat hull form analysis project, were inspired by Chapelle. In his review of a preview manuscript of Chapelle's paper presented at the Second World Fishing Boat Congress (MCF May 1959), John acknowledged that research of hull form of small fishing craft was dependent on economics. "It isn't that mathematics won't work for small craft design. It's simply that the fishing industry at present appears unable to pay for the sort of mathematics that will work."

He suggested computer analysis of performance data could augment lines analysis based on a large repository of historic vessel shapes and praised Chapelle's 30-year dedication to acquiring these data. He added, "From the lines plan, the trained eye can quickly synthesize a wealth of interrelated detail wholly lost in generalized formulae," and suggested computers be used to help analyze data from the interrelated variables of hull resistance, seakindliness, construction, and suitability for specific fisheries, all predicated on economics, that of the viability of the fisheries and the cost of the testing.

During the fall of 1958 and the following winter, Gillmer ran the tank model towing tests measuring wave making resistance and determining powering needs of different working craft. He presented his final report, "Model Tests of Some Fishing Launches," at the second FAO World Fishing Boat Congress, published in *Fishing Boats of the World*, 2. The tank models identified by code included M-1, the 34' William Frost model (32' 9" LWL, 9'1" beam, 3' draft; waterline displacement 9,140 lbs.) and M-2, the 37' John Gardner model (waterline displacement 11,800 lbs.). John's V-bottom design with large freeboard, generous flare, and raking stem was a dryer and easier driven boat as shown by Gillmer and required only a 100hp diesel for winter flounder fishing.

The men involved with the tank test, John, Chapelle, Gillmer, Traung, and Bolger, each enjoyed long, successful careers associated with boats.

John's 24-year collaboration with Chapelle ended with Chapelle's death in June 1975 (February 1, 1901-June 30, 1975), four years after his retirement. In a letter to Chapelle on January 30, 1960, John noted his wish for a big snowstorm so that he could stay home from work for a few days to catch up on his correspondence and work at his drafting table, work that always seemed to be ahead of him. John respected Chapelle for his pioneer work in the field of traditional small craft, recording their history, and construction details, and as he wrote to John E. Barnes, Jr., in 1961, "We all owe him a debt of gratitude for his pioneer work in preserving and making available our heritage of small craft design." Though not blind to his shortcomings, those largely due to his lack of a

broad education or carelessness when rushing to turn out a prodigious amount of work, John found him to be generous and kind and praised him, coming to his defense even when it was not popular.

Later, in a letter to Sam Manning (January 1963) he opined, "Chapelle has never said as much to my knowledge, nor do I know whether or not he, himself, is aware of the full extent of his great accomplishment in collecting and preserving the details and specifications of our small craft heritage. But beyond the purely technical aspect of his work, he has done more than anyone else so far to preserve our native small craft as one of our folk arts." Chapelle spoke at John's second Small Craft Workshop in June 1971 at Mystic Seaport where 400 people gathered and also taught at the Museum's Munson Institute.

Twenty-eight years after the publication of *American Small Sailing Craft*, John wrote, "No other North American maritime scholarship has come close to this book in the impact it has had and still has, on popular culture" (*The Log of Mystic Seaport* Summer 1979). In addition to the those already cited, John wrote reviews of Chapelle's books and various papers including: *The National Watercraft Collection* (NF/MCF February 1961), *The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America*, with Edwin Tappan Adney (NF/MCF December 1964), and *The Search For Speed Under Sail 1700-1855* (NF December 1968), and acknowledged his contributions in many of his columns (e.g., NF February 1976).

In his 1993 book, *Classic Small Craft You Can Build*, published by Mystic Seaport, John expanded his September 1989 column from the *National Fisherman* into a chapter on the Gaspé flat or "skiff" as Chapelle called it, using a drawing that Chapelle made for him at Grand Révière, Quebec in 1952. John credited Chapelle for attracting him to the field and later summed it up in an interview with Peter Spectre for *WoodenBoat* (No. 40, 1981), "He got the thing started, but some of what he did has to be refined."

Thomas C. Gillmer, at 91, is enjoying his well-earned retirement which is only four years old. He still sails his 29' sailboat, a version of his Blue Moon design (first appeared in *Yachting* in 1946) berthed at the waterfront dock of his Annapolis home (New Moon built by Allen Cady, Annapolis) pictured in Steve Mitchell's article in *Good Old Boat* (July/August 2002). The details of his brief meeting with John 47 years ago are no longer clear. They were part of a long and very successful career in teaching, writing, and yacht designing, including cruising designs and sail training vessels.

Born in Warren, Ohio, in 1911, he attended the U.S. Naval Academy where he graduated in June 1935, going on to serve in the Navy, and then during the war as a professor of naval architecture at the Academy, where he created the Department of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering and wrote the textbook for naval architecture. Throughout his career he wrote scores of articles and a number of books, including *Working Watercraft: A Survey Of The Surviving Local Boats of America And Europe* reviewed by John, (*The Log of Mystic Seaport* Spring 1973; NF April 1973), and designed the *Pride of Baltimore* (1976-77), *Pride of Baltimore*

II (1986), the *Lady Maryland*, and the 139' *Kalmer Nyckel*, a replica of a Dutch pinnace from 1638, all of which have come through the Route 1 Mystic Highway bridge to tie up at Mystic Seaport.

He was a great personal friend of Chapelle's and it is interesting to note that in his *WoodenBoat* (No. 5, 1975) tribute to Chapelle he not only spoke of this, "I knew him first from an admiring distance as a youth," but also chose to recognize the lesser known contributions he had made to improvements of fishing boats and working watercraft for poorer nations as "a member of the Consultant Panel of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the U.N. on Fishing Boats," some of which has been acknowledged here.

And in sweet irony after speaking with Gillmer (February 2003), I teased Mystic Seaport Boathouse volunteer, Richard Ellers, who lives in Warren and whose son, Andy, has sailed on Gillmer designed tall ships and received a credit in the recently acclaimed sailing film, *Master and Commander*. Richard did not know of Gillmer's birth place but subsequently found a cousin of Gillmer's and between them made it possible for Gillmer's name to be added to the Warren High School Alumni Hall of Fame, the school from which he graduated in 1929.

Despite the debacle over Ceylon, for which he quietly blamed the State Department, John maintained a cordial working relationship with the Fishing Boat Section of the FAO and continued corresponding with Jan-Olof Traung, who kept him abreast of fishing boat design developments on the international scene. Traung was ecstatic over John's review of the Rome proceedings published in 1960, *Fishing Boats Of The World: 2* (MCF December 1960), the same tome which included three papers by John totaling over 5,000 words, those that he would have presented in person in Rome and was rightly proud of; i.e., reporting on the M-2 tank test of resistance, the economic factors of small boat design, and the need for heavy duty commercial outboard engines and motor well research.

In May 1960 there was an International Conference on Small Craft for Fisheries and Transportation, in New York City at which a paper on outboards by Traung was read and reviewed by John (MCF August 1960). In January 1961 in a letter to Kenneth Durant, John wrote, "If I may judge from *Fishing Boats of the World 1 & 2*, and my FAO contacts, the state of small craft knowledge in Europe is still in much the same primitive state as here, with the lion's share of the basic research yet to be done." Prior to a visit to Canada in late October 1964, John met Traung, then Chief of the Fishing Boat Section, at the Statler-Hilton again to interview him for a piece in the *National Fisherman* (NF November 1965).

Traung was doing the legwork, checking over FAO projects prior to the third World Fishing Boat Congress scheduled for October 1965 in Goteborg, Sweden, which was to highlight smaller boats of less than 100 gross tons, particularly those types used in countries struggling to develop their fisheries. The third volume in the series, all edited by Traung, *Fishing Boats of The World: 3*, was published in 1967 and reviewed by John (NF Dec. 1967) where he began unequivocally, "Without any question this is clearly the most

significant work published this year or several years previous in the field of naval architecture. ... The three volumes taken together constitute a unique encyclopedia of up-to-date worldwide theory and practice in the fishing and shipbuilding industries and are an indispensable reference work for professionals in these and related fields." Traung recalls their last meeting at the Montreal Conference on Fishing Vessel Construction Materials, October 1-3, 1968. John's review of the event appeared shortly after (*NF Yearbook* 1969) and included a photograph of Traung and reports on ferro cement construction, fiberglass dories, and a 34' cross-planked V-bottom utility fishing boat.

In 1996, after learning of John's death, Traung went back to his writing desk to include Gardner and Gilkerson (1997) with Gillmer and Greenhill (1996) in his *Giant G* series for the Swedish journal *Batologen*. In October 2002 he was 83 years old and "very glad to read again John's excellent review of *Fishing Boats of the World* (1953): I. At the time he found it amusing that the FAO proceedings, going for \$22 each in the '60s, are rare and often picked up at the bargain price of \$200 for the set (and now apparently available on CD).

Stella Z. II and other V-bottom hulled fishing boats are still used on the North Shore. Years later John developed her construction details published in the *Maine Coast Fisherman* into a chapter in his last book, *Wooden Boats To Build And Use*, published posthumously by Mystic Seaport in 1996 after his death at 90 years of age.

In this chapter John walks the prospective builder by the hand through each step of her construction, making it possible for anyone to duplicate her hull. Not to say that there isn't plenty of opportunity for communing with the gods or invoking John's help from the shop moaning chair. He had a habit of listening to readers, fishermen, and builders and responding to their needs, wooing them with his words. Attempts in 1995 to follow up on the whereabouts of the *Stella Z. II* were unsuccessful.

Thanks to Nick Del Greco of Peabody, I recently learned some of her history. Over time she passed from the original owner, Joseph Zdanowicz of Salem, to his son Tom, and then to his stern man, Manuel Garafanhao, who fished 50 traps and upgraded her engine to 125 hp. She was hauled at Hawthorne Cove Marina in Salem and not fished again until Bob Houghton of Peabody, who lost his boat in a storm, leased her in the spring of 1998. A year later in the spring of 1999 Houghton bought her. "I mostly fish

alone, don't like the clatter, and she is hard as a rock. She was stable regardless and handled well in a following sea. *Stella Z. II* was a great platform and most stable boat I ever worked on. You can be blindsided by a wave when hauling and she sits still. One of the best designed boats I ever fished."

And later, he added further, "Whereas the fiberglass boats have it on maintenance and speed which is part of the business, they are not as solid as a wooden boat. Wooden boats are special." After injuring his shoulder, Houghton sold the *Stella Z. II* in January 2002 with traps and lines to Todd Smith of Lowell, who wanted the license and he subsequently sold her again. According to Houghton the current owner is restoring her to fish again.

Houghton, Angus Campbell, now of Florida, and Del Greco report there are still a number of hard chine boats in use on the North Shore, especially in Salem, Beverly, and Marblehead. The Bartletts, for example still fish hard chine boats. It was the 31' V-bottom lobster boat, built on the same molds as the *Patty Z.* for Fred Bartlett of Beverly in 1949 by the Cloutmans, which John included in a six-part series published in the *Maine Coast Fisherman* in 1957 (January-June) from his survey of North Shore fishing boats. She appeared in the December 1950 issue of the same journal in a N. Fuller photograph.

One might be content to accomplish all this over a period of years, never mind compacting it into a period of months. However, this summary includes nothing more than a mere skeleton account of John's working life over a brief span in the late 1950s. He was a devoted father, a family man meeting daily responsibilities, renovating his house, tending a large vegetable garden, holding down a demanding physical job, actively engaged in research, consulting on projects with maritime museums, and carrying on a very comprehensive correspondence on an old manual typewriter without benefit of a secretary, as he often reminded people, while simultaneously preparing a 30-page summary paper on psychoanalysis published in the summer of 1958 under one of his pseudonyms, John Clarkson, in the quarterly journal, *Contemporary Issues*.

Fishing boat models reviewed in John Gardner's North Shore survey in the late 1950's included the following.

Dimensions Design, Designer, Builder, Date, Lines:

32' x 10'4" x 2'11" V-Bottom Lobster Boat *Bessie Ann*, designed and built by J. Hull, Ipswich, Massachusetts, ca.1947 for Amerigo Angelina, Beverly, Massachusetts,

lines taken off December 1956 by John Gardner (*MCF* January, February, 1957; April 1958).

43' x 11'4" x 2'10" V-Bottom Party Boat *Doris M.*, designed and built by J. Hull, Ipswich, Massachusetts, 1939, for Pier Transportation Co., Salem, Massachusetts, lines taken off March 1957 by John Gardner (*MCF* May 1957).

31'1" x 10'11" x 2'11" V-Bottom Lobster Boat *Millie II*, designed and built by A. H. Cloutman, Marblehead, Massachusetts, 1949 for Fred Bartlett, lines taken off Salem, Massachusetts 1956 by John Gardner (*MCF* January, February, March 1957).

32' x 10' x 2'6" V-Bottom Utility or Fishing Launch designed by S.S. Rabl, Baltimore, Maryland (*MCF* March 1958).

32'11" x 2' x 2'11" V-Bottom Sport Fisherman *Rosy III*, designed by Philip C. Bolger, Gloucester, Massachusetts, built by Robert H. Cloutman, Marblehead, Massachusetts, winter 1957-1958 for Michael Pearlman, Swampscott, Massachusetts (*MCF* July 1958).

41'1" x 10'4" x 3'6" V-Bottom Hatteras, lines taken off by H.I. Chapelle, Maryland.

34'9" x 9'1" x 2'3" V-Bottom Chesapeake Launch, lines taken off by H.I. Chapelle, Maryland.

30' x 8'2" x 2' V-Bottom Chesapeake Crabbing Launch, designed by H.I. Chapelle for J. Richardson, Cambridge, Maryland.

28' LOA Round-Bottom Lobster Boat *Stella Z.*, designed and built by George L. Chaisson, Swampscott, Massachusetts.

33' x 10'10" x 3'2" V-bottom Lobster Boat, designed by John Gardner, Saugus, Massachusetts, February 1958 (*MCF* March 1958).

37' x 11' x 3' V-bottom Lobster Boat *Stella Z. II*, designed by John Gardner, Saugus, Massachusetts, October 1958 for Joseph F. Zdanowicz of Salem, Massachusetts; built by Dion Yacht Yard, Salem, Massachusetts, 1959 (*MCF* October 1958, February, April, July 1959)

32' LOA Round-Bottom Novie Lobster Boat *Triton Z.*, measured by John Gardner in Salem, Massachusetts.

28' LOA Round-Bottom Lobster Boat *Judy Z.*, measured by John Gardner in Salem, Massachusetts.

33' LOA Round-Bottom Novie Lobster Boat *4S759*, measured by John Gardner in Salem, Massachusetts.

31' LOA Round-Bottom Lobster Boat *Tuna*, measured by John Gardner in Salem, Massachusetts.

32'8" LOA Round-Bottom Novie Lobster Boat *Arlene*, designed and built by Devoe, Salmon River, Nova Scotia, for Henry Briggs, Barber's Lobster Pool, Marblehead, Massachusetts.

30'6" LOA Round-Bottom Novie Lobster Boat, designed and built by Adams, Manchester, Massachusetts, measured by John Gardner in Salem, Massachusetts.

34' x 9' x 3' Round Bottom Lobster Boat by William Frost, Portland, Maine, ca. 1946; lines taken off by Philip C. Bolger.

38' x 13'2" x 3'4" Round Bottom Cruiser *Julyntha*, designed by Philip C. Bolger, built by Essex Shipyards, Essex, Massachusetts, winter 1957-58 for Ronald F. Davis, Winchester, Massachusetts (*MCF* July 1958)

(Submitted February 14, 2004)

The 36' x 10' x 3' Cape Island lobster boat *Nettie-Mae*, pictured here in 1952, was built by Edmund D'Eon, West Pubnico, Nova Scotia, in 1951. Her Novie-type hull was planked in pine on white oak frames and galvanized nail fastened, powered with a second hand Buick eight cylinder gasoline engine. Pictured here in 1952, she was purchased by Lynn, Massachusetts lobsterman Thomas Athy but never fished prior to her sale to Prescott H. Littlefield of Darien, Connecticut in August 1952 for \$1600.





The *Patty Z*, built by Albert and Robert Cloutman of Marblehead in 1949 for John S. Zdanowicz, as she looked in 2003 stored at Rose's Marine in Gloucester. She was photographed by John Gardner in 1956 in Salem and featured in his last book, *Wooden Boats to Build And Use*, published in 1996 by Mystic Seaport Museum. (N. Del Greco photograph)



Henry Briggs, a highly regarded fisherman and owner of the Barber Lobster Pool in Marblehead, regarded his own Novie boat *Arlene*, 32'8" x 10' built in 1955 by Devoe of Salmon River, Nova Scotia, not only the best boat he had fished in 37 years, but a bargain that would have cost by his estimate \$3000 more to build locally, accounting for their popularity on the North Shore. Briggs attended the launch of the Albert Cloutman designed 30' V-bottom *Lizzie H.* for Marblehead lobsterman Ed Hawkes at Fisherman's Beach in Barnegat in February, 1947. (Peter F. Littlefield Collection)

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I just read that hook and line fishing story I wrote and sent off to our esteemed editor and realized that I had made a grievous error, so I am writing my own rebuttal and hope I beat you to it. I forgot to say that hook and line fishing is not my thing in SALT water. You can't catch fresh water fish with a cast net so I always use a hook and line there.

Well, Jane is the one who always catches the fish. It is funny how much better women are than men at fishing, and it isn't just patience either. A woman taught me how to fish and I am pretty darn good if I do say so myself, but I had to learn. Jane just came by it naturally.

What it is is that she just knows where the fish is and what kind of mood he (or she) is in. She won't hesitate to drop her worm in the worst weed patch in the pond either, and has a miraculous ability to pull (lead) a big fish through the bushes like he was trying to help her. Because of that tendency, she is always getting hung up in limbs and snags and stuff, but unlike a man, she does not get frustrated and hysterical but just wiggles and fools around until the worm helps her get loose.

We have been to Chef's pond two successive days and caught our supper on both days. The pond is in that wonderful state when the fish are biting and the cursed Hydrilla (a noxious weed introduced into the U.S. by aquarium fanciers) still hasn't completely covered the pond for the whole summer.

Ten big bream are just what we need for supper and my breakfast the next day (a big, old, cold bream beats hell out of a bowl of Froot Loops). Because it is not blowing like the dickens for a change, we have been using the old Grumman wild rice canoe. A canoe ain't bad for a fishing boat when there is not enough wind to send it planing sideways right in the middle of where the fish are every time you pick up your fishing pole. You have to be very careful when you lay the paddle down and not stomp around on the aluminum (I have proven time and again that fish cannot be caught out of any aluminum boat containing a two-year-old child) but it can be done.

On the first day we went Jane caught nine big bream and I caught two little ones and one of them was too small to keep. We have two species of eating size bream in that pond. One is the regular old blue bream that is ubiquitous all over the country, and the other is the shellcracker which is a smaller fish than a bluegill but with a bigger mouth and, to me, the best eating of all bream.

Down here bream get big. The biggest blue bream are in Lake Miccosukee which is a natural lake and ancestral home of the long gone Miccosukee Indians. There have been some 4-lb. bream pulled out of that lake. I know a lot of you know what it is like to catch a big bluegill and can imagine what a four-pounder would do to the old Zebco. I don't think there is any fish that fights harder for his size than a bluegill. I have never caught even a 2-lb. one but I can imagine. What he'll do to the Zebco is chew up the line so bad where it goes around the pins that you'll have to change it after (if) you get the fish in the boat.

There are bream beds on Miccosukee so big that 50 boats group up on one bed. I don't participate in social gatherings of that nature, but I had an old friend who was downright fiendish about fishing a bream bed in company with all sorts of other people. There are

Fresh Water Fishing

By Robb White

women who fish bream beds but it is an all day proposition and most women don't like to have to pee out of a boat with a bunch of other boats close by, so they usually fish off the dam or something while the old man goes out and anchors on the bed and pees over the side.

All the other fishermen act like nothing unusual is happening when one of them does that, but this old booger friend of mine had a nasty streak in him and he rigged up this rig with an automotive electric fuel pump pulling water out of the live box and pumping it up his britches leg through a carburetor hose and he would stand up to pee and just keep on peeing a hard, steady 3/8" diameter stream as long as he wanted to. The other fishermen would try not to notice but couldn't help looking a little nervous. You know how human nature is...particularly here in the South... people don't like to acknowledge any human abnormality by looking at it. Wheelchair people are almost invisible around here.

I went to an auction where they were selling off a whole farm's worth of equipment after another old man had died, and this old booger was there with a little dog leash with an empty collar dangling on the end of it. The leash was rigidly arranged so it looked like the man was following an invisible little dog and this dog was very willful and kept going up under women's dresses. "Get your ass out from under there," the old booger would scold and snatch the little collar back hard enough to flip the woman's skirt up pretty high. He was a nasty man. If I can remember, I'll tell you about the time he bet me five dollars that he had a buck rabbit that would successfully copulate with a cat, but I ain't got time now. I have to tell you some more about bream fishing.

You can catch them with a cane pole and a lot of people like that method, but Jane and I like to fish off the bank a lot and, unless you stay in the same place and watch your cork all day long, a cane pole is unsuitable. All our ponds are all grown up around the sides with big trees and bushes and a cane pole will drive you crazy trying to burrow through the undergrowth.

I have an ancient Zebco 33 that I bought from that same nasty old booger back when he was running the bait store 40 years ago. It is sort of like George Washington's axe. I have swapped out guts and covers so many times that I don't know if there are any original parts to it but I still like it. You know, in my opinion most men over-accessorize themselves when it comes to fishing tackle. Some of them have a tackle box worth a thousand bucks with all those expensive baits and all. Mine ain't worth but about \$200 and most of that is the pistol.

Me, I am a wild worm man and so is Jane. I don't give a damn how much money you spend, you can't have a better bait than a wild worm big enough to cast without any weight at all. He'll (actually it's a he/she hermaphrodite) sink slowly and wiggle enticingly all the way down. I don't know the species of these naturally occurring worms down here, but they are very dark colored and kind of iridescent like a hologram and, in the right

conditions, get big. One right condition is in a pile of old junk mail catalogs.

Because of the nature of this business, we get a world of them. I pile them up in a likely place and the worms get in there and eat their way through the paper. Back in the old Sears and Roebuck catalog days (which I hated to see the end of...Wal Mart ain't in it with Sears and Roebuck in their heyday) any time I wanted to go fishing, all I would have to do was uncover the leaves off my Sears catalog and flip through the pages and put the worms in my Prince Albert can (which I hated to see the end of, too). Usually the lingerie section would have the biggest worms and it isn't because of any nasty connotation or anything...they just had a lot of slick pages in that section and worms love that clay coated paper. They just love a stack of *Cruising Worlds*.

Anyway, when you uncover one of those worms he doesn't just lie there in acquiescence like a night crawler or pond worm, but goes to flipping and twisting like an alligator on a hook. They don't like to be stuck with a fishhook, either. I don't care how high tech a man gets with his equipment, you can't beat a wild wiggler fighting the hook as he slowly thrashes all the way to the bottom...ain't too many fish that can stand to watch that happen right in front of his or her nose for very long. Bass will come running from 15' away if the water is clear enough for him to see.

Which brings up a peculiarity that I have noticed. Both largemouth bass and bream are in the same family, but with bass it is the female that gets to be the biggest, whereas with bream it's the male.

So believe me, it ain't the equipment that brings in the bacon, y'all, it's the technique. As I said, my equipment is an old Zebco and a cheap, short rod, 4-lb. line, a package of fish hooks, a pocket knife, and a few wigglers. Jane's is about the same except she doesn't own the rod. She just uses one of the children's "Mickey Mouse" Zebco rigs. I don't know when Zebco started that but it might have been 30 years ago that they began to make that little cheap one-piece rig with Mickey printed on the cover. It's all plastic and the rod is so short that it only has two guides on it. The little reel comes with 6-lb. line and it has no drag, so I always get in there and kill the anti-reverse.

You know it is a lot better to give the fish line than it is for him to have to take it. If you give slack the fish will stop fighting, but if he feels the resistance of the drag he'll tear off into the bushes and lily pads and hang you up. If he is heading in the wrong direction, Jane back pedals on the handle and gives slack line until he stops and starts heading in the right direction...then she catches him. Except for the nostalgia of it, I would use a Mickey Mouse (or Goofy...same thing) Zebco.

Of course I would take that 6-lb. line off of there and put 4-lb. line on there. No fish likes to see anything but the worm and that brings up my axiom, you can catch big fish with light line and a little hook but you can't catch little fish with heavy line and a big hook. When you are looking for something to eat, you have to have your equipment suit the situation.

Another tip is to hook your worm in the nose. If you do like the kid in *McElligott's Pool* and hook him in the middle, the bream will grab him by the head and run off with

him until he breaks off where the hook is. Fish (especially bream) are keen observers of everything, are omnivorous in their habits, and are never really hungry so they are picky eaters and have sense enough to know that a worm won't go down very good backwards because they have those little bristles leaning back like little barbs so they always grab him by the head.

Make sure the point of the hook is sticking out good and make sure the hook is so small as to be practically invisible. I like a #10, fine wire, blue, Mustad (the oldest manufacturer of metal objects still in business in the world) Aberdeen pattern hook, myself, for bass and bream. But there is one time when such a little hook is inappropriate and that fact was once again proven yesterday.

Jane spied a slight quiver to the water in the middle of a lily pad patch about as big around as a kitchen table and flipped her worm over there, even though she knew he/she was going to land right in the middle of all those lily pads and a big wad of Hydrilla, too. The worm lay there on top of the lily pad for a while and then crawled off the edge and a little bream about as big as child's hand grabbed him by the head and tried to drag him down to the bottom. Jane coaxed him out around the lily pad stems into the Hydrilla and started dragging a big mess of it to the boat.

All that grass was too heavy to lift into the boat to untangle the little fish so she reached over the side. As soon as she got the little fish untangled he started to swim off and a bass as big as a beagle dog hit him just as soon as he got clear of Jane's hand. Whew, it sounded like somebody had dropped a car battery in the water and Jane snatched her hand back and just managed to catch Mickey Mouse before he went overboard. The bass ran all the way out in the middle of the pond

before Jane could manage to catch the whirling handle and feed him enough slack to stop him from taking line, but he did.

We decided to let him have plenty of time to maybe eat that little bream good enough to get to the tiny hook but he didn't make another move, so Jane sat back on him in an attempt to snatch the hook out of the little fish's mouth and maybe hook him in the lip and it appeared to work. He pulled and Jane pulled and fed line and I paddled to try to keep up a little bit. Finally he spat out the little bream and went on about his business.

The hook was still all the way in the little bream's mouth. We know where he (she) hangs out though, so as soon as the spawning season is for sure over (January and February and part of March down here...usually completely over in April...but this has been a funny year) we will set up and go catch her. We'll put 8-lb. line on the Mickey Mouse Zebco and a big hook and I'll catch another little bream and we'll hook him through the lip with plenty of hook sticking out and make a special trip. I thought I heard some skeptical remarks about credibility issues from the peanut gallery, so if I am going to have to prove something I may as well pile it on.

Last week my seven-year-old, intensely determined grandson caught a very big bass on a little plastic octopus with a Mickey Mouse Zebco....with 4-lb. line and a #10 hook. That's them right there in that picture. The fish had to live in the bathtub until Daddy got home to cook him. Oddly enough, big bass are very good eating. A baked 10-lb. bass stuffed with onions and celery and red bell peppers is a real crowd pleaser around here and my grandmother made catching them a special project all her life. Of course, they didn't have plastic octopuses in those days so she climbed a tree and shot them with a 25/35 Winchester.



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Readers may have noted that my columns have been getting longer. Editor Hicks said he won't cut them down and I must. I hear and obey, oh mighty King Solomon. Up goes my sword and down it comes upon my baby.

International Scene

The Prestige affair agonizes onward. The Basque regional government filed 21 pages of questions for the ABS classification society to answer, Greenpeace urged Spain's new socialist government not to forget the disaster, interested parties are trying to get the case of the still-under-arrest master before the European Court of Human Rights, and a key European Parliament committee said he should be allowed to go home until his trial. Similarly, Europe's Council of Ministers urged Pakistan to release the master of the tanker *Tasman Spirit* and seven others held under arrest until their trial.

The two International Association of Classification Societies are working on common rules for tanker and bulkier design. The U.K. wants double-hulls for bulkers, the Greeks don't. Norway, which controls or owns one-third of the world's merchant fleet, is trying to stem its slippage as a maritime power.

Disparate groups worried about safe manning and human errors. Hong Kong ship-owners, surprisingly, worried too much work is being demanded from mariners, especially masters. A P&I Club found 54% of liability claims were caused by human error. It did not see much structural failure but "a lot of human error." A conference felt the human factor was to blame for much of the maritime business's problems. One speaker said there was a "culture of exoneration" and "looking the other way when something is wrong."

He summarized by saying, "We get exactly what we deserve, including arrests of masters." Another speaker noted that rates are high but the industry is still obsessed with cost. A third wondered why ships' crews are the only ones on-site after an accident, a plane's builder and owner swiftly appear when an airliner crashes. A survey found that the master is overworked by paperwork and the ship is always in the wrong in any given situation, everyone, from the merest clerk upwards, knows more than the master.

Hard Knocks

A barge broke away from its tug off northwest Spain and the Spanish salvage tug *Ibaizabel I* managed to secure a new line between the two vessels but it soon parted in heavy seas. The Spanish tug tried again, two men were washed overboard and only one was rescued alive.

The Maltese-flagged tanker *Everton* collided with a fishing vessel off the coast of Oman and burst in flames. Twenty-four of its crew of 25 were rescued by ships including the *USS Yorktown* (CG 48), which rushed to the scene. Its crew and equipment helped suppress the fire as the tanker went drifting.

The NOAA fisheries-research ship *Miller Freeman* ran into an uncharted ledge off Kodiak Island while doing 11 knots in 66' of water. It will not finish its research on the pollack fishery. One would not be surprised if a NOAA vessel of the hydrographic survey variety closely examined that general area in the near future.

Beyond the Horizon

By Hugh Ware

Six survivors from the fiery sinking of the ethanol tanker *Bow Mariner* off Virginia finally testified before a grand jury. Company lawyers had made sure that nothing the survivors said could be held against them in the U.S. or in Singapore where the ship was registered, by giving each man clothing worth about \$700 plus a daily allowance of \$100 addition to regular salaries and providing a van for their daily transportation and unlimited calling cards so they can keep in touch with families back in the Philippines.

Cruisers And Liners

Washington State and Maine are contemplating legislation that would forbid dumping of grey water, untreated sewerage, or oily bilge water in state waters. This would mean cruise ships must keep nearly all their waste water in holding tanks. Cruise companies are unhappy since a typical cruise ship generates about a million gallons of grey water alone in a one-week cruise. Also unhappy are the Canadians, whose waters will probably be dumped into.

A Japanese court punished a welder for carelessness that contributed to a fire aboard the new building cruise ship *Diamond Princess* at Nagasaki in 2002.

A bow-thruster door wouldn't close and a back-up engine turbine didn't work well enough to make up lost time, so the brand-new *Queen Mary 2* arrived seven hours late at Southampton. Many passengers were not amused.

Navies

The head of the Russian Navy, out on the nuclear-powered cruiser *Peter The Great*, quickly ordered it back to port, saying, "The ship is in such bad shape it might explode at any minute." He later modified that by saying the ship, reportedly a crack ship and the pride of the fleet, was only badly maintained, and he gave leaders two weeks to clean it up. Observers sensed a power struggle among Navy leaders. And two Russian Navy officers built a homemade sauna in their bathroom with parts from the ship's galley and used it for two years until it started a fire that spread throughout the ship.

Five members of Britain's Combined Services Caving Association decided to explore Mexico's Alpacatz caverns. Trapped by unexpected rising waters, they requested rescue by Royal Marine divers, not local scuba rescue personnel. The President of Mexico wanted to know why foreign military were invading Mexico on tourist visas without his knowledge, while locals decided the spelunkers were seeking uranium. "Bored silly" after eight days of waiting, the six cavers were brought out by both Royal Marine divers and local rescuers.

Indian Ocean nations are busy arming themselves. Bangladesh wants four submarines by 2012, two marine patrol aircraft, missiles, long-range torpedoes, SAMs, and a helicopter. It will buy two ex-Royal Navy frigates and five offshore patrol boats (mostly

delivered already) and will build a large patrol boat, and so on. India will soon ask for bids for its biggest ever drydock, perhaps ready in time for its "new" aircraft carrier from Russia (the ex-Admiral *Ghoshkov*) in 2008 and a new India-built carrier in 2011.

In thick fog the new U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Holly*, on her first icebreaking job, somehow managed to hit the anchored (or ice-bound) 1000' laker *Stewart J. Cort*. And the General Accounting Office said the Coast Guard has too many missions and not enough people or money.

The CO of the *USS Firebolt* (PC-10) was relieved after striking an aid-to-navigation off Iraq. The Navy closed its Roosevelt Roads Naval Station in Puerto Rico, so 2,000 troops and dependents have left and 1,000 locals are out of jobs, all due to activists' complaints about the Vieques Island bombing range and its subsequent closing. Three men associated with the carrier *USS John F. Kennedy* died in one week, one from hitting his head on a pipe, one while playing basketball, and the last when a pipe he was working on burst and released toxic hydrogen sulfide gas.

In two or three years the new amphibious transport dock *USS San Antonio* will be parked next to a 10,000-lb. explosive charge and it will be exploded. Such shock testing is customary for the first of each class of major warship and will be repeated up to three times.

Royal Navy court martial participants will no longer have to wear swords as the Senior Service makes another giant stride in getting in step with the court martial practices of the other Services.

The Service will scrap its fleet of Sea Harriers as prohibitively expensive, and critics suggested that the lack of the Harriers to defend the *HMS Ark Royal*, the Service's only carrier, is why that ship is to be mothballed. Initial plans had the Royal Navy's new carriers *HMS Queen Elizabeth* and *HMS Prince Charles* too tall to pass under the 114-year-old Firth of Forth Bridge on their way out from the builder.

BAE will not be the prime contractor for the carriers, but neither will French co-contractor Thales. The Ministry of Defense said, "We now have some important decisions to make."

Ferries

New ferries are popping up everywhere, but none so startling as a ferry between mainland China's Zhangzhou City and the "province" of Taiwan.

And thousands followed via a website the delivery of the new 45,000hp, 47-knot Lake Ontario superferry *Spirit of Ontario* (nicknamed "The Breeze") from Australia but were not present when the vessel, on a show-off stop in New York City, grazed a pier while landing and made a 25' streak with an 8' gash. There may a delay to starting service May 1 while the vessel is repaired.

An arrested Muslim terrorist may have caused the fatal February fire on the Philippine ferry *Superferry 14* that killed 118, but some officials blamed welding in ongoing repair work in the area of the explosion.

An Indonesian ferry rated at 70 passengers was carrying 173 members of a wedding party when it capsized in rough seas, killing 23. And the ferry *Enamadaa* in the Maldives carrying 18 football fans and another 100 or so people was capsized by the wake of a pass-

ing vessel. At least 17 died and were buried in a mass grave.

Legal Business

The *Storman Asia* was detected stormin' for 14.5 miles in the wrong lane of the Dover Straits Separation Scheme in spite of repeated radioed warnings, so its master paid a £14,000 fine plus £6,042 in costs for wrong-way driving.

If a longshoreman is stupid enough to walk a 4" piece of flimsy dunnage 10' above the deck and it breaks, it's his own fault. So ruled a U.S. Court of Appeals.

American Salvage Association members are getting so little business from tanker emergencies that they need to be subsidized in order to remain ready, and they urged the Coast Guard to implement a long-delayed plan that would require oil shipping companies to pay \$500 per ship per year to have a salvage company on standby. An oil industry spokesperson retorted that all ships should pay since so few tankers get in trouble. An example of the salvor's problem was the recent blockage of the Mississippi by a sunken supply boat, if Bisso Marine had gone out of business due to lack of work and its derricks were not available on short notice, the river might still be blocked.

The Japanese owner of the bulker *Spring Drake* paid a \$2 million fine for dumping oil waste and falsifying logs while the ship's chief engineer will spend a month in jail. And Hoegh Fleet Services paid a \$3.5 million fine for similar misdeeds on its *Hoegh Minerva*.

Bouchard Transportation paid a \$10 million fine for an oil spill in Massachusetts' Buzzards Bay last year. The mate of the tug *Evening Tide* was absent from the wheelhouse and didn't take a radio with him so he didn't hear calls from other vessels that the tug and barge were heading into shallow waters. The fine is the second biggest after the *Exxon Valdez* fine.

Terrorism, Smuggling, and Piracy

The Royal Navy's *HMS Cardiff* did much to stifle drug flow out of South America but also earned the worst drug record in the fleet when crew members were found to be cocaine users. The Senior Service had 23 cocaine positives and 23 cannabis positives last year.

An Indonesian patrol boat flying pennant number KAL-I-502 stopped a cargo ship off Jayapura and an Indonesian "naval officer" forced the master and third mate to go to the warship for papers inspection, then beat them and demanded a U.S. \$5,000 ransom. The master negotiated this down to \$2,500 plus provisions. Indonesia said the matter was under investigation.

Just as pirates were changing the names of a hijacked tugboat and barge, Thai navy and police showed up and arrested seven Myanmar nationals.

Ship Building and Scrapping

The shipbuilding scene in Europe was mixed but mostly down. Four thousand Dutch shipyard workers urged government support, while steel maker Hollandia Bailey Koos said it would take over ailing shipbuilder Van der Glessen. In Germany, Thyssen Krupp and One Equity Partner may merge Blohm & Voss and HDW to create Europe's first Asian-style super shipyard. The accident to the

newbuilding *Pride of America* put Lloyd Werft into bankruptcy, it was unable to pay subcontractor SSW and that would have affected HDW's future if SSW could not deliver steel sections for newbuildings. In the end, SSW got state and Bremerhaven City aid but with strings attached.

French engineering giant Alstom won contracts for two big cruise ships which will bring badly needed work to its Chantier de l'Atlantique shipyard. In Poland, the New Szczecin Shipyard still has many problems, mostly with the receiver over how much to pay for the "old" yard and its parent company. Wallenius Lines will lengthen five vehicle carriers into the biggest such ships yet, each carrying 7,100 units, and build two carriers with 6,700 vehicle capacities.

In the U.K., BAE Systems launched a 16,000-tonne landing craft (it hit the opposite bank!) and will build another, plus two patrol boats and six destroyers. The Dutch owner of Swan Hunter poured £30 million into it but will lay off 1,700 workers and mothball the yard unless it gets orders.

Drastic increases in steel prices forced the world's largest shipbuilder to admit it is in trouble, largely because it filled most building slots to 2006 earlier and cheaper than most other companies. MOL ordered the largest bulk carrier ever, a 323,000-dwt, 1,115'x197' monster with a 69' draft, bigger, it was claimed, than even the largest crude oil carrier.

Greenpeace said, "It is criminal, pure murder, to send a ship to those countries where the workers are not aware. It is like sending a poison," and a British Euro-MP and a former cabinet minister agreed that EU shipowners must scrap their ships in Europe. But the Ministry of Defense said, "We do not accept that scrapping ships in the U.K. is necessary to ensure a high standard of disposal."

In Pakistan, workers from all over Pakistan eagerly attacked the beached 1,360' tanker *Sea Giant* and were glad to have the scrapping work. The 888' aircraft carrier *Oriskany*, however, will be sunk near Pensacola as an artificial reef.

Odd Bits

A record was smashed when MOL agreed to a daily charter rate of \$43,500 for the 4,038-TEU box carrier *Mare Britannicum*. Some worry how the vital feeder and regional services will fare given such extraordinary rates.

Several canals celebrate birthdays this year. The Chesapeake & Delaware Canal is 175 years old, the Suez Canal turns 135, the Panama Canal reaches 90, the modern Kiel Canal is 90 (a shallow Kiel goes back to 1895), and the Cape Cod Canal is 90 (although not deepened for deep sea shipping until 1940). The Kiel Canal is busiest, averaging 109 ships a day, the Suez passes 43 vessels per day, and the Panama Canal handles 37 to 38 vessels each day.

To get "Abnormal Indivisible Loads" off the roads, the British Government granted £8.5 million to build the *Terra Marique*, a barge capable of carrying 2,000 tonnes of power station equipment and the like. Its first jobs was to carry a decommissioned Concorde SST to Scotland for permanent exhibit.

Back-ups of daylight restricted vessels through the several Turkish Straits have been essentially eliminated and Turkish officials

are, no doubt, breathing easier.

Insurance companies are refusing to insure trucks carrying cigarettes through a 14-mile zone in Ireland and shippers now move the smokes from Belfast to Dublin via U.K. ferries. The Irish Prime Minister is mad at the IRA for threatening the £1 billion-a-year cross-border trade.

Watch it if you try to salvage old military gear. Usually when the U.S. Navy lost a small boat or plane in World War II, it was finders-keepers if someone later stumbled on the wreck. An airplane mechanic dug the wreck of a Corsair fighter out of a North Carolina swamp and now the Navy is suing for its return, the costs of the return, plus compensation for any damage since its recovery by the mechanic. The Government's eccentric behavior may be because the Corsair is an F3A-2, one of 75 built by Brewster instead of one of the 12,000 F4Us turned out by Chance Vought.

The U.K. established a maximum alcohol blood level limit (80mg in 100 ml, the same as for motorists) for U.K. mariners everywhere and any mariners in U.K. waters, but wondered what levels to set for non-professional mariners, whether to make exceptions for, say, rowers, and whether it would be OK to detain a vessel until a constable arrived.

After a cold winter with heavy ice, the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway unexpectedly opened early this year. Water levels were higher (but still inches below long-term monthly averages) and are expected to rise. First-comers in various ports were given traditional canes, top hats, and even wooden shoes. A strong shipping season is expected. On April 1, the U.S. Lakes fleet on the Lakes was more than double last year's number, mostly in vessels carrying iron ore, coal, and limestone. But environmentalists said the St. Lawrence Seaway should have opened one week later so ships' wakes did not rattle the ice and scour out vegetation that is vital to breeding fish.

The Fish and Wildlife Service said the Corps of Engineers' plan for varying water depths of the Missouri this summer "does not achieve the desired goal of avoiding jeopardy to listed species" but it will not stand in the way of barge shipping on the Missouri this summer.

Head Shakers

A tugboat skipper has been repeatedly ramming a 150' barge into an old Florida bridge. The barge is heavily instrumented to record the forces involved in a bridge ramming and possible collapse of its roadway.

Tugboat workers in Trinidad briefly went out on strike in sympathy with striking construction workers and the Prime Minister wanted an investigation. A spokesman for the tug workers said the PM's comment had "mashed up the morale of the workers."

In Singapore, the two naval officers in charge of the missile boat *RSS Courageous* when it collided with the container ship *ANL Indonesia* were found guilty of carelessness in navigating. Each was fined. Seah Sim Beng, father of one of females who died when the rear of the warship was torn off, wrote to the court. He said he'd always had good impressions of them from their visits to his home and he was worried that they would fall into depression if sent to jail.

Prologue: Well, Bill Gates dies, you see, and he is met at the Pearly Gates by Archangel Michael. "Mr. Gates! Honored to see you! We've decided to give you a special opportunity. We'll give you a glimpse of both Heaven and Hell and let you decide which you want to spend Eternity in."

He agrees and is presented with Heaven. The sky is blue, people in white robes are strolling over green hills and gently playing harps, and a heavenly choir is providing soft background music.

Bill says, "Hmmm, that's nice but I would like to see Hell before I make up my mind."

They go over to the elevator, and hit the "Down" button.

Hell is dark but there doesn't seem to be much torment. A group of party-goers comes out of a nightclub, laughing and singing. A vista of various night spots and entertainment options stretches into infinity.

Bill says, "Well, Heaven was nice, but I think I'd rather spend Eternity here."

Immediately a gagging cloud of sulfur envelops him and he finds himself in a vat of flaming pitch. He screams, "Hey! This wasn't part of what I saw!"

A twisted gremlin who is busy poking burning embers under his fingernails says, "Oh that! You saw the demo version."

Saturday: "Hats." My wife pulled off the road a few minutes from our house. "We forgot our cruising hats."

"Forget it," I said. "Going back will take 30 minutes off the cruise, even if we find them immediately. Let's go. We've got spare baseball caps if we need sun protection and the chances of that are slim anyway, the forecast is for various forms of rain." We pulled back on the road and continued the drive.

We were already a day behind our original plan. On Thursday I'd remembered that I'd told a Friday tutoring client that he must phone 24 hours in advance to cancel, and here I was going to miss his second session. I had to keep the appointment. Friday, planned as the last vacation day of the summer, was spent as a normal workday.

Back in the car the drive went normally. A number of cars were in the parking area of our small private marina set up behind an old waterfront home on the Magothy River in Maryland. We started unloading gear. We'd donated two old wheelbarrows to the "marina" a few years earlier and these simplified the transfer of gear.

Our saying is that, "Enough for a weekend is enough for a week." It sure was true this trip. We had remembered the digital camera this trip, last weekend we'd had a wonderful time but only remembered the missing camera as we looked at the only stone fort built by the English in their colonies. The camera had a history, Sarah had dropped its predecessor in the Gulf Stream earlier in the summer and I'd been able to find its mate at K-Mart at a triple-discounted price after we returned.

The gear really filled the wheelbarrows. I had the cooler and the jerry can of water while Sarah had everything else, capped off with a milk crate of general supplies. As I was wrestling the heavy wheelbarrow up onto the dock there was a splash, and an exclamation from my wife. I called out, "I'll get there as soon as I can..." and finished wrestling the load onto the dock. When I got to the boat, I

The Cruise from Hell

By Mark Fisher © 2002

found Sarah using the crab net we'd brought to fish floating gear from the muddy water around the dock.

Saying nothing, I peeled down to underpants and jumped in. The water was warm and filled with gear. A potato floated by and I flipped it up on the dock. I grabbed for the more water sensitive floating objects, library books, bread in wrappers, and then turned to the thing that was on my mind, the camera. I knew it would sink.

Diving down, I felt along the bottom. It was only 5' deep but very irregular, with bits of tree limbs and 40 years of ejecta from small boats. The new stuff, however, was easy to "spot." My first find was a card of tent pegs from last week's trip. Putting it up on the dock, I quickly found the camera. Bringing it to the surface, I called, "Sarah, here's the camera. Please get the batteries out quickly," then went back to my fishing.

We gradually accumulated a soggy mess of salvage. There were some irreplaceables in the pile, no family silver, but there WAS the original engine manual from 1978 and all the ship's papers. Sarah set to work spreading out the paperwork to drain and I dried off and changed to a dry swimsuit. I had a look at the camera. I pulled the 64-meg memory card and swished the camera in spring water, a little better than the brackish seawater that surrounded the dock. The case was fastened with jeweler's Phillips head screws, far smaller than anything I had on hand.

Another boat owner came by and I asked her if she had any jeweler's screwdrivers. She said "yes!" When I got the set, however, it was very basic and didn't have the small Phillips I needed. The smallest of the straight blades, however, WOULD grip and I was able to fight my way past the "No user serviceable parts inside" message. I set to work methodically removing and retaining the various fasteners. It seemed as though there would not be too many different ones, it mostly used the same small self-tapping screw.

I was getting to the main board with the image screen on it when Sarah appeared at the companionway. "There's something else still in the water, the VHF." She was right, we'd taken it home to remember to put fresh batteries in as backup to the shop's power we normally used.

I suited up in my wet muddy underpants and went back in. Sure enough, the radio was in the mud under a waterlogged branch. It was pretty sorry looking when we got it up, but I set to work pulling it apart.

Sarah appeared at the companionway again. "That radio won't be ready for this trip and it's five years old already. Let's go over to Boats-R-US and get another one. Besides, then we can have fried chicken from Machogian in Annapolis." Her logic was unassailable. We went over the soggy piles, transferred the papers to the cabin, and took the soggy clothing back to the car.

Freshly equipped with a new Icom radio, a gallon of distilled water, another loaf of bread, and a set of jeweler's Phillips screwdrivers (obtained at the cost of 45 minutes in Westfield Mall on Saturday afternoon!!!), we

arrived back at the boat at 3:00. The gear was stowed quickly and we were on the water by 4:00. In total calm. No problem, that's what the engine is for. The trusty Yanmar one-banger started thumping below and we headed out in majesty.

About a mile beyond the river entrance the wind came up from the northeast. As it built, I suggested we should try for the Rhode River. I hoped to find another Sandpiper 32 we'd heard was moored there.

The trip down the Chesapeake was wonderful. We bounded ahead of the building breeze, reefing the mizzen as weather helm developed. With our new radio we monitored traffic. A story was developing about a woman on a club cruise that had put down the hook off Thomas Point because the wheel had come off the steering pedestal. Another member of the club was trying to diagnose the problem over the radio but was getting nowhere. It seemed to us that there was probably a very simple solution, Edson wheels are designed to come off to make room in the cockpit. Finally he reported that she was pulling the plug, she was going to get a Tow-Boat-US ride back home. Soon Thomas Point itself was abeam and sure enough, there was the dark-hulled sloop. We blew by, too embarrassed to offer aid.

The Rhode was pretty in the evening light. We nestled up against the bank and settled in. The fresh breeze continued, bringing periods of rain. We had a rich and plentiful dinner and a sleepy evening, reading Spin Sheet stories aloud, and to bed.

Sunday: Rain continued through the night. I got up a few times but the GPS reported that we had been swinging in the arc we expected. The wind didn't shift to the south as we had hoped though, and we were hanging the same way in the morning. A steady rain was peppering the boat as well. I took advantage of a short break in the rain to put up the cockpit Bimini and the rain screens.

We had a very leisurely breakfast of bacon, cantaloupe, and corned beef hash. It was still raining, a steady, insistent barrage of small drops, like being under a lawn sprinkler. We really need the rain so we didn't grumble too much, the drunken Swede and his two kids on the weather radio had warned us.

We fiddled in the cabin, doing a few wiring projects that had been hanging fire for several months. When those were completed it was noon. The rain slackened. We decided to get underway. I went to start the engine, rrrrrrr... again? rrrrrr... Hmmm, dead battery. Oh well, no matter, we had a hand crank for exactly this and I'd tried it before. With the help of Sarah on the compression release the engine kicked to life. We hoisted anchor and toured one of the arms of the Rhode for our potential sister ship. The wind was light with light mists falling at intervals.

Well, the other boat wasn't there. We had frittered away enough of the day and decided to poke our nose out onto the Bay and see what the wind was doing. On the way out the wind built and brought more of the steady rain we'd had in the night.

The Rhode River joins the West River, then the channel turns north in what seems to be a large open bay, to join the South River just south of Thomas Point. It turned out that the wind was as strong as ever, about 20 knots from the north. On the northbound leg we kept

the motor on to help us make it in a single straight run rather than by tacking, avoiding the plentiful crab pot floats on either side of the "Pot Free Channel." We were coming up to the narrowest part of the channel when a buzzer went off, adding its shrill chirping to the racket of the engine, the wind, and the rain. I suspected it was the "low oil pressure" alarm, as we were heeled over pretty far, and I just shut off the engine and kept pressing on.

We decided to head for the Wye River across the Bay. There was a leg up Eastern Bay that headed north, but it was aligned northeast, and if the wind shifted any further north we might make it in a single leg. The rain settled in at a steady rate, not thunderstorm torrents or Scotch mist drips, just a permanent steady mix of air and water. Only the rain screens made it possible at all, but they only blocked the front and forward end and there was plenty of space for rain to get in. We were wearing foulies but the rain and damp penetrated everywhere. We were troubled for a while by a persistent accumulation of water in the bilge, but then we realized that the cooler was just relieving itself into the bilge.

With two days of steady strong winds the Bay had built up into a respectable chop. One of the reasons we had bought the 32' Sharpie was to deal with exactly that chop, but we hadn't realized what a penalty we would pay. The cat-ketch rig is not the most weatherly design. Our best course to windward in light air and flat water is 45° from the wind, and if there's any chop we are thrown even further off the wind. On top of that, we reduce sail area by revolving the masts. This is convenient (very!) but it also takes a toll on sail performance. When trying to make way to windward while reefed and pushing through chop we cannot plan on any better than 60° from the wind. The result is a boat that does wonders on a reach or a run but cannot be depended on to work into the wind. Normally on the Bay the wind shifts around, my rule of thumb on the Bay is to start a weekend trip downwind, the wind is sure to switch around by the next day. This time, though, that wasn't so true. We had a clear run across from Thomas Point to Bloody Point, but any other course would involve lots of tacking, and since the wind was above 20 knots, we would be pretty heavily reefed.

We rounded Bloody Point (named for the first conflict between Englishmen when Lord Baltimore tried to collect taxes from a Virginian) and took advantage of the reduced chop under the nearby weather shore to have fresh tomato and salami sandwiches. We then headed up Eastern Bay. The wind had not shifted, we would have to tack up Eastern Bay as well. The steady rain continued. There was another element as well, current. At this point in the month the tides were strongly diurnal, with a single flood and a "double" ebb, with a short period in the middle of the ebb where the levels reversed themselves. The catch? The flood was all night and the ebb was all day. We would be tacking against wind and tide.

Considering the forces we did pretty well. We switched watches every hour and watched the rain between. The shoreline of Eastern Bay gradually changed to the shoreline of Rich Neck, then to a search for the turning mark to the Wye. It was getting late.

It occurred to me that we should test the engine again to see if we could motor-sail the remaining way up to weather. The engine started easily, thanks to the charge during the tour of the Rhode. And then started the beep, beep, beep again. It was clearly the over-temp horn, not the steady beep of the oil-pressure horn. We gave a collective sigh. We'd been through this a few months earlier when we'd blown the head gasket. It couldn't be that again, it must be a bum impeller. That's what had caused the original stress that caused the head gasket failure. It also meant that we could not depend on the engine to help us get to the Wye.

As we filled away to beat on up to the turn to the Wye, I looked up at the sails. I realized that the leech of the mizzen had become tattered and the leech of the main was clearly headed the same way, there was a 3" flap of material along the leech between the battens. The failures were too high to get a close view of the damage. Without an engine there was no choice, we had to press on to get to some shelter where we could see what was up, and the mouth of the Wye would have to do. There was no question of tacking up the narrow northbound channel into the Wye proper, however.

The trusty GPS pointed us toward the invisible can marking the Wye point bar and our speed came up to 5.5 knots as we skipped across to our haven. The invisible can turned out to have been replaced by a day-mark with the number boards aligned 90° from the principal course past them, but it was exactly where the GPS had predicted. We ran on in across the Wye channel, rounded up on the flats on the landward side, and dropped the hook.

Light was fading fast so I got to work on the engine. Thru hull? Open. Strainer? Clear. Hose connections? Tight, hose new and unknicked. Water pump? I pulled it from the motor and Sarah pushed past me. I heard thumping on deck and came up, Sarah had noticed that the shore had shifted and realized that we had dragged anchor. We now had 35 feet of rode out in 45 feet of channel, not very good scope.

OK, we're sailing. Main out a bit, board down, tiller up to get the head to fall off, and we were under command again. We headed back in to the flats. We went farther on this time though, until we were in 8'. I rounded up and Sarah let out 75' of line. That should hold us.

Back to the engine. The water pump was fine, the impeller was fine, the seals were fine. I hooked it up with its output open and turned the engine over for a second, water came out at the expected rate. I hooked up the hoses, fired up the engine, and got an over-temp buzzer in about a minute. I took the zinc plug off the top of the head and was greeted with exhaust coming out of the water jacket. In case you didn't know, water is supposed to live in the water jacket, not exhaust. I keep the water in pipes. We had another blown head gasket. That was far beyond anything we could address "on cruise."

It was dark now and the wind was blowing briskly out of the northeast. We wouldn't be able to do much of a job of inspecting the sails in conditions like that. Sarah made a restorative ragout of rice, squash, and hot dogs and we ate in the golden light of our kerosene lamp. We talked a little of options. "Pull-

ing the plug" right now, we could just up-anchor and blow down to the marina complex at St. Michaels. That, of course, would put us on the other side of the Bay from our car and leave the boat in the hands of a resort marina staff for repair. I suspected that the raveling we saw was in the UV cover North Sails had stitched on. The radio promised that the wind would taper off and shift southerly on Monday. We decided to get up early the next day, inspect the sails, try the engine's head bolts, and, if everything looked good, get an early start and sail home.

Monday: I stumbled out of bed on Monday morning, Memorial Day. The wind was still pretty stiff and it had backed slightly further to the north again. We had an abbreviated breakfast and set to work. The engine's head bolts were as tight as they could go. The sails themselves were in good shape under the UV cover. The covers, however, were not. About 80% of the stitching was just plain missing, rotted away by sunlight. With considerable grumbling about North Sails' inspection the year before, we went about getting underway under one reef by 8:00 A.M.

We had to tack again to get back to Rich Neck, watching a procession of grand sailing yachts motoring out of St. Mike's straight into the wind. We got to the turning mark by 9:30. We settled down to an easy run south to Bloody Point and I went below to lie down for a bit. The boat slowed down, the wind was slackening. I went forward and unfurled the full mainsail. This both gave us more raw sail area and greatly improved the sail's shape. The usual spirit of competitiveness returned and we worked to match the speed of each of the great ones as they swept past.

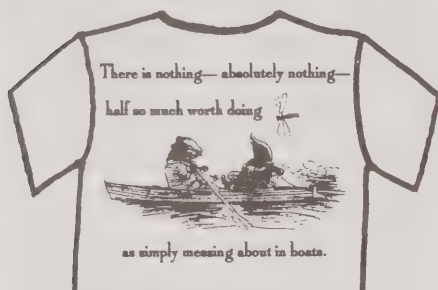
We shortened up sail as we prepared to head up around Bloody Point. As we steadied on the northbound course, we realized that the great ones were sweeping past faster than before, the wind had reduced further. We unfurled the main again and heeled over. We settled down to a long beat upwind (and current) to the Bay Bridge just visible in the north, and the Magothy beyond.

Our progress was pretty good, with full, well-shaped sails we were able to spend much of the trip actually pointing close to where we wanted to go. The weather was pleasant, with broken clouds and blue sky. Thousands of boats were out for the last big sail of the "official" sailing season. Racers clotted in candy-colored masses while other recreational sailors exhibited their tools of choice, from ocean-going motor yachts to small cat-boats. The current, however, was still against us. Our markers for that were the four freighters at anchor below the Bay Bridge. Throughout the day they pointed steadily north, their deep draft ensuring that they showed the direction of the current, not the wind.

It was a long but pleasant day. By the time we got up past Annapolis the wind was definitely light. We set the light air jib and added full mizzen as well. Speed continued to drop. With close attention to the telltales on the jib we could maintain two knots. As the wind shifted, we would tack to take best advantage. By 5:00 P.M. Sarah ghosted under the Bay Bridge. Sandy Point, the last mark before the Magothy, was clearly in sight. And the wind fell away to a breath. There was a large cloud to the west that was drawing the breeze up under it, but as it dissipated the breeze it generated also faded.

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Finally we were over the shoal behind Sandy Point. The wind was gone and the water was glassy. The current was very gentle, perhaps 1/3-knot, but implacable. We decided to drop the hook. We sat and stared at each other. After all that concentration and effort, here we were, still out of reach of the dock. North of us, just inside the Sandy Point lighthouse, I noticed a Tow-Boat-US flasher near a runabout. We talked about calling for a tow, perhaps if we just hailed him we could split the charges. But as we were talking a puff of black diesel punctuated the air and the now-rescued boat gradually disappeared to the north.

It was very quiet. We thought about dinner but it didn't seem very attractive. We talked about calling for a tow again. Sarah needed to get in to work on Tuesday early, or at least get to a phone. We were, of course, only a mile from shore, it would be easy to row in and phone. And the wind was forecast to pick up from the south. And the tide was guaranteed to switch around soon, but it would mean an uncertain night, with someone on deck at all times, both to watch out for speedboats cutting the bar in the dark and staying alert for a returning wind. I felt sick. The thought of calling (and worse, paying) for rescue galled me, when we were in NO danger. A runabout passed headed south in the sunset, towing a little kid on a tube. They stopped a half-mile south of us and we could hear, "Do you want to get back in the boat?" A heavier trawler-type came by northbound. Without saying anything, I stood up and waved a white cushion in an arc overhead, back and forth, in a deliberate fashion. I didn't want to use the flare gun as that would overstate our condition. If he decided to ignore us and continue on his way, he would be free to do so, as we had done with the lady off Thomas Point. But he didn't. His bow started to turn, his wake fell away, and soon he was within hailing range. I shouted, "Where are you bound?"

He called in response, "Magothy, Deep Creek. What's your problem?"

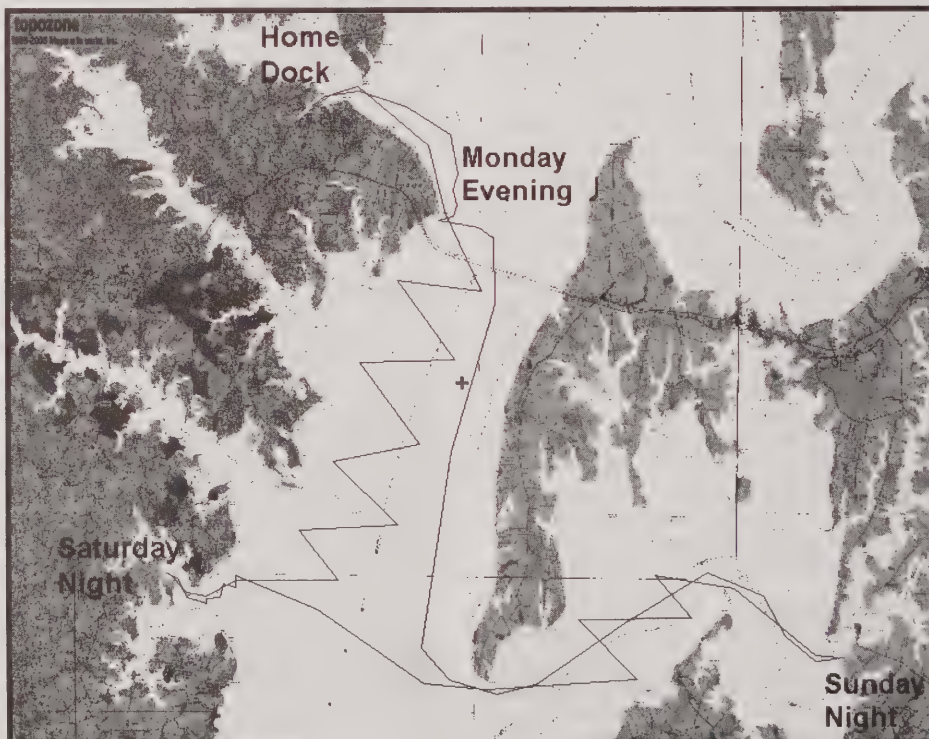
A surge of hope swelled up. "Blown head gasket, and now no wind. Would you give us a tow in to Deep Creek?" The answer was "Yes," and I tossed him a line. We were soon underway at a safe and sane six knots, headed for home. As darkness fell he threaded crab pots and pulled us through the profound calm toward our dock. We set up contact on Channel 69 to coordinate the tow. I heard someone else on Channel 69 comment that it was unusually calm that evening.

In full dark he cast off the tow as we approached our dock and doubled back to his mooring, perhaps 45 minutes behind his planned arrival. I never even found out his name. The boat was *Pleasure Time*, however. We took down the sails, carted the rest of the gear off the boat, and retreated to the car. The mildew stench was incredible, soaked clothes, sitting for three days in a closed car produces an amazing smell!

The drive home was uneventful. Our yellow kitty, a pumpkin-colored pyramid, was waiting for us on the curb. Unloading went quickly and the shower at the end of the day was wonderful. The final capper was the smooth percale of the bed's sheets. Aaahhh...

Postscript: At a reception at Bowdoin, Admiral Peary was approached by a dower. "Oh, Admiral Peary, I've so much enjoyed reading of your adventures at the North and South Poles." He drew himself up, "Expeditions, madam. 'Adventures' are the result of poor planning."

This weekend had definitely turned into an adventure. Adventures are amazing things. We do everything in our power to avoid them, but while the adventure is in progress there is nothing as involving. We even read stories about others' adventures just for fun. If this cruise was hell, it must have been the demo version. I was even able to resuscitate the radio and the camera and the second head gasket replacement has held. The batteries have been replaced.



Aah, Fall 2002 and haul-out time. Sarah and I were pulling *Sanderling*, our 32' Sharpie, for its biannual bottom inspection and anti-fouling coat. We'd been through leaky centerboard pivots and two tries at replacing the engine head gasket already that year (finally successful) and it was time to see how the hull had fared.

The travel lift rumbled and applied force to the sturdy nylon lifting straps. The boat shifted and soon was draining off as the huge machine rumbled back to the "blast pad" where the pressure washing would be done. As the blast of the pressure wash polished the slime and scattered barnacles away, we became aware of an unwelcome new possession, blisters. They were everywhere, from isolated 50¢-sized domes to expanses of what seemed to be teenage zits. We were very disappointed. The yard gave us a quote. It would take only \$10,000 and they might be able to get to it by the following August, ten months away.

"Solid" fiberglass hulls have three basic layers. The gel coat is first to be applied to the mold and is destined to be on the outside, providing a hard and weatherproof surface. It is formed of polyester resin and clay fillers which give a hardness and durable gloss to the surface. Unfortunately, this mixture is too thick to spray so it is thinned with styrene solvent. This is the real Achilles' heel of polyester, aside from styrene's terrible smell, as it evaporates it leaves pores through the resin.

Next is a layer of mat, either laid in blankets or shot with a chopper gun (again thinned with styrene) to minimize "print through" of the inner layers as the material shrinks while curing. Finally, there is a thick layer of multiple plies of woven roving, which provides the real strength of the hull. When first molded, a properly saturated (unpigmented) fiberglass surface looks "fat," the resin has saturated the glass fibers and there are no air pockets to catch and reflect the light.

Blisters arise from osmotic pressure caused by water soluble elements of the original hardeners used in the resin. When outside water can "see" the pockets of hardener, individual molecules of water migrate to reach the hardener through the pores left in the polyester resin. In time, the pressure built up by the increased volume of water becomes enough to actually rip the laminate apart. Damaged laminate looks milky, as millions of tiny voids have been formed beside each glass fiber, reflecting light.

We had seen a few blisters when we first prepped the hull after we bought the boat six years before. At that point we had dug out perhaps ten quarter-sized blisters and faired them. We told ourselves that surely the rest of the hull had dried out after the winter on the hard, so we stripped the boat down to gel-coat and encased everything in an impervious layer of steely gray InterProtect 2000. Two years later at haul-out 2000, things seemed to be holding. There were another ten blisters but nothing dramatic. We filled what we saw and sent the boat back to the water for another two years. But this time, another two years on, things were different.

It seemed like our impervious epoxy coating had had the reverse effect from what we intended. The original polyester resin was an old, very porous version. Water migrated into the laminate freely but, because of the

"You've Got Blisters!"

Life on the Hard

(Or, how I spent my summer vacation, and my winter vacation, and Easter, and...)

By Mark Fisher © 2003



You've got blisters.

porous nature of the resin, excess pressure harmlessly oozed back out through the same pores. By capping this "ecosystem" with an impervious layer of epoxy, we had provided the breeding grounds for the high osmotic pressures that were tearing our hull apart. We were definitely going to have to stop the progress before one of the blisters worked its way right through the hull.

We have had some practice with this. Fifteen years ago, when we were younger and had less to fill our lives, we bought a 26' boat that was covered with blisters. Then the yard cost to fix them was \$2,500 and we got the seller to deduct that amount. Instead of paying the yard the difference, we set to with a heat plate and a spatula and zipped the gel coat right off the boat. In that case, it seemed that 98% of the blisters were right at the joint between the gel coat and the first layer of mat. Heating the surface expanded the blisters, softened the gel coat, and dried out the underlying fiberglass. We were done by the next spring. In ten years of ownership after that we saw only an occasional blister.

With this history in mind, we decided to have a "go" again at repairing it ourselves. We arranged to have a secure place to work on the boat and bought (at the yard's insistence) \$125 of environmental awareness, a groovey 35' black felt dust-catcher for the stuff we planned to remove from the hull. We had asked for a location where we could work for an extended period of time, since we anticipated that it would be the end of summer 2003 at the earliest that we would be ready to go back in the water.

They put us in the "graveyard." To get to our boat we walked past a nice 1956 steel Dutch trawler project, the owner had ripped out all the original dark African mahogany interior (our galley table came from his dumpster load of scrap hardwood) and partially installed a completely new interior arrangement. That was six years before and there had been no change in the project since then. We sat beside a compact British bilge-keel sloop that had cattails growing in the cockpit. When Sarah went over to at least clear the vegetation from the cockpit, she looked inside, it was filled with water to above the engine. On our other side was a fairly modern sport fisherman, aside from the

fact that it had slipped from its poppets, it was covered with barnacles, all the way over the flying bridge!

There was a small and handy 20' sloop, likewise resting on its bilge. It had been "scavenged" and fittings like the bow pulpit had been removed by sawing the attachment points out of the hull. Just beyond that was a very nice S&S hull in a custom cradle, it had never been in the water. Sarah noticed that the prop shaft hole was weeping one day and poked at the hole with a wire, it drained a solid clear stream for four hours. In the midst of all this desolation sat our project, its perky sheer poking at a wall of vines and weeds, its poppets almost hidden by the rank grass.

Armed with experience we did a test patch. The heat plate glowed its familiar orange, the biggest blisters popped and fizzed but the gel coat did not peel off in sheets the way our earlier project had. Perhaps we had forgotten how hot to get the pad, perhaps we had to sharpen the scrapers more. Nothing we tried worked. We had a 7" disk sander and I knew that we could always just grind away, but I also knew how nasty that operation would be.

In the intervening years since our first adventure yards have turned to "peeling" blistered hulls with specially adapted planers. I decided to try my virginal Christmas present, a "Harry Homeowner" level Bosch hand planer. To my amazement it worked well, easily lifting the gel coat in a fountain of white chips. It did produce an unearthly shriek, but with a shop vacuum attached to the side of the planer the entire operation didn't even need a dust mask, only ear-plugs. Looking down I found an unopened set of earplugs that someone had dropped. My motto is, "You always find what you need in the mountains," and this seemed like proof that we were on the right track.

In the fall we worked as much as we could to strip the gel coat off so the remainder of the hull could dry more easily. The planer worked well. It turned out that, with the Shop Vac inhaling the chips, there was almost no mess on the ground. We emptied the Shop Vac periodically into a 55-gal. drum, leaving only a few stray chips on the felt chip-catcher.

Replacement blades for the planer were expensive, \$12 for a card of two reversible blades, for a total of four edges, but they lasted pretty well. We could get around ten square feet of easy cutting on each blade and, with more effort, we could milk the blade for another 15 square feet. *Sanderling* has a full-length 6" keel and the planer couldn't get too close to changes of contour, but there was only a little bit left to clean up with a sander. By Christmas the hull was 80% "peeled" and we had the 55-gal. drum filled with fiberglass chips.

Snowy winter.



Spring 2003. The coldest, latest, and wettest spring in memory. For weeks the hull sat in the yard, buried behind a wall of other boats and up to 27" of snow at times (if you are reading this in Maine, 27" is a LOT for Maryland, where this story takes place). We made occasional trips out to look, but little progress. Finally the weather warmed up a bit. First, we needed to clear a path to the boat. Rather than fight our way to the rehab site through eight layers of haphazardly placed winter storage, I realized that we could loop around and drive right next to our boat through a "waste yard" area. The long winter had beaten down the rank grass so it was easy to get our old Volvo across the field, as long as we dodged the trash that lay in wait under the weeds. I brought our lawn mower to the yard and mowed a "road" right to our boat.

We moved on to the next phase, cleaning the leftover bits of gel coat off. For this we would need to sand, and I had a secret weapon, much like what we had used 15 years before. I sewed up a canvas hood with a clear faceplate and attached it to a bathroom vent fan via a 10' dryer vent hose. Wearing this, I felt like an astronaut. The fan produced a gentle breeze on the back of my neck and I could happily lean into the sander, spewing goutts of bright red copper and fiberglass sanding dust while breathing fresh air from 10' upwind.

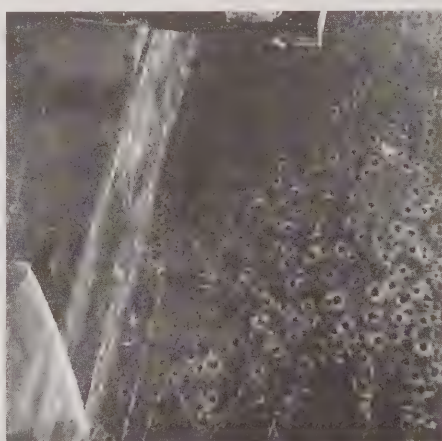


Spring cleaning.

While Sarah worked on the last sections of open gel coat with the planer, I started in cleaning up the remaining strips of gel coat along the keel and near the poppets. I found a 4" carbide grinding disk that worked very well back in the cove of the keel. Next, the elderly Black & Decker angle sander lost its switch, but there was a DeWalt repair shop that could still get replacement switches and we kept going.

As Sarah ran out of surface to plane, we went back to buy another 7" angle sander, only to discover that fashion had moved on and light "Harry Homeowner" grade angle sander/polishers were no longer made! I finally found a wonderful Chinese knock-off of a commercial body shop sander for \$60 from Harbor Freight. It was heavy and the sanding disk was a proprietary hook-and-loop system. I ordered a replacement rubber sanding disc back from the DeWalt people and adapted it to the new sander. We could now use the same sanding disks for both sanders. Oops, another problem. If Sarah was going to be sanding, she would need a hood as well. I'd spotted a 14" acrylic bowl at a local Big Box and I adapted that to another ventilator fan for a second dust hood. She looked even more like Neil Armstrong than I did. We returned to the fray.

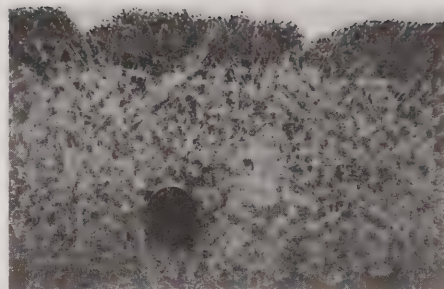
With two grinders, we soon had the hull down to fiberglass and were coming to a second unhappy conclusion. The damage wasn't just in the gel coat this time. Almost all the surface below the waterline was definitely chalky and, in places, blisters in the gel coat had raised "leopard spots" in the mat below. We were very discouraged. After all our work we didn't want to just encapsulate more water behind our projected new epoxy shell. We could see that what we saw as "chalkiness" was produced by many small openings in the resin, places where, even if there was no water right now, the excess hardener by-products that had created the original problem would lie in wait, like a paper towel in the bilge, ready to absorb any water that managed to get in and resume the progress toward future blisters. On the other hand, in the spots where we'd ground out deeper blisters, it was apparent that the fiberglass and resin deeper in was "fat" and healthy looking.



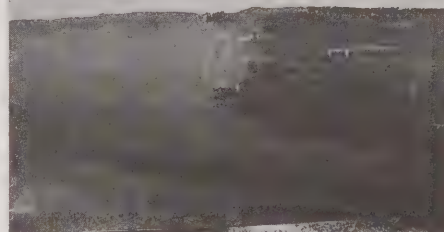
Leopard spots.

I drew up a grid. I saw four choices, we could walk away, either selling the boat as someone else's project or carting it off to the dump, we could just cover up the damaged layer with a new layer of epoxy, we could wrap the trashy stuff with an "outer hull" of fiberglass and epoxy, or we could peel another layer off the hull and rebuild it with both a replacement fiberglass layer and a final epoxy skin to replace the original gel coat. We walked around the boat. I looked at the damage closely. It did not seem to penetrate to the roving. We talked about peeling the mat layer off the hull. It would mean more delay as we would have to essentially repeat the planing and sanding work we had already done over the entire hull. It didn't seem that the poor plastic hand planer would stand up to fiberglass reinforcement, but it wouldn't cost much to try. I inserted a fresh blade, set the planer to 1/16", and dug in.

It was amazing! In the planer's wake there was a strip of clear "fat" lay-up, the last millimeter of mat before the roving layer. The planer was not troubled by the fiberglass, in fact, it was easier to plane than the gel coat had been. We went back to Home Depot, stocked up on spare planer blades, and dove back in again. Sarah observed at one point during this process that even though wood takes more continuous maintenance, at least repairs smell nice while underway, and sawdust and shavings are curly or soft rather than itchy.



Matt closeup.



Peeled matt layer.

The next step was looming on the horizon, however. What was coming off would soon have to go back on. Our local "quality" yacht repair emporium touted their command of Vinylester resin. I looked into getting some. It would be about 60% of the cost of epoxy but had its own set of limitations and considerations. I decided that the much lower fume level, longer working time, and easier clean-up (using another "secret weapon," distilled vinegar) of the epoxy would be worth the difference in cost.

A second problem. I would be doing 50% of the work flat on my back. This meant that I would somehow have to persuade the fiberglass cloth to remain in an inverted position while I saturated it with resin. The first person I spoke to about it was a kayak builder in West Virginia. He had terrible memories of trying to add epoxy to the underside of a Volkswagen fender. I finally talked to Merton's Fiberglass Supply and got some suggestions. I ordered a selection of fiberglass cloth types and set up a sample "hull" attached to the ceiling of the basement. Following their suggestion, I coated the "hull" with epoxy and waited. When it was at its tacky stage I pressed the cloth on the surface. It clung beautifully. The next step was to wet it out. The job was drippy, but the 12-oz. biaxial cloth wet out easily and handled well, with few stray hairs falling from the surface. Things were looking up.

Overhead.



Merton's other suggestion was System Three's Clear Coat. This is a very liquid resin, better at penetrating small cracks and slower to cure than "standard" resin. Because it is also about 30% more expensive, we developed a lay-up schedule that used it only where necessary. I sat down and planned the sequence of layers we would use and came up with estimates of the amount of resin needed. My estimates of resin were a little low and I ended up with about ten yards of extra 12-oz. biaxial cloth.

One place the Clear Coat made a big difference was in that first layer. Its slower cure rate allowed us to have enough time at the tacky stage to carefully position the fiberglass cloth. As we got started, we realized that handling a 36" wide panel of cloth would be impossible. We made a cutting table out of yard scraps and started slicing the cloth into vertical 12" panels that conformed to the hull's shape more easily. The Clear Coat was slow enough to kick so that we were able to get half of the hull coated before we began to lay the cloth on.

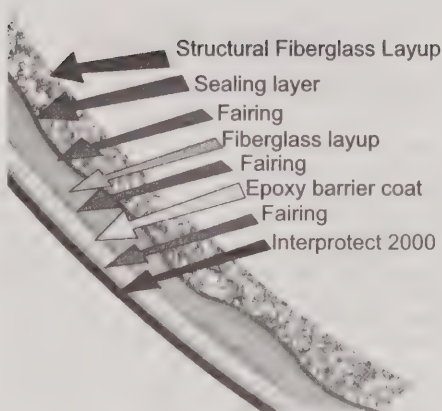
The biaxial cloth needed special handling. While there were stabilizing stitches longitudinally, if I put any tension laterally, the fabric stretched until the primary yarns were almost straight and the stitching was bunched up in nasty ridges. Since a hull is not a regular cylinder, there were inevitably "gore points" where panels diverged around the contours of the hull. We didn't worry much about these, if they were less than 1" we ignored them, and if they were over that we cut filler pieces. The glass cloth was intended to establish a fixed film thickness and replace the mat that had been planed off, rather than provide vital stiffness to the hull.

The next step was saturating the cloth. Since we had about 1/2-gal. of Clear Coat left, we used that. It turned out that its lower viscosity indeed did make wetting out the cloth easier, with fewer enclosed bubbles. Unfortunately, we ran out of the nice stuff and ended up trying to work the heavier resin into the inverted cloth, a slower and less effective operation. There was a little milkiness left in the cloth no matter what we did.

Once the cloth was saturated, we faired. The objective was to get a smooth surface without sanding back through the guaranteed thickness we'd built up with the cloth. We did three passes of a cocktail of resin, microballoons, and thixotropic powder.

Later we added a colorant so we could see the needed extent of fairing in the alternating colors of the layers. Each pass meant spreading the paste, waiting until the layer cured, then sanding off the high spots. We needed a hard cure, a soft cure tended to load up the sandpaper. This severely limited the number of passes we could complete on a weekend and was a major part of the slow progress in late summer.

I'd bought kneepads, but I was thoroughly sick of diving under the hull again and again. The long-suffering Sears 1/3-sheet sander finally died and we bought another, as well as ordering repair parts for the older one. Now we would have two sanders going. We didn't bother with the pressure hoods for this sanding, relying on box fans to move the dust away from us. We experimented with wet sanding, but the type "F" sandpaper from Chesapeake Marine Fastenings was durable and sharp enough to cut dry.



Colored layers.

Another development was weather. We were into August now with steady 90° temperatures. When hardening, epoxy resin is very sensitive to heat, in cold areas it can take days to cure, and in hot areas it can cure as you are mixing the hardener into the resin. I'd planned for this some and ordered the System Three "slow" hardener which promised a four-hour working time at 90°. It helped a lot but there were some batches of resin that still "kicked" before they were all applied, one cause was that the microballoons acted as insulation and the internal temperature of the batch got uncontrollably hot.

In addition to weather, we had bugs. The rank grass of the field beside us was a fertile ground for animal life. As the year progressed there was a succession of small visitors, lighting bugs, dragonflies, rabbits, a toad, and, most prominently, mosquitoes. We finally resorted to aerosol foggers, backed up with repellent and蚊screen. We found that one advantage of working under the hull was that sweat ran back over our ears rather than dripping into the work.



Coatings.

The hull coatings were all in place, right? Nope! There were the areas under the keel blocking that were completely untouched. We brought three small bottle jacks to the boat and carefully jacked up the bow, tightening the poppets as we went. Once the bow was off the forward blocking, we quickly and carefully moved the blocking back two feet, then carefully lowered the hull back down on the new blocking, slacking the poppets very carefully as the hull came down. The same procedure was repeated at the rear.

Once the hull was faired, we coated. And coated. Again we added a different tint to each layer. This helped to gage film thickness of each layer as well as monitoring coverage for each layer. We alternated between blue and tan tints that merged into an aqueous turquoise, too bad it was doomed to be covered up. The goal was to build up a non-porous layer of epoxy. Once the coating layers were in place, we faired again. The fairing process this time was much quicker as the base structure was fair to begin with, all we were fairing now were the irregularities in the solid resin layer. We faired rather than merely sanding the solid resin layer smooth to avoid sanding through the epoxy resin layer. The fairing compound, filled with microballoons, was also much easier to sand than solid epoxy resin. Finally we added three coats of InterProtect 2000. This was more as a bottom paint primer than as another defense against water (though I wouldn't complain if it helped to keep water out of the hull).



End of summer.

At this point it was Thanksgiving. The hull below the waterline was now coated with a trim gray shell, but it still needed bottom paint and installation of the centerboards. There would be no time to do these things and get it in the water this season, it was time to button things up for the winter, the second year in a row on the hard.

Spring 2004 came with an amazing amount of rain and cold weather, but finally, by May 13 and with three coats of bottom paint, we hit the water. The tight knot of anxiety, would the centerboard pivots be tight, would the new bottom keep the water out, lifted and blew away. The feeling of freedom as we did a victory lap out beyond the marina after leaving the travel lift was very sweet. Next fall's haul-out should be a piece of cake.

Profile.



It is pitiful not to have sense enough to leave well enough alone, but I can't help myself. Most people think I am a nut because of my boneheaded determination to do exactly what I dammit please, no matter what. I just got back from my class reunion and I could tell that all those codgers and matrons remembered me. They clustered in little burbling groups and discussed the state of the Union and hoped that I wouldn't intrude with any of my opinions. I sipped my glass of wine and examined the state of our decrepitude.

I think some of us have had a little work done on things like the wattles of the neck and all, but you know, there ain't a whole hell of a lot you can do if there is not much to work with to begin with. I mean, if you pull back the wattles of the neck and there ain't no neck under there anymore, it does not make one look like Audrey Hepburn when she was 22 years old. I think some of us should have left well enough alone.

So the point of all this is that I, too, can't keep from fooling around with the spray rails on the Rescue Minor. At first, I put two little things on there to stop the inexplicable little creep of water all the way up the sides of the boat to the rub rail. They were aggravating to put on the boat because there is a hell of a twist right where they needed to be, but I was able to do it by laminating two 5/8"x5/8" strips on there. I fastened one end of the first one with a screw and then twisted it with a Crescent wrench as I fought my way along while Jane drove the screws...Jane has driven a world of screws in her lifetime and I hope she drives a bunch more. Anyway, the second strip was easier because I had something to clamp to. I (we) got them on there without skinning up the paint job too bad, and I epoxified them on there by the heat capillary action method, took out the screws, fixed the holes, planed and scraped them smooth, and capped them with half round brass. Which, at that, I'll tell you what I have found out about that kind of material.

Half round and half oval brass strips are good stuff. Some say brass will leach out its zinc and rot, but I have used it for many years

Water Wings

By Robb White

and never had any trouble with it. Stainless steel is what messes up on you. My old Navy motor whaleboat had 1-1/2" brass (price that sometime) half oval on, not only the rub rails of the sheer, but two additional rails down close to the waterline. I guess they didn't care what the old boat did to the paint job of the carrier *USS Saratoga*... (the second one) when it bammed up alongside, and I don't care what any skiff of mine does to any dock I come alongside of or the gelcoat of any boat that clips me because of incompetence of the crew. I like a strap of brass between me and any obstacle.

Half round is my favorite. It bends fair and stays fair but it is heavy. For light boats I use half oval. It is fine if you do it right. One thing is that you need to straighten it out perfectly by bending it in your hands so that it is slightly convex to the surface you are fixing to fasten it to then it'll roll out fair. Another thing I learned the hard way is that the strap needs to be warmed up pretty good before it is fastened to the boat if the strip is very long (like a keel guard), so when it cools off, it'll shorten up and stretch out flat and not expand and buck up between the screws.

There are two ways I fasten brass to wood. One way is to drill the holes (it comes without holes...don't forget the center punch) and countersink them and drive regular flat head bronze screws (brass screws are not any good...I don't understand) so that the head protrudes pretty good. You can file the heads off easily. I like those square drive screws because it is easy to drill into the remnants of the square hole to take the damned strip off if you decide to do a little modification to the project like I had to do. If you use a drill bit the same size as the screw shank, it'll cut down and completely remove the screw head and leave it on the bit like a little bevel bottomed washer. I wish I could think up some use for them. Because of my spray rail experiments I have a whole bunch of them.

After you pry off the half round brass, you can unscrew the stubs of the screws with Visegrips. I always fasten half round like that but the way I fasten half oval is to nail it on there with ring shanked bronze nails. Because of my mistaken belief a long time ago that I could make a living building plywood boats, I bought 25 pounds of 3/4" ring shanked nails and I still have a lifetime supply. The way I do that is to drill the holes slightly small and countersink the hole just the least little bit. That way when the nail is driven the rings of the shank are upset into a barb and hold like bloody hell. The head of the nail is upset into the countersink so, when you file them flush they are invisible but (unlike square drive screws) you better have your mind made up because that is an irreversible action.

Anyway, I have fooled around with the spray rails on the Rescue Minor trying to make it into a perfectly dry boat in any white cap style chop. The water comes out from under the boat about a quarter of the way back. Phil Bolger says that pressure is what causes water to splash and it is easy to see that the place where that occurs is just about a quarter of the way back. It is a satisfactory boat like it was and I should have left well

enough alone, but I decided to find out what there was to spray rails. I have already had some fascination with that. Old Take Apart, a hard chined plywood boat, has spray rails made of half a piece of PVC pipe fastened so that the hollow catches the upcoming water and throws it back down. We figured that the water coming down would interfere with the water coming up, but the boat is still wetter than I would like in a cross chop and not as dry as one of my lapstrake skiffs built exactly to my notion of how the bow of a boat ought to be...about like a Bolger "Shivaree" except for being lapstrake. Might be an act of God. It is hard to build a lapstrake boat with a bad bow.

So I decided to build out the little spray rails that had solved the problem of the surface tension (?) creep of water all the way up to the gunwales by pulling the brass off and adding on a pair of water wings right where the water splashed out from under the boat. Man, they stuck out at least 4" and, though I had reattached the brass and painted them so I could see just how horrible they looked, they didn't do a damned bit of good. They suppressed a little of the spray from quarter of the way back but they threw up something like a rooster tail on the stern of them that blew back into the boat, so I sawed them off into a tapered looking thing sort of like the dorsal fin of a burbot which kept the hellish width where the water had been splashing out but tapered into a point at the stern.

Jane and I went to Lake Iamonia for the try-out and the taper didn't do a damned bit of good. We were disgusted, but while we were there we met a man in an old raggedy army coat (master sergeant...Viet Nam...hand as hard as wood) who backed down a Datsun (not Nissan) pickup truck and launched an aluminum butthead. We didn't see any motor. He was very interested in the Rescue Minor and Jane and I launched it with aplomb. The rollers of the trailer are so well lubricated that the boat rolls off so slick that the transom almost goes under...Jane touches the painter just exactly right so the stern wave doesn't surf up over the stern deck into the boat. You know, with practice anybody can develop a little bit of aplomb and it is good for you.

I offered to let old Viet Nam launch first but he said, "I want to see how that junk runs." He stood on the boat ramp and I hit the button and turned the Rescue Minor on its heel and blasted out into the lake completely ignoring the lily pads. I know he took notice of that. Bolger was right. The least amount of protuberance to create pressure you have, the better off you are. If you don't believe that, stick your finger in the water while the boat is running about 12 knots.

I took the boat home (old Viet Nam was out there pulling them in with one hand and sculling over the bow with the other) and got my Ryobi saw and ripped the damned rails down to where they used to be. It is amazing how a disposable Japanese saw will cut bronze screws without damage. You ought to see all the joints in all that brass half round from all this experimenting and I am just exactly back where I started but I did learn something about spray rails...but not about leaving well enough alone. I am fixing to build me a walk-through Kilburn Adams style house on there and I might have to have a wattle job done on my neck. I'll let you know.

**"Every man shall give as he is able,
according to the blessings of the
Lord" (Deut 16:16)**

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Many of the readers here have lived aboard boats for long periods of time and know how a dinghy is used. Some dinghies are used very little and some see daily use. This article is about daily use. Different travelers have different ways, some arrive and soon after are ready to haul anchor and be on their way. Others must make a living as they travel and spend more time in one place; for them their dinghy is used daily. Some do not long for those faraway islands but are perfectly happy cruising their home grounds. Many are waiting until the season is right and then will move on. The fact is it is very hard to get along without a dinghy of some sort if you spend any length of time aboard a craft.

Here we will discuss those long periods at port and the use of the dinghy during that time. Sleeper is not a good candidate for a take along dinghy; it is more for long time use at port.

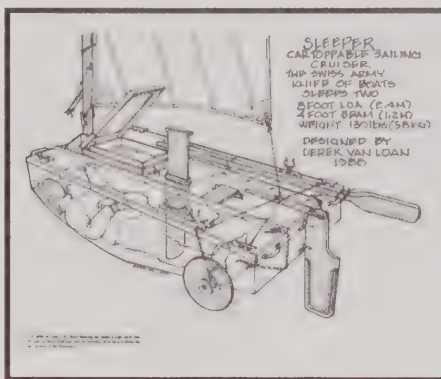
What is the picture of the daily use of a dinghy in port? Let's take a look and see. At the break of dawn the captain or one of the crew may have to go to his or her job. It is likely, as mornings usually are, without wind and the task is to row to shore; in fact, the greater percentage of the time the craft will be under oars. This includes day trips or evenings as many won't bother with a sail most of the time. Usually the distance to shore or to the docks will be less than a mile so the normal choice is to put to oars. It is pleasant in the early morning to row, the air is fresh and all is quiet. Some of your fondest memories will be these passages to shore.

If the cruiser happens to be alone, the time to ready the craft and put ashore takes very little time. However, one must be prepared for all weathers and some of the times

Building Sleeper

Part 17

By Don Elliott



you will be making passages in terrible conditions. If you work, you are not able to select the best of times to head for shore. If it is raining hard you must go anyway, if there is heavy chop and high winds, and if you value your job, you must head in despite the conditions. It is unlikely you will make shore without getting wet in these conditions, even if you do have heavy weather gear (shoes included, most won't bother with them). Your shore clothes can be plastic bagged and stored inside Sleeper's cabin along with any other gear that must go with you.

Once at the dock, the dinghy must be secured, and Sleeper has an advantage over the average dinghy as all loose gear can be stored and locked within its cabin. Most boat-

ers do not steal but many have the habit of "borrowing," so it is wise to secure all your gear. If you don't you may well be waiting for the "borrower" to return with your essential gear so you can get underway.

There are times when the Sleeper sail can be put to valuable use. If one happens to live in an area where the winds are steady and frequent, then the sail rig will be put to use often and will be of great value to the craft and its owner. Always select the proper craft and it rig for a particular area. In other words, don't build a boat, of any kind, that isn't suited to a given area or, for that matter, a particular use.

Sleeper, of course, could be used for long distance exploring while in port; that is, if one doesn't mind the slow pace

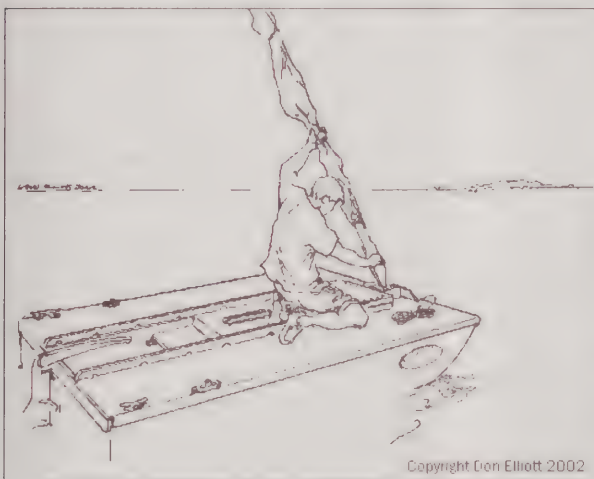
Sleeper's mast and sail rig are easily raised as the sail stays on the spar at all times, ready for immediate use.

On days that are free one could cruise in Sleeper, exploring the docks and nearby shores and sights. Many a Sunday afternoon can be devoted to this kind of activity. When you do happen to stop to chat or visit with friends or other people, Sleeper is sure to draw a great deal of attention as it is not your common, run-of-the-mill dinghy.

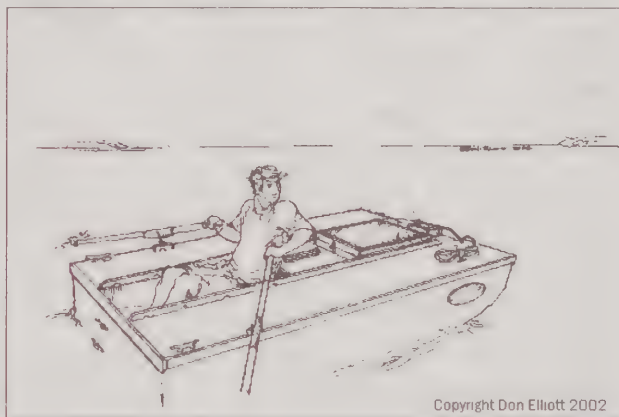
However, during the week or on more practical days the dinghy is a working craft and most likely will be rowed.

Sleeper is not the best of rowers, however, it must be kept in mind that it does many other things well. Besides, it is much easier to build than one that would be a better rowing craft, being more like a truck than anything else. For the short distance it would be commonly used, it will work just fine.

(To be continued)



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Birdwatcher is about as "green" as any pleasure boat can be in terms of utility versus resources consumed. In 1985 she was designed as a light family camping cruiser, handily trailer hauled and quickly and easily launched and rigged, calling for a comparatively small investment to build and maintain, easily built by amateur carpenters and quickly built by professionals. The slim sharpie hull delivered a good performance, and the draft of less than 6" with an average cruising load allowed access to interesting and quiet places denied to practically all ordinary cruising boats, and also security from many underwater hazards. She can lie with her bow over a dry beach or take the ground upright in tidal waters if the bottom is reasonably clear or soft.

It has usually been taken for granted that ultra shallow draft boats are easily capsizable and need very careful handling; in fact, are fit only for alert sailors in warm, protected waters with help at hand. But Birdwatcher has a combination of a comparatively heavy bottom (1" thick plywood), high freeboard (about 36" from the load waterline through a length of 14' amidships), and broad decks to allow her to float high in the water in a beam ends knockdown with deck openings carried well clear of the water. The result is a range of stability that allows her to recover dry from any sudden knockdown and, therefore, a tranquil mind. She can be sailed either boldly or absentmindedly without most of the usual hazards.

The unique capability of this design was produced by making the upper half of the high

Bolger on Design Birdwatcher II

LOA 25'5"

LOD 23'6"

Beam (over rubrail) 5'10"

Hull Draft: 6"

Max CB Draft: 3'7"

Normal Load Displacement: 1,500 lbs.

Trailer Weight: 800 – 1,000 lbs.

Sail Area 213sf

sides transparent, exploiting the development of strong and durable transparent polycarbonate plastics such as Lexan. Up to that point large windows had been silicon glass, either very fragile or very heavy and usually both. Boats with large windows were rightly condemned as unseaworthy. The new material made as reliable a hull side as wood, better in some ways. The view out from below decks could be so good that the crew could be accommodated inside with huge advantages:

They have perfect shelter from spray and sun.

The whole of the boat becomes usable day and night; cabin and cockpit were the same volume, allowing both to be roomy.

The weight of the crew is placed low and amidships where they don't affect the trim of the light boat and where they add to her stability at all angles of heel.

The crew (that is, everybody on board the boat) are perfectly secure and comfort-

able as well as sheltered, even when they are sailing the boat hard in strong wind and rough water. The hazards of weariness and exposure are practically eliminated.

The buoyancy of the high sides allows a broad open "standing room" along the centerline. The top of the coaming along the standing room is 42" above the inside of the bottom, over waist deep for a tall man. He can walk through most of the length of the boat, erect and with no need to hold on, to handle sail with "both hands for the ship." Anyone on board can stand up and move around freely in perfect security. Children need not be either tethered or confined to a cellar with no view. They can, for instance, stand far forward with heads clear above deck in perfect security. Under the raised deck the rush of water along the lee side, close below the windows (or over them at extreme, but still safe, angles of heel), is hypnotic for children and adults alike.

One of the first objections to this configuration is always that sitting "inside a greenhouse" will be intolerably hot. In fact, it has always been found that the open standing room powerfully ventilates the crew position under the raised deck due to downdraft from the sails and other aerodynamic effects, while the crew has the benefit of shade. An extreme test was a cruise in a Birdwatcher type boat on Lake Meade, Nevada, in heat officially recorded as 122°F, in which it was 10°F cooler under the raised deck than outside it. In the reverse situation, when the weather is uncomfortably cold, the "greenhouse" works as such by controlled covering

of the standing room. The Birdwatcher configuration encourages "three season" sailing in cold climates, or four season whenever the sailing waters are not frozen! The immunity from risk of capsize eliminates most of the danger usually associated with "frostbite" sailing as well as most of its discomforts.

The original conception of the design was a stark minimalist exercise. The construction was the simplest plywood structure, signifying a high degree of sophistication derived from, at the time, over 30 years of steady experimentation. She was/is conventional except for the external chine logs selected for, among other reasons, the clean interior angle from which dirt and water can be easily sponged. The standing room was covered in at night and in wet conditions with canvas. The rig was a jib headed cat with a straight sprit boom and no halyard; the mast could be lowered and racked on deck literally in a minute. There were two spars, no standing rigging, and two parts of running rigging, the sheet and the snottier, both single part.

And the design was based on auxiliary oar propulsion without a motor. The oars were kept short (7') and located where they could be laid in inside the maximum breadth of the boat for coming alongside. It was argued that the oars were effective power in dead calm, that the boats were good and weatherly sailers at any other time, and that many irritations associated with motors would be obviated. Less is more...but, perhaps not necessarily for everyone!

The revised Birdwatcher II is a substantial step up from the minimalist approach. It retains the simple and rapidly assembled basic hull but adds foam panel insulation to improve the hull's thermal characteristics, eliminating condensation for overall improved comfort in this camp cruiser. To eliminate condensation drip the standing room now has four interlocking hard foam cored hatches. And since she is too shallow to have a bilge, we show a gutter along the inside joint of bottom plate and topsides to collect a few ounces of free liquids be they water, beer, or soup which otherwise would be prone to soak everything along her midsection.

She now has a conventional double door companionway opening with significant roof hatch overhang to allow good but dry ventilation during rainy spells at anchor. Screened replacement doors could be put in at convenience with unhanging hinges.

The companionway opens up to a stern platform added to make boarding easier and to create an "outdoor" space for chores like cleaning fish or sizzling up greasy burgers, activities best not brought into the living quarters. To retain tools and burgers laid on deck, this afterdeck has transparent bulwarks averaging 1' high below a stout railing extending aft from the house. To port a hatch covers a separate self-draining compartment for outside gear such as smelly fishing gear and engine related supplies.

To starboard a motor mount is integrated under the afterdeck with its own watertight section of the stern compartment. Afterdeck, motor, and now rudderhead as well are all protected from hooking against pilings by the rubrail that now also extends past the rudder. Combustion-based power is meant for rare but necessary use such as more reliable scheduling of cruises and outings, to open up tidal and river waters with streams too strong for



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the oars, or to power sail off a threatening lee shore. Here we show the 30 lb., 2hp, long shaft Honda (centrifugal clutch and 360° steering) with its tiller handily sided to face the hatch aisle for direct hands-on maneuvering under power with your right hand.

The rowing capability is retained for silence, waters too shallow for the motor, exercise, and back-up power.

Under the bow there is another watertight, overboard draining compartment for wet and dirty anchor warps, mucky boots, etc.

The sail plan was increased and then matched by a larger and heavier centerboard for still better windward performance. We added significant ballast via a piece of scrap steel plate laminated inside the board.

With her range of stability, generous positive buoyancy, and overall watertight envelope, she has the basic characteristics of an offshore boat and, in fact, we would rather go to sea in her than in a high proportion of production "blue water cruisers." That is not a strong statement, we think the currently fashionable type is a very bad type indeed! In fact, we do not recommend Birdwatcher for ocean crossing, among other reasons because, unless saddled only lightly with astro-

naut type foods and hand-powered water maker, she would likely be overloaded with the necessary supplies, degrading her basic seaworthiness.

At long last, finally, a Birdwatcher, I came within reach on a long a day's trip. Mason Smith in New York's Adirondack Mountains happened to have bought the prototype that had come to linger in Colorado misunderstood and uncared for. Then we had just recently heard about his proposal for a *WoodenBoat* article in late March, 2004 and were surprised and very pleased with his experiences and write-up. We were not happy about suddenly having to consider what needed improving on the Birdwatcher some 19 years later, since it meant serious interruption (again) of a dense work schedule of long overdue projects for exceedingly patient but antsy clients. On the other hand, worldwide exposure of a thoughtful article on this challenging design needed an instant response to maximize this one-time opportunity; hence Birdwatcher II. With *WoodenBoat* #179 in our hands we had a particular urge to sail her.

So, on one recent Saturday we drove near 700 miles round trip to sample and enjoy a few hours of fast sailing on a blustery mountain lake under racing clouds and brilliant sun. Perfect day for Birdwatcher. Getting the mast erect, unrolling the sail, and shipping the sprit boom, we filled away, the lake chop breaking on the shore close under our lee. The quick acceleration surprised and delighted us. We sharpened up and went charging out to windward. Sharply heeled, there was no slamming of the flat bottom that formed a sharp vee at that angle, but the steep little sea was noisy on the upraised bottom. There was no feeling that the chop was stopping her, the rush of water seen through the leeside windows was convincing of close hauled speed. So was the rapid diminishing of details of that lee shore.

The wind was typical of mountain lake sailing with the sudden puffs and shifts that call for tense vigilance in most boats. In Birdwatcher we just drove her, letting her heel as much as she liked, once or twice halfway

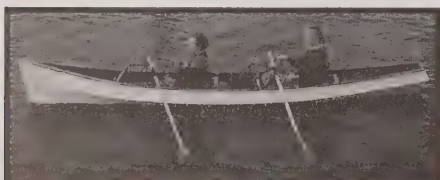
up the windows (interesting underwater view!). Nor did she show any sign of bogging down at the extreme angles of heel, she kept on going fast. She did not let much spray come above the weather chine but we could see a few drops shooting clear over the standing room opening and back into the water to leeward. We stayed perfectly dry as a matter of course.

An hour or so later we recalled that there was supposed to be a sailing race at the starting point. We squared away with the sail broad off, its clew held down by the angle of the sprit boom, keeping the head of the sail from sagging forward to induce a rhythmic roll. The wind was stronger than ever. Sailed upright the 6" draft hull was not subject to any hull speed limits. We had no GPS but she went very fast!

At the designated starting line we found two sailing canoes trying out the wind. Another one had capsized several times and given up, and a sailing dinghy had come out for a look and decided there was too much wind. We sailed back and forth with the survivors, finding that we were faster on all points. There did not seem to be any enthusiasm for a formal race and we had a second 350-mile drive ahead of us, so we ran in and tied up. We spent the next hour discussing the boat with a succession of interested sailors, myself sitting "below" and having no trouble lighting a pipe. The canoe sailors had gone to change their wet clothes. I'd been wearing a thin sport shirt all this time, but as the guests left I stood up in the standing room and was startled at how cold the wind was without the shelter of the "Birdwatcher house."

Plans of Birdwatcher I, our Design #496, are available for \$150 to build one boat, sent priority mail, rolled in a tube. Birdwatcher II plans, Design #496 B, are \$175 to build one boat.

For a very direct personal but independent report on the Birdwatcher's inherent capabilities, consult the fine, well-illustrated article by Mason Smith in *WoodenBoat* #179, August 2004, pp.54-61.



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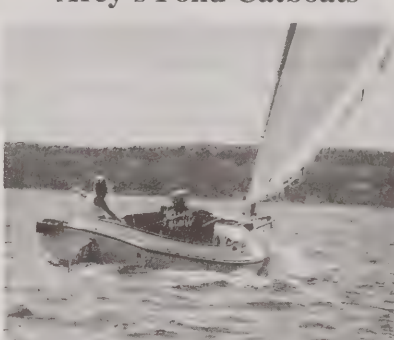


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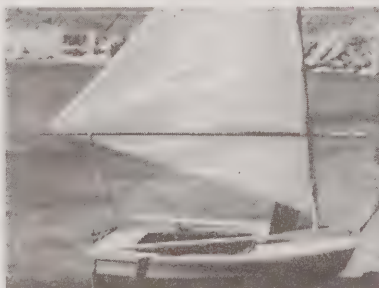
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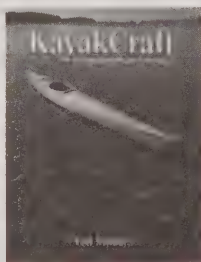


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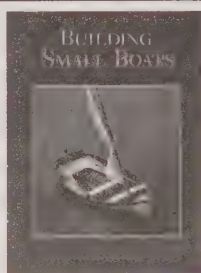
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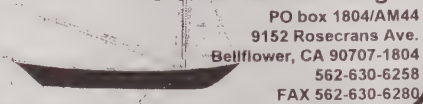
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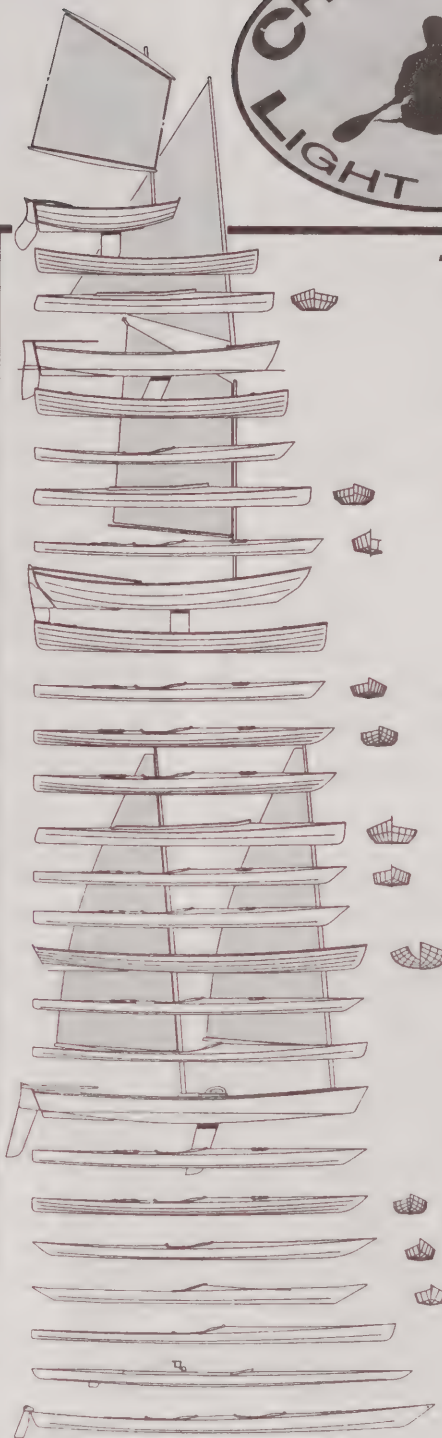
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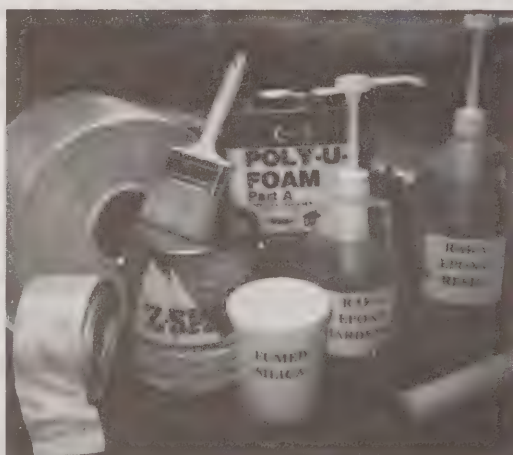
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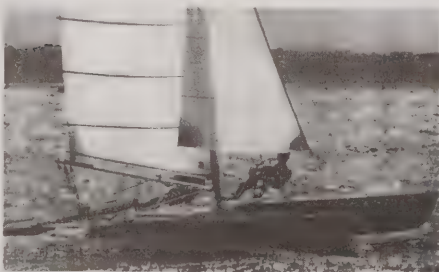
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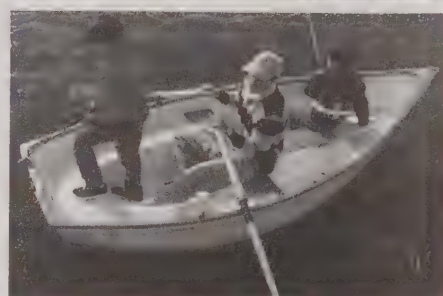
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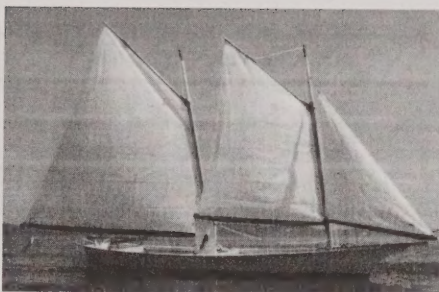
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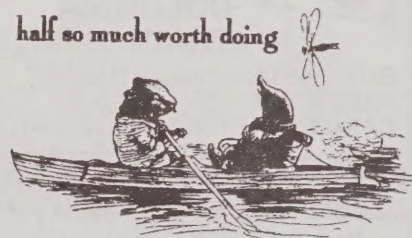
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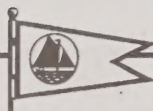
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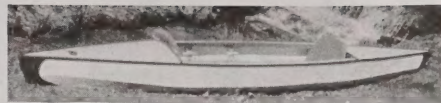
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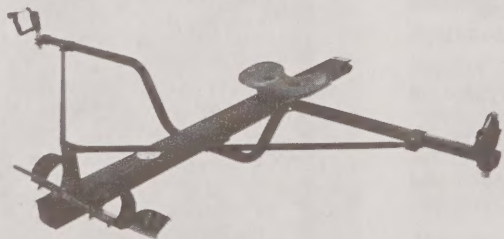


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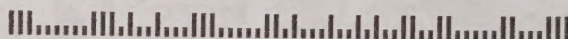
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