



messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 23 - Number 17

January 15, 2006

Special Features This Issue
"Marion Day and the Messabout"
"Colorado River Odyssey" - "An Old Snipe Goes Home"



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Editor and Publisher is Bob Hicks.

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For circulation or production inquiries or problems, contact:

**Roberta Freeman at
officesupport@comcast.net**

Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor



Just before I sat down to write this Commentary on the morning of the day this issue will go to the printer (December 15 for January 15 issue), I was going back through my archives locating articles requested by someone who had looked over the index of back issues on our website. This particular request was for 35 articles no less, from 1983 through 1999. I took each binder down off the shelf, opened it to the issue specified, and opened that to the page specified, tagged it and removed it from the binder to take on my daily round of errands to my local (three miles away) Staples copy shop to copy it. This will be about 70-80 sheets as many of the articles are multi-pagers. Be reminded that none of these issues were ever stored in a computer then, they weren't done that way until about 2002 or so.

When this all began to happen after by-the-sea.com set up a website for us which included an exhaustive index of all issues 1983-1998, the demand for such article copies has been growing. At first, for requests for copies of one or two articles I just provided them as a courtesy, part of the cost of doing business, even though it turned out over time that just about all such requests were not from subscribers but from internet surfers. And when requests for multiple articles began to come in I had to think about my time involvement in what is a clerical task. Since I am the clerical help as well as the editor/publisher, it was I who had to do the copying. So I decided to attach a modest price to this service.

I decided on a base price of \$2 to copy up to four articles and then \$.50 per article thereafter. This would cover the copy cost (\$.07) and postage (\$.37 on up to \$3.85 for Priority Mail for a large set), and perhaps my time spent (I was going to the copy shop anyway as part of my rounds to there, the post office, the bank, perhaps the gas station, and sometimes the grocery store for an item suddenly in short supply at home).

It is to laugh to think of the editor/publisher of a real magazine carrying out such a mundane task and to be charging such a ludicrously small sum for the service rendered. This is because I have had some personal experience on the other end of this, looking for article reprints or back issues and discovered that these are regarded as priceless artifacts, judging from the price asked. Even really tiny special interest publications that you may receive a half dozen issues a year of 20 pages each for about what I charge for two dozen 40-pagers ask \$5-10 for back issues.

Amazing, such assumption of value placed on these little magazines.

Journalism is one of the poorest paying careers, as hopeful graduates from journalism schools find out when they go looking for that entry level job at the small town weekly newspaper. I wasn't a journalism school graduate when I got into this trade in 1959 and never worked at it for anyone else. I had to decide how cheaply I would work at it to do what I wanted to do, owning my own magazines. Faced with the realities of small volume publishing it turned out to be pretty cheap. It still is.

I think this same mindset after 46 years at it is what governs how much I feel I can ask for my product or services. Not much. That's why you get *MAIB* for what you do. This much information in some publishing ventures I have seen would cost you \$60 a year, but would you pay it? I doubt it. So, in my position as #4 around here (after the printer, the postal service, and my daughter's services doing all the computer stuff and maintaining the subscriber files) I sort of live on the edge financially.

I have often described living on the edge to those interested by drawing a line on the ground and placing my toes up to it. That's living on the edge. Then I edge my toes out a ways until my arches are over the line. This, I point out, is when it begins to get dodgy, how much edgier can it get before I tip over the edge?

Looking ahead at 2006 I find my feet are beginning to creep over that line because our subscription rate is not making up for non-renewals. Despite a renewal rate averaging 80%, we still need about 800 new subscribers a year and are getting about 500. You can see where this math will lead. The new subscriptions we do get come from out of the blue, from referrals, from two internet sites, and as gifts from current subscribers. With circulation now dropping just under 4,000, the portion of total costs of doing business that each subscription will have to carry is going to rise.

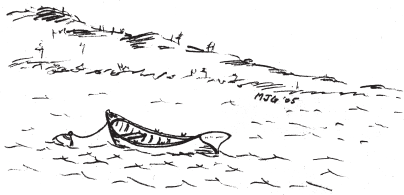
Before I contend with this, as well as a recent 10% hike in the printing bill (still by far the best I can do believe me) and an oncoming postal rate increase (Third Class Bulk) in January that may be as much as 20%, I'm going to try one more year to turn around that subscription rate before I settle on increasing the price. Anything you can do to encourage new subscriptions will be a great help, thank you.

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On the Cover...

Happiness is a small boat in a brisk breeze. Bruce Anderson in his "PD Racer" (black and yellow stripes) "livin' the life" at the Colorado River Odyssey, featured in this issue.



From the Journals of Constant Waterman

By Matthew Goldman

When I was 25 years old I worked for an engineer in private practice. He had his shop and office in southern Connecticut, close to the Sound. Not only was he an inventor, but a would-be entrepreneur. He had designed and built a one-man diving bell, had tried it out, and wanted to market it. What he needed was sponsoring, someone to make the maritime world sit up and take notice.

He was friends with a couple of gentlemen at Harvard who had a plan to do some exploration. All they lacked was funding, a crew, and a boat. The only boat I had was an 18' sailboat, not nearly sufficient to hoist a diving bell. What was required was at least a 40-footer, something with a crane and accommodations for four. "Something like a steel fishing boat?" I asked.

"Not at all," answered my boss. "Just wait and see."

So off we went to Cambridge, home to Harvard University, known for its many intellectual pursuits. We were appointed to meet with two men, a financier and a scientist. My boss had his briefcase stuffed with drawings. "But where do I come in?" I wanted to know. "Do they want me to learn to man your diving bell?"

"Not at all," answered my boss. "Just wait and see." I pictured myself in my old machine shop, fabricating parts for diving bells. After all, it was what I was paid to do. But the gentlemen at Harvard had far more grandiose plans for my career. They didn't require much convincing of the efficacy of the diving bell, that had proved itself. What they needed was personnel. "Have you much experience sailing a boat?" they inquired.

I tried not to sound as diffident as I felt as I answered in the affirmative.

"Would it bother you to be away for six months?"

That wasn't a problem. I hadn't commitments, I was single and young.

"Would living aboard a wooden sailboat be a hardship?" they asked.

"Doing what?" I wondered.

"Why, nothing more than being her skipper," they responded.

My mouth began to water. I thought I could manage that.

"Good," they replied, and conferred between themselves.

"What's going on?" I asked my boss. "Where do they want me to go?"

He looked at me and grinned from ear to ear. "Just wait and see," he told me.

Salvage work, I thought to myself. Maybe sunken treasure? Why would they need a wooden sailboat? Something quiet, something that doesn't... oh, my gosh. They want to salvage and decommission old mines, that must be it. And they want a boat that won't detonate mines that are triggered by hull or engine noise. I swallowed some bile and felt the sweat beading on various covert parts of my anatomy. I wasn't sure now that this was such a great idea. Six months walking tiptoe about the deck? Six months scarcely daring to crank a winch? Suddenly my oily old machine shop sounded secure and rather comforting.

Now the three of them had their heads together. Well, I thought, you've put your big foot in a clove hitch this time, Mate. I hope the pay is good. Now they were smiling, they seemed to be in accord.

"Come over here and sit down," they said, "and listen to our tentative proposition." I wiped my hands on my trousers and tried not to shuffle too obviously as I came to the conference table.

"I'm afraid we can't pay you for more than your food and travel," they began.

I forced a crooked smile, six months risking my precious life and they couldn't bother to pay me for my time.

"We want you to skipper the boat and fit her out, we'll need your expertise to help us with that. We're hoping to get a government grant," they confided.

Lovely, I thought, my taxes at work funding to blow my poor young self to bits. I hope a coffin's included.

"What we'd like you to do is spend a summer in Scotland," they continued.

Oh, well, I thought, I'd just as soon die in Scotland as anywhere else.

"You see," they concluded, "we're putting together an expedition to find the Loch Ness Monster and we need to have a sailing vessel in order not to scare her."

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You write to us about...

Activities & Events...

Good Year for the Gundalow

This has been a tremendously successful year for the Gundalow Company. Highlights include:

Between May and November the gundalow traveled along the rivers of New Hampshire's coastal Piscataqua region making 11 port visits, including Exeter and Dover, for the first time in 18 years. Nearly 10,000 people visited the gundalow and more than 4,000 students from New Hampshire and Maine participated in our onboard and NEW in-school programs.

The gundalow was hauled out briefly in April for caulking and other repairs specified in a recent marine survey. Also, a new stump mast was made at Strawberry Banke Museum. Thirty-four volunteers contributed over 1,500 hours!

This winter we will again offer outreach programs in classrooms as well as implementing our long-term maintenance plan to preserve the structural integrity of the gundalow. Next year we will provide programs for school groups on the gundalow in collaboration with the Old York Historical Society, Old Berwick Historical Society, Strawberry Banke Museum, and Sandy Point Discovery Center. At each location the gundalow visits during the summer we will continue collaborating with other organizations to provide another series of "Contemporary Coastal Issues" events for the public which will focus on the Piscataqua region's water quality, stewardship, and habitat protection.

Molly Bolster, The Gundalow Co., P.O. Box 425, Portsmouth, NH 03802, (603) 433-9505, <info@gundalow.org>, www.gundalow.org



Great Florida Gulf Coast Small Craft Festival

Small craft enthusiasts should request our flyer that advertises the inaugural Great Florida Gulf Coast Small Craft Festival on April 1-2. This event is co-sponsored by the FGC TSCA, the Maritime Museum, F.I.S.H., and the N.E. Taylor Boatworks in Cortez, Florida. Look for ads soon in *Messing About in Boats*, *WoodenBoat*, *Ash Breeze*, and *Southern Waters* magazines because a full court press is being brought to bear to make this the premier small craft festival on the Gulf Coast.

Plan to bring your boat, camp, and do the small boat thing with folks from all over the country. The special guest speaker for this event is to be raconteur, boatbuilder, tugboat captain, writer, philosopher, and com-

mentator on yahoos and jet skis, Robb White. Don't be an April Fool, come to Cortez on April 1-2.

Florida Gulf Coast Maritime Museum at Cortez, P.O. Box 100, Cortez, FL 34215, (941) 708-4935, <Roger.Allen@Manateeclerk.com>

Information of Interest...

Cartoppng a Small Boat

I agree with Robb White about getting better gas mileage with a small boat on a trailer than on the roof. But there is a trick to up your efficiency if you must cartop a boat. You want to carry it right-side-up! That way the dense air flow along the hood and windshield flows around the smooth curves of the hull rather than being trapped inside the body. This will generally give you 20% better gas mileage, plus the boat can be loaded with gear. A canoe makes a wonderful aerodynamic cargo carrier and stuff doesn't even seem very inclined to blow out (watch those PFDs though).

The drawback to right-side-up cartopping is that rain can collect inside the boat, possibly a lot of rain if you live in thunderstorm country. It's hard to bail out up there on the roof so a spray skirt would be a great addition to the rig. I've never gotten around to that so we've often had to sit out thunderstorms parked under a freeway overpass or some other shelter. Just as well not to drive in those conditions anyway.

To transport a boat right-side-up on your roof, it's a good idea to adapt the racks to fit the shape of the boat bottom. One easy way to do this is to carve dense ethafoam pads to fit. This stuff cuts easily with a serrated knife and is found free in big appliance/electronics packaging (there used to be big slabs in the old Vax boxes). You just need to strap the boat down well to keep the foam from blowing out.

The best roof racks I've ever used are the cast aluminum "Quik-n-Easy" jobs. They sit atop the rain gutter and have a camming strap that locks them on. With wooden 2"x4" or pipe cross pieces they're about strong enough to lift the vehicle by, yet easy to remove for better gas mileage when not needed.

I've been driving full-sized vans for 30 years (at 15mpg) largely because they're the only vehicles still made with rain gutters (that support my \$25 racks). That's probably a foolish economy at \$3/gallon.

Steve Axon, Challis, ID

A Peculiar Little Engine

I bought a peculiar little engine off the eBay. I was looking for something to power an Atkinized bastard sport boat I am going to build. The engine is 4-cycle, 2-cylinder, overhead valve, air-cooled, military surplus and cost me \$138 brand new in the box. The outside is all aluminum including the cooling shroud. It has those shielded sparkplugs like an airplane. You can squirt it with a hose while it is running and it will neither shock you or skip a beat.

"Military Standard Engine" is what it says. Made by Colt Industries in 1985. It isn't but 3hp and has the littlest bore Zenith carburetor I ever saw... only weighs 35lbs and runs real well. We are almost finished with the boat in the shop and then I am going to get out a strip planked hull of a little canoe I want to draw the plans for and then I'll start bastardizing again.

Robb White, Thomasville, GA

Information Wanted..

Trying to Decipher What a Sprit Rig Is?

The recent article on sprit versus standing lug rigged boats was very interesting to me, a veritable rookie in the realm of sailing. However, it would have been a much better article with some fine photos illustrating the differences between the two. I spent hours on the internet trying to decipher what is a sprit rig and what is a standing lug. The endeavor was a waste of a day when the Iowa weather was actually nice.

Borrowing a line from a movie, "Show me the pictures," I have more books on sailing than the entire state of Iowa library system, but no pix of the two rigs. Please include some photos the next time. Not all of us have had experience with a plethora of small boats with different rigging.

Stephen D. (Doc) Regan, Cedar Rapids, IA

Opinions..

Didn't Like My Book

My publisher recently forwarded to me the following critique of my little book, *How to Build a Tin Canoe*, and I thought I'd like to share it with your readers:

"Robb White, I just finished your book, *How to Build a Tin Canoe*. But first, I was a Navy photographer from 1949-1953. A retail district manager, fished for lobster off the coast of Honduras, sailed as a seagoing tug and tow AB out of Tampa, a deck prep crew chief for Endeavor Yachts, a USCG licensed Master, and a sailing instructor for the Annapolis Sailing school here in St. Petersburg. I made 62 sailing trips to the Dry Tortugas and never lost a student, not that there were some of them who needed to be lost at sea.

All this being said, I must tell you how much I disliked your book. The loss of the trees to publish this piece of crap is a total waste of resources. The good news is that I didn't spend \$23.95 for this publishing mistake, but the nice lady who wants to marry my son paid for the thing. Now she is going to ask me how I liked the book and I can't hurt her feelings telling her the truth.

Guess if I cross my fingers and toes I can say that I sure was impressed by your writing style. I was 75 on October 13 and as I grow older I find that I take great glee in not having to kiss ass in order to get along. That is as long as the SS checks keep coming.

As an author it's a good thing you kept your day job. While I was wading through your prose I was thinking that if the reader didn't know how to build boats, most of what he was reading would be gibberish. I know the vernacular and it was still gibberish. You

do owe your publisher a big thank you because the book jacket was the best part of this book. I hope that you save a tree and give up trying to sell your sea stories.

I am sending you this note via your publisher and you probably will never see it. But if you do, be advised that every word is true. I didn't care for the *Tin Canoe*."

Good thing I am kind of thick skinned from a lifetime of doing like I dammit please despite the opinions of others, ain't it?

Robb White, Thomasville, GA

Projects..

I had given thought, but...

The first photo below was taken in Chincoteague, Virginia, on a short vacation trip a couple of years ago to the DelMarVa area. I had given it a thought or two because I would like to try commercial fishing and new adventures. I looked for a phone number and found none. I left my number and address but heard nothing. The lovely and talented Naomi thought the idea was lacking. She said some other stuff, too, but...

The second photo was taken at Fairport Harbor in Grand River, Ohio, when just looking around in old boat yards on the way home from the Great Lakes Wooden Sailboat Society gathering. The name is apt.

Greg Grundtisch, Lancaster, N



This Magazine...

Brings Back Old Memories

I love *Messing About*, which I am lucky enough to have given to me by Prof. Nancy Kinner. The great articles bring back so many memories of my own lucky life. I built my first boat when I was ten, 8' long scow, gaff headed, sail made from an old striped awning. Since then I've built about 400 sailboats from 4-1/2' (for my daughter when she was three) to a few 23-footers. In between 190 "Merry Maco" and a mess of canvas dinghies, I also worked with my brother, Bud McIntosh, on auxiliary boats between 30' and 35'.

In 1944 I salvaged a 34-1/2' Atkin cutter off the rocks in Rye, New Hampshire. I planned to repair her and have one cruise aboard her and then sell her. Sixty years later I am still sailing her!

Mac McIntosh, Dover, NH

Enjoys Rambling Stories

Good November 1 issue. I especially enjoyed the rambling stories by Jim Thayer and Robb White. I always get a kick out of their observations and adventures. It was interesting to learn the details of Jim's sale of his cement boat. Its bottom had become a favorite oystering spot there in the Corrotoman. Jim feared he would wind up paying to have it hauled away to the dump, a painful ending to such a big project, so full of dreams. He couldn't stop grinning as he described the deal, months later. We awarded him "Salesman of the Year" for that effort. Just goes to show you the power of positive thought, always a Thayer strong point.

Steve Axon, Challis, ID

Digs Out Old MAIBs

I enjoy every part of the magazine and when I run out of library books I end up digging out old MAIB issues. I wish I had known about your magazine when it started.

Herbert Guthrie, Westwood, NJ

Show Me Some

Show me some duck boats and punt boats and little outboard boats for 8-10hp motors.

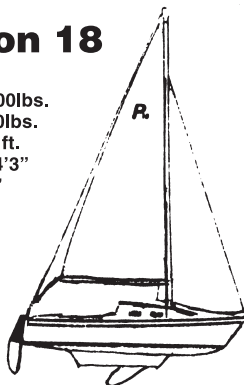
Lynwood Altman, Algonac, MI

Editor Comments: We show what we get. If we get duck boat and punt boat and little outboard boat articles we show them.

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(This review is, on the face of it, a review about a book but, as the reader will soon discover, it is more about my column "Beyond the Horizon." Both book and column are closely related).

Although most reviewers have praised the book (an especially detailed review with much background discussion appeared in Vol. 51, No. 13, *New York Review of Books*), others dissent (see the review by Dr. Shashi Kumar in *Naval Institute Proceedings*, October, 2004). In my opinion, the author has written what is basically a muckraking book, albeit in a dispassionate and understated manner.

He uses isolated examples such as tanker sinkings, a single instance of piracy, one failure of a ferry's bow door, and a discourse about that favorite Greenpeace target (ship-scraping on the beach at Alang in India) to apply a tar brush to the other thousands and tens of thousands of merchant vessels, owners, operators, regulators, and others that see that ships routinely sail from here to there and back without much drama or accident or even notice by the general public. What you will give as Christmas presents are enroute from China and will arrive on time. And others around the world will get Christmas presents of American-built BMWs shipped out of Charleston, South Carolina, while elsewhere hungry people will dine on American grains and edible oils barged and shipped from the U.S.

I suppose if you are an author you have to pick out the juicy bits and ignore what is dried and newsless but that practice reminds me of reading the police blotters as printed in daily papers. For example, I recently read with some surprise that somebody was stopped on my road for having a taillight out and the police discovered Class II drugs in the car and the driver was wanted on a bench warrant. My, I do live in a dangerous neighborhood, don't I? So much crime is everywhere! It's dangerous out there! Of course, the other 90,000 (or whatever the number is) of vehicles that pass my house each day act benignly and few seem to crash nearby.

That is not to say that this book should not be read. It is a very good book (although his chapter on the sinking of the ferry *Estonia* does seem grossly over-long) and I would like every reader of my columns to read the book as background. But do not think that what he describes is universal or even widely prevalent. It is not.

Having said that, I will upset my rhetorical apple cart by citing two recent episodes that prove that life on the high seas can be difficult and even dangerous.

Michael is an Asian shipowner, a small shipowner. In fact, he and his two partners own just one ship, a 9,000dwt cargo ship named *Natris*. But they do not really own it in the sense of possessing it because its ownership is in legal limbo. In 2002, uniformed pirates claiming to be "the Navy SEALs of Indonesia" captured the *Natris*, the crew was released, and the ship sailed off. In the months and years after, Michael learned that the ship was trading as *High Challenge*, then as *Victoria*, and next as *Paulijng*, and its ownership and flag had been changed several times. He chased the ship from country, trying to get local authorities to arrest the ship.

Finally last August Malaysia did arrest the ship (after helicopter chases from port to port and a final storming by Malaysian special forces), Michael was able to prove it was



Book Review

The Outlaw Sea: A World of Freedom, Chaos, and Crime

By William Langewiesche
Published by North Point Press
A division of Farrar, Straus & Giroux
New York, 2004
239 pages, endpaper maps - \$23
ISBN 086-547581-4

Reviewed by Hugh Ware

his ship, and a Malaysian court agreed. But the manager of the *Paulijng* appealed the ruling, saying the ship legally belonged to Bang Jing Shipping. Michael is nearly broke and still doesn't have his *Natris* back.

The other case probably involves loss of lives, but nobody is sure about that yet. The elderly, Indian-owned deep sea tug *Jupiter 6* was towing a decrepit bulker named *Satsang* from Cuba to Alang for scrapping. Mechanical problems kept the tug in Walvis Bay, Namibia, for six weeks and then the tow headed around the tip of Africa and into the Indian Ocean. The last radio message was a routine position report on September 6.

A month later a bulker spotted the *Satsang* adrift and unmanned, the tow wire hanging down off its bow, and no tug in sight. Was the tug sunk and dangling at the end of a 2,000' string? (This has happened.) Bad weather kept crew from a salvage tug from boarding for several days, and when they did board they found the wire was cut or had parted at the far end and there were signs of at least two attempts to rig emergency towing lines. Evidences of heroic but unsuccessful efforts in stormy conditions? Who knows? A search was started for the tug.

Suddenly, about 200 miles off Port Elizabeth and well off shipping lanes, the tug's EPIRB started broadcasting. Its battery life is only about 90 hours so why had it started broadcasting so late? An aircraft spotted only oil and some debris at the position and there is no surety that they came from the tug.

Then, from India rumors started appearing that the tug had taken on an unusual mount of fuel, that it had been captured by pirates, or was hijacked by its own crew... but no hard information has surfaced. The families of the dozen Indians on the tug would like to know what happened, and so would the maritime community.

How did my column come about and where do I get my news? As readers of *MAIB* may remember, I decided to keep on writing and editing when I retired in 1992 and it was

MAIB that published my first article about the Boston Tugboat Muster (thank you, Bob). That inspired me to focus on writing about tugboats (luckily, I'm a quick learner) and, some time later, I came upon hints of a radical new tug concept in Holland. I approached several maritime magazines about an article on this possible tug and one, *Pacific Maritime*, responded affirmatively with a Sunday morning phone call, the editor saying, "I've decided to publish your article. Now, who the h... are you?"

To cut a long story short, he died soon after the article appeared and his sons took over the magazine and eventually I became its East Coast editor. But little of my contributions were being published because they usually had more than enough West Coast news. Problem: How to keep up the lineage of my products appearing in each issue?

By then I had developed numerous sources of information, most news arriving via the Internet; a very good shipping newsletter from Holland prepared daily by a Dutch tug skipper whenever he is not towing something across oceans; a summary of legal and governmental actions worldwide, prepared at 5am each day by an ex-Coast Captain, now attorney; information from tugboat chat groups here and abroad; and probably the best source, keyword searches (U.S. Navy, shipping accidents, tug, barge, Royal Navy, etc.) from Google News.

But not all news comes from the Internet. Many items come from reading maritime magazines. And I have a former colleague, now living in Devon, who regularly sends us fat packages of clippings from local and national U.K. papers. Most clippings concern gardens (for my wife) or maritime and RNLI lifeboats (for me) but there are always a few gems of off-beat news.

I don't remember how the idea hit me of a column reporting worldwide maritime news with a certain style but hit me it did. I assembled a trial column, the editor liked it, the readers liked it, and I was off. Today, only *MAIB* readers get a full version of each column because other publications use only what they have space for. New Zealand *Professional Skipper* magazine is a subscriber but it is published every other month so editor Keith Ingram pieces together items from two columns. But he often extracts portions as stand-alone news items.

Who is the column intended for and why is it shaped as it is? I visualize its readers as being of several varieties. One is the professional who can benefit from a quick overview of the maritime world or may need a reminder of an impending bit of legislation. Another reader has retired from the sea and relishes the reminders of a former lifestyle. Finally, I suspect that most readers read them with fascination at a look at a world so different from their own. This is an important group because most readers are ignorant of how crucial maritime trade is.

I'm reminded here of a story I was once told. Whether it is true or not is unknown. It seems that somebody asked for a meeting with New Jersey's senior senator to explain why dredging of the channel leading to New Jersey's Port Elizabeth and Port Newark was needed if those ports were to retain their lead as East Coast container ports when bigger container ships started arriving. The senator was busy so his senior aide filled in. He patiently listened to the sales pitch and then asked why his boss's help was needed?

"Doesn't the U.S. Navy handle shipments of everything?" I hope that all column readers learn a bit, smile a bit, and sympathize with those who hurt.

As for a column's format, I usually begin with an International Scene heading, especially reports on the conflict being waged between states wanting to control their local waters and the international community that wants, nay, needs, freedom of the seas. Then follows Navy items. The Royal Navy is always good for something startling as that ancient service evolves and responds to modern pressures. Increasingly though, the naval build-up in the Far East is becoming obvious and it is interesting to watch

potential partners in possible conflicts twirling across the dance floor towards each other. Cruise ships come next, then ferries (although I actually report a tiny portion of available news there), and then I sort the remaining news items into categories for which I try to think up catchy titles for the fun of creating them.

Anything else that doesn't fit somewhere goes under the Odd Bits heading. Hopefully, there's a Head Shaker or two but some months the candidates have been distressingly feeble.

I try to be objective but it is hard, especially when reporting the excesses of the eco-freaks. I try to be balanced and complete but

that is impossible when I gather many more candidate items each month than can appear in a column. I omit much news, partly due to this lack of space but more often because I do not have the background to appreciate what an item really means and where it comes from and why. I have been called an "expert" but I am not.

Let me be frank. I'm merely a used news dealer, a purveyor of pre-masticated reports on what happens in the real, very real world. Finally, do read *The Outlaw Sea*. It will provide information that will help you appreciate the news I put in my columns. And that is the end of this review.

The boating season here on the North Shore of Massachusetts was abbreviated, but better than last season. I couldn't complain too much when we decided to put the boats up for the winter in mid-October. Six years ago we sailed in every sort of weather just to be on the water one more time. Like children called in from playing in the ocean, lips blue and limbs shaking with cold, we sailed in conditions that I would need a monetary inducement to repeat today.

Once the boats are tucked in we take a break and head north to Stowe, Vermont. Armchair cruising is the mainstay of our activities as the weather in the mountains is unstable. I can always count on a few days of precipitation to keep us off the trails and snuggled by the fire reading about warmer climates and new trawlers making the great circle routes,

This fall has been a particularly wet one, rain gauges across the eastern seaboard have been overflowing since the various hurricanes have traveled past. Even without any direct hits, we've felt the sharp backlash of the monsters' tails as they've swept up along the coast, the backside curve of the winds spiraling in from the northeast brings gale force wind and rain heavy enough to drown a frog.

One tropical storm at summer's end is not unusual, two can be tolerated, but when we get slammed by five and six of them the earth groans under the burden of all that moisture. Trees in full leaf are cloaked with wet, their trunks shimmer from the water running in twisted rivulets that pool around the roots. After the first two storms the water tables had risen and the holding capacity of the soil was overwhelmed. There was nowhere else to put the continuing rain so it ran off into cellars and storm drains. Valleys became small reservoirs, brooks turned into rivers, the rivers leaped their banks and spread out searching for a shortcut to the ocean.

Going up I89 heading north we drove through mountains of slate in which the engineers had blasted out a wide cut to lay the road bed. Slate is a sedimentary rock made up of layers of silt and minerals which were compressed under the early sea floor and then lifted in folds as the Appalachian mountain range was formed millions of years ago. By its very nature this stone is fragmented and has distinct fractures and layers that water can seep through. The water that fell week after week this fall was soaked up by the slate until it bubbled out of the hillsides and roadway cut faces.



Window on the Water

By Chris Kaiser

Vermont White Water

As the evening light failed we came to an area of warning beacons and detoured travel lanes. The super-saturated rocks in one area had sloughed off huge sheets of their exposed faces. The clean-up work would necessitate further blasting and a less acute angle to the rock face bordering the roadway. Modern stone boats were scattered across the site waiting for morning and the mechanical horses to return to move their cargo to the county bone yard or a highway swale needing solid fill. I was glad we weren't the ones to witness the avalanche of truck-like slabs slithering down to shatter into Volkswagen-sized pieces at the edge of the road.

We think to bring the Melonseed north each fall, wanting to sail on Lake Champlain before it ices over. Each year common sense prevails and we leave her home. This trip we saw a number of places that we could have sailed on the two clear, warm, Indian summer days, some of them are usually low-lying cow pastures, but the rain had filled them with 2' of standing water (the Melonseed only needs 9"). We also had many canoeing options. Every brook and stream was a raging torrent. The Little River in Moscow seemed to be auditioning for the remake of "Deliverance."

Coming into town the next morning I was amazed to see several children riding lollipop colored kayaks, rushing down the nearest "white water." The few canoes employed were not making as good headway as the rolypoly plastic kayaks. The flatter bottoms of the canoes made for more friction as the crew of the overfilled craft tried to find the fastest pathway. The single or two-person kayaks zipped along with gleeful abandon, one run included a steep drop that sent the craft airborne, spilling its occupants out into the cold, fluffy, "white water" from which they emerged laughing and in pursuit of the runaway craft.

We had received 6" of snow overnight, and with an earlier base the innovative children had found a way to extend their Mess About season until the ski trails were fully opened. This Yankee ingenuity proves that there's more than one kind of White Water in the hills of Vermont.

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Photo Album: *Marion Day* and the Messabout



Reprinted from *Mainsheet*
Newsletter of the Delaware River Chapter TSCA



Marion Day, left and above. At left, Rick, Ron, and Tom put *Marion* through his paces. Above, “you-ho-ho, three boats in a row.” Pete and Ned test their sprit rigs against each other as Frank, in his *Shellback*, follows along.

Below, Ron deploys rain protection while paddling through a Messabout mini-squall.



Just out messing about. Small boaters, below, try out each others' craft at the Messabout. Left to right: a beautiful, ACA-rigged, wooden sailing canoe owned by Tom Ballew, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and an unidentifiable small sailing boat; an Appledore 19 double-ender with sliding seat rowing rig, recently restored by Tom Shep; a Crawford Melonseed owned by someone in the Cape May TSCA Chapter; Andy Anderson's Tuckahoe Ten sailing skiff, designed by Tom Jones; *Marion Brewington*; a brand new Glen-L 15, built by Harold Bernard; a 20' cold molded Melonseed with experimental junk rig built by Gary Holmes; and Dave Moreno's glued lap Oughtred Whilly Boat.



At right, a crowd of sail obscures the horizon as Messabout racers make their first turn at the windward mark: an Albacore dinghy, Mike Wick's windsurfer-rigged Bolger Gypsy, George Loos' Blue Jay, Ron Gibbs' Celebrity, Frank Stauss' Shellback dinghy, Harold Burnham's Glen-L 15, and Ron Herion's Bluejay.



Above left, becalmed at the race's start, three Crawford boats (tanbark sails) and a traditionally-built Melonseed from North Jersey look for air. Above right, this year's class winner, Phil Maynard, shows off his prized half-model trophy donated by Roger Crawford. Phil sails a 13' stitch-and-glue plywood 'Seed of his own design and building. Second place went to young Sam Follansbee (holding mug), third place honors went to Andy Follansbee, his dad, both of them in Crawford boats. Holding the microphone, front center, is Jack Follansbee, our "official" race starter. (Photo by Carolyn Follansbee)

At right, the men's rowing race, foreground: *Three Sisters*, a six-hour canoe and a Ducker. Background, left to right: Appledore 19, Gloucester Gull dory, Tuckahoe Ten, an Andy Wolfe 10.5' double paddle canoe, the Ducker *Thomas Eakins*, and a Crawford Melonseed. George Loos took first place in the Gloucester Gull.



At left, pulling hard for the finish of the women's race: Wendy Byar temporarily holds the lead in *Three Sisters* as Carolyn Follansbee gains ground in the Appledore 19. Carolyn edged Wendy out for the blue ribbon. (Photo by Andy Follansbee)

Unless noted, all photos are courtesy of Wendy Byar.

West has always been our favorite direction (from here in Texas). We just plain like the country, the wide open spaces, the sagebrush, the big rocks. We usually take the smaller roads, but we wanted to make good time so we took I10 all the way to Phoenix. Should have looped around, but we turned northwest there and drove up through town. Phoenix spreads out for miles and miles. Just about the time you think you have reached the outer edge of the galaxy, the Sun City retirement suburbs begin.

I don't like to think about "retirement," probably we will never reach that point anyway, we have been self-employed so long that we know nothing else. This was scary. Walled compounds, dedicated hospitals, cookie cutter homes. When I saw the elderly lady with orange hair pull through the busy intersection on her golf cart I said, "Let's don't ever come through Phoenix again."

We were headed for Lake Mohave. The Colorado River flows out of the base of the Hoover Dam and forms the western border of Arizona. Sixty miles south of Hoover Dam is Davis Dam, the dam that makes Lake Mohave. Bullhead City, Arizona, and Laughlin, Nevada, lie on opposite sides of the river. Laughlin is pretty much just the casinos (which are also motels/hotels). Bullhead City is where all the people live and is essentially one long main street, thick with motels, restaurants, and shopping centers. To quote something I read on the internet, "Originally established in the 1940s as the headquarters for the construction of Davis Dam, which impounds Lake Mohave in the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Bullhead City has evolved into a year-round vacation community."

Maybe it is just the contrast with the desert, but the river is a beautiful, almost unreal blue and on a quiet day I imagine the reflections of the sparkling casinos in Laughlin beckon to the retirees of Bullhead City. From space, especially at night, it must look like a long strip of glitter, and whether you find it appealing or you just want to get away as fast as possible, it is interesting to find civilization in what might otherwise be the middle of nowhere.

Climbing back up out of the river's plain we were quickly back in bare desert hills and those two manic towns were the last civilization we saw until the tiny town of Searchlight, Nevada, just a couple of small casino/convenience stores and the intersection where we turned off for Lake Mohave. The road went straight downhill for 13 miles. We traveled through several distinct cacti ecosystems, cholla and Joshua Tree are the ones I remember. I don't think we saw saguaro but we had seen lots on the trip out. Chuck was not happy until he got to examine one of those giants with arms up close.

Lake Mohave appeared at last, a blue oasis. The facilities are pretty basic but nice enough. Houseboats or powerboats can be rented. I believe there were a few kayaks and paddleboats. A small store sells ice, drinks, snacks, etc. There is a small motel/lodge (booked solid through mid-October), two campgrounds, spaces for RVs, and a tiny cafe.

Lake Mohave is part of the Lake Mead National Recreation Area and the campgrounds are run by the government. Everything else (as near as I could tell) is private concession. It's a small lake compared to Mead and Powell. Four miles wide at the

A Colorado River Odyssey

(With the Welsfords, the Kokopelli Crew, & Other Old Friends)

By Sandy Leinweber

widest point and, if you think of the lake as extending all the way to Hoover Dam, about 60 miles long. I confess that even though we had the skin boats with us, I did not explore the lake at all except to swim in the part near the campground. Chuck and John paddled around a bit but we were there more to visit than to cruise.

We got a spot in the campground with nice shade, \$10 per night. The bathrooms are government-standard toilets and sinks with those mirrors that aren't really mirrors. Showers are available but they are hard to find. It requires a hike up through the RV park to an obscure cinder block building right in the middle of the trailers, and the ladies in the store seemed reluctant to divulge the location. I would find out later why the location is not more clearly marked.

The water called to me but Chuck sensibly suggested we set up the tent and think about a nap. We were expecting John Welsford (New Zealand's most famous boat designer, whose plans we market in the U.S.) to arrive with his family sometime that afternoon. We were also looking for Jim Thayer and anyone coming for the annual Kokopelli cruise, but thought they might not arrive until sometime Saturday.

The Welsfords pulled in about 3pm and, after all the meeting and greeting, John's wife Denny, son Brendan, daughter Serena, her boyfriend Alby, and I made tracks for the lake. The air was HOT. The water was cold and wonderful. There is not much mud to cloud the water and it is clear enough to look down and see your toes wiggle. I was feeling a little guilty about luring them here. They had come to see the wonders of America and there was not much here for a 13-year-old boy and a young couple to see at this isolated spot. John and Denny, however, seemed content to relax. They had spent a day at the San Diego Zoo and another in Tijuana already.

On Saturday morning the weekend partiers began to arrive. Many were from Las Vegas and had driven down to escape the big city. One huge group appropriated the pavilion by the water and began to barbeque with music and dancing and swimming. Brendan met a family camped near us with kids and we barely saw him after that. Chuck and John talked boats (what else?) nonstop and Denny and I got to know each other, with frequent trips to the water to cool down. Jim Thayer and Ron Roberts came in Saturday afternoon and set up camp nearby to wait for the rest of their group.

Late Saturday afternoon a large party of young Hispanic men and women arrived and set up camp across from us. They had a truck loaded with gear and soon they were in weekend mode, complete with loud mariachi music and singalongs. It occurred to me that the lake was probably the only spot with water and no great entry fee in a huge expanse of desert. When the music and the singing (which had gotten louder through the

evening), finally stopped at 2am I thought, "Well, I can sleep late in the morning." When it began again I opened my eyes to find that it was still dark. I checked the time, it was 5am. I peeked out of the tent and the men were all back sitting around the picnic table, drinking beer and singing louder than ever. One fellow was even adding wolf howls to the end of every refrain. "Ahhh-oooooh." We kept thinking the park host would be awakened and come and ask them to at least wait until daylight, but he was in his trailer with the air conditioner going, no doubt oblivious.

I lay there thinking about cultural differences. Was it unreasonable of me to be irritated? I thought about things that had irritated my parents when I was a kid, things I thought they were being too sensitive about. I peeked out of the tent again. Where were the women? I dressed and headed for the bathroom in the darkness. I could hear laughing and one particularly annoying giggle over and over, usually coming right after the howl. I spotted movement in a van parked in the site. All the young women were packed in the vehicle, talking and laughing. The men, clearly drunk, sat at the table and sang loudly. It was a group serenade and they had to sing loudly so the women in the van would hear. Young love was happening here. Were they aware of the rest of us, still in our tents but no longer asleep? Probably not. Was this old age setting in? Was I losing the ability to live and let live? I really wanted to strangle that giggling woman.

The bathroom was something of a disaster area and now I knew why the showers were not clearly marked and why they were not located in the campground proper. At 8am a park ranger cruised through the campground. He was flagged down by several campers and soon he was back at the site across from ours. The music stopped. If looks could kill, the rest of us would have burst into flames. The young lovers loaded their gear and roared away.

We headed out Sunday morning. John and his family were off to see Hoover Dam and spend some time in Las Vegas. Tom and Heather Gale and their kids Wil and Ruby had arrived and they and Jim Thayer and Ron Roberts and Kim Apel were going to spend several days cruising Lake Mohave. They would be joining us at Lake Powell on Friday. Chuck and I headed off to Kingman, Arizona, in search of a motel with wireless internet and a good Mexican restaurant. If you ever visit Kingman, find the El Palacio restaurant in the old downtown. Mondo deliciouso!

We met up with John and family on the south rim of the Grand Canyon Tuesday morning. I had made reservations for campsites but the campground was not at all crowded and, except for the amazing sounds of elk bugling, perfectly quiet at night. Why couldn't I be as fascinated by the mariachi serenades? We did all the regular tourist stuff, even hiked a short way down the Bright Angel Trail. It was a perfect juxtaposition to the lake. Tall trees, cool air, the unbelievable canyon.

Thursday morning we took off in opposite directions, the Welsfords west, back to Los Angeles, Disneyland, and other stateside attractions. Chuck and I drove east, hoping to take the ferry at Lake Powell from Hall's Crossing to Bullfrog. It took longer than we thought. We stopped for another last look at the canyon at the east entrance. We had a

good view of the river, and when we spotted rafts far below we watched until they reached a series of rapids and watched them go through. I know we were both lusting to be on the river. Someday.

Chuck kept talking about the switchbacks north of Mexican Hat. The town lies along the San Juan river, a tributary of the Colorado. There's a cute little rock formation nearby that gives it its name. The road out of town took off straight north but I could see a little squiggle on the map. The reality was more than a squiggle! The sign at the bottom said it was not recommended for sedans, RVs, or anyone pulling a trailer. We saw all three on the way up. We climbed 1000' feet along a series of serious hairpin turns on a washboard road. I was on the outside edge and could not look down until we reached the top, the scenic overlook.

We used to live in Montana, up in the Highland Mountains, and switchbacks were a big part of going in and out. When the road was icy Chuck would have me stand on the back bumper to add weight for traction as we went up a hill. "Jump up and down." he would holler. Much younger days, pre-kids, before I learned to fear painful death. The edge here was different. Almost straight down, no big trees that might stop us if we went over the edge. Totally spectacular, though. At the overlook we met some fellows with kayaks going home from Lake Powell. They saw the skin boats on top of the truck and came over to check them out. We asked them if they knew when the last ferry left Hall for Bullfrog and they thought maybe 6pm, but were not sure.

On top we were on a winding road through high desert. I kept expecting to see the lake just over the next rise but the road went on forever. There was a small stream running alongside, just a little bit of water heading for the lake. It seemed strange that it would not sink immediately into the sand but there must be solid rock very close to the surface. At last, the blue of water appeared. Hall's Crossing lay below.

The last ferry had departed at 4pm. It was almost 5pm. We resigned ourselves to camping at Hall's and taking the 8am ferry Friday morning. Chuck raised Bruce Anderson on the VHF. He was over at Bullfrog wandering around, looking for someone he knew. He had decided to park and camp and wait for daylight. He blinked his headlights and we could see him on the other side. The next morning, crossing on the ferry, we searched the shore with binoculars, looking for the pirate flag he had promised to raise, but had no luck. When the ferry landed, we saw Tom and Heather Gales' van. They were talking to Jack, Heather's father, who had rowed over looking for them. Like us, they had underestimated the time necessary to get from there to here, arriving late in the evening, too late to put boats in the water.

Jack told us where to go. We got lost anyway and had to backtrack. The maze of roads in the Stanton Creek drainage is confusing at best. Last year we used the GPS to finally locate the spot, but this year we decided to wing it. The water was higher by about 40' from last year and everything looked different. We finally spotted the pirate flag and there was everyone, just under the ice cream cone rock, invisible until you got to the top of the rise.

Kellan Hatch from Salt Lake came with his two sons, Evan and Elliot, and their two

Mouse boats rigged for sailing or rowing. The boys made him proud, solo sailing for the first time, looking like they had been doing it for ages.

Chris Ostlind (also from Salt Lake) came with Kellan and the boys, bringing his self-designed trimaran. It is a work in progress, but with a little work he had her in the water and going full blast before the weekend was done.

The folding schooner on DeWitt Smith's trailer was unfolded, her masts placed, her sails raised. She scooted out of our little cove and sailed smartly with her crew of four up and down the lake. Coming back in she came to grief on the rocks. The rocks are the "monsters" in the lake. As the water levels rise and fall they are sometimes exposed and sometimes hidden, often just a few inches below the surface. Someone needs to be riding shotgun if your boat has a centerboard or leeboard sticking down very far. In the skin boats we could skim over rock ledges covered with just an inch or two of water. DeWitt hit barely covered rocks going fairly slowly. The collision jammed his centerboard backwards into the case, it had to be hammered out. I am guessing a speedboat misjudging the depth of a rock (often the top of submerged hill) can really sustain some damage.

Heather Gale and her dad, Jack, were pictures of grace in their rowing boats. Heather's is a Whitehall, one of Jim Thayer's designs, and her dad's is self-designed, both built by Jack. The one who amazed us all was Heather's son, Wil. Jack built a scaled-down rowing boat for him. According to Heather, when they first put him in the water he rejected all suggestions, saying he knew what to do, and pulled away, rowing like an expert. He took that little boat in and out of the cove with the assurance of a master. Wil is six years old.

Wil's little sister Ruby was truly the sunshine, the joy of the messabout. She is five and she was everywhere, knowing no strangers. She had a turquoise guitar and she

DeWitt Smith's folding schooner.



Evan and Elliot Hatch with their mouse boats.



Chris Ostlind setting things straight, Ruby Gale supervising.





Heather Gale rowing.



Wil Gale rowing the boat his Grandad Jack Hicks made for him.

Ruby Gale in her Kokopelli shirt.



entertained us after dinner, she toasted marshmallows to share, she sat on all of our laps, she made mud cookies for all. Her grandfather Jack plans to build her a boat when she is six.

Ruby and I took a little paddle in the skin boats. First we went out in Chuck's. His has a larger opening, more room for two people. It is narrower and tipper than mine and as soon as I told Ruby she would have to sit still, she began to wiggle. With a big grin on her face she leaned one way and then the other. Five years old and already wise to driving adults crazy. Ruby has been going out in boats since she was born. We paddled back and got my boat. It was crowded but I felt more like we would stay out of the water.

Her Dad, Tom, brought his Van Gogh boat. I had no idea where the name or the design came from until Chuck showed me the painting by Van Gogh. Tom modified the hull a bit to make her sail worthy. Beautiful!

Ron Roberts left his vehicle in Bullfrog and sailed and rowed to the messabout in his canoe with a sail rig and a forward facing

rowing set-up. Ron is quite a character. He sings and plays the guitar (he borrowed Ruby Gale's turquoise guitar), and he helped her entertain us after dinner.

Randy Swedlund (Prescott, Arizona) and his faithful companion, Chooey, motored over from Bullfrog. Randy brought his sail rig to test it out and it appeared to work very well.

Bruce Anderson brought a spiffy little PD Racer. She had bright yellow stripes and a nifty little sail and she danced on the water, turning tail on a dime. When Bruce announced Sunday morning that his boat was gone, we all laughed because Bruce is a big kidder. It was indeed missing. The wind had blown onshore all day Saturday, but sometime during the night it had apparently shifted and Bruce's boat must have wanted more adventure than he had shown her so far. He and Randy took Randy's boat to search. On the first trip they found nothing. The second time, they flagged down a park patrol and the rangers took Bruce on board and went to check with the office at Bullfrog. It seemed a boat had been found and towed in. It was the PD Racer, unscathed. Bruce returned triumphant, promising his boat to never lose her again.

Last but not least, Jim Thayer, he of Kokopelli fame. And speaking of fame, when Chuck started Duckworks I would hear these names, Jim Michalak, John Welsford, Jim Thayer, and others, spoken with reverence, as if these men were gods. I am a cynic about such things and guess what (no surprise to me), they are not gods, just some of the nicest people you could hope to meet. Knowledgeable about boats, for sure, but just people. Jim brought his boat, *Nina*, and his video camera, capturing everything including a running commentary as he filmed.

Chuck spent some time in almost every boat. I stuck to my skin boat, going up one way and down the other. I loved paddling over the barely submerged ridges and rocks, they seem to go down forever. The water was a little rough, just enough to make going straight a challenge. The current (I assume it was the current) pulled the boat towards the center of the lake even though the wind was blowing towards the north shore. Wakes from passing speedboats and houseboats rolled me up and down. I am not an adventurous paddler but I have to say I never felt anything but safe and stable in my little frame boat covered with plain cotton canvas.

Late arrivals Alan and Jeanie Donaldson arrived in their Sea Pearl shortly before dinner Saturday. Just in time, too! DeWitt had announced earlier that day that he was prepared to feed all of us Saturday night, and wisely no one was turning that down. No one expected the feast to come (imagine drum rolls and bugles here, please)! Smoked chicken and ribs with three different sauces to choose from. Beans seasoned with mustard and other wonderful things. All brought frozen and heated over coals until perfect. Three kinds of wine. Fine ripe tomatoes a la Jim Thayer. Thank you, DeWitt and all.

Sunday morning things began to wind down. We had only the skin boats to load so our task was easily done. We also had the longest drive home (two days) and we said our goodbyes and were on the road by 10am. Rather than take the ferry back to Halls we drove north out of Bullfrog and up and around to the road back down through Hite.

The last time we were here Hite was high and dry, just the river running past, no lake at all. A bit more lake this time, still not quite reaching the end of the ramp. Our plan is to return next year for a combined Kokopelli cruise and messabout (for those who can't make the cruise, with the messabout the weekend before or the one after the cruise).

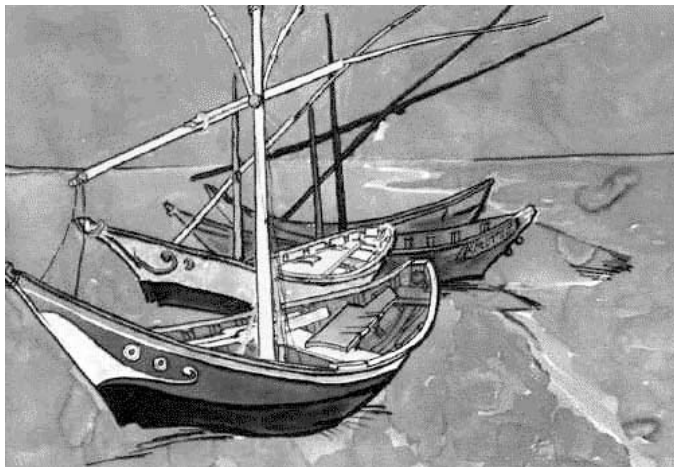
I am intrigued by the dinner plan for the cruise (as demonstrated by DeWitt) where one person/couple/group each has a night to prepare dinner for all. We are looking forward to seeing more of the lake. Chuck and Jim are talking of going all the way from Bullfrog to Hite, with exploration in between. Chuck is thinking about a new boat that we can sail or row (with a small motor for backup). Bring it on.



Ruby and Sandra in Chuck's skin boat.



Ron Roberts and Chris Ostlind admiring Ron's sailing/rowing canoe.



Painting by Van Gogh.



Tom Gale's Van Gogh boat.



Randy Swedlund sailing with Chooey (I hope I spelled that correctly)



Jim Thayer sailing in Nina.

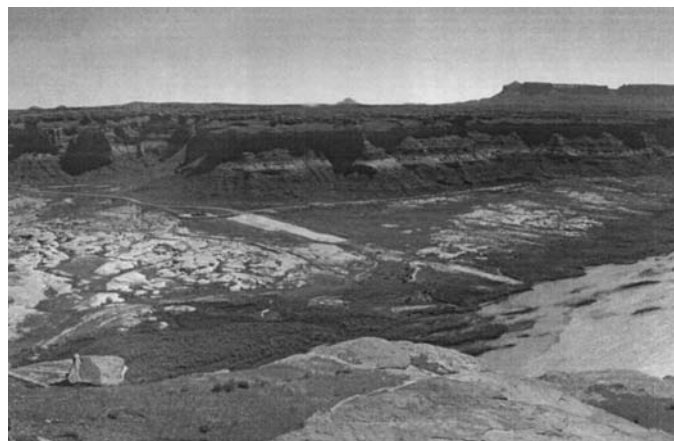


Our little cove at Lake Powell.

Bruce Anderson in his PD Racer (The stripes are white and yellow!).



Looking down at Hite.



It's a peculiar late summer for Jane and me. Usually we spend most of the time down at the coast but that persistent red tide has kind of stymied the joy out of it. For one thing, we are sort of afraid to eat much salt water fish because of the toxin situation although they (?) say it is perfectly OK. Who wants to eat fish from water that stinks?

Besides, the toxic dinoflagellates dehydrate out of the seaside spray from the surf and blow across the island like salt crystals. I think real salt crystals are good for you, but after a day or two of breathing the toxin I get to feeling like I might have a rubber band in my nose.

One of my granddaughters passed a rubber band into her diaper when she was just a baby, which act functioned as a marvel for the other children at the time and now, many years later, is grounds for blackmail. "Little Sister," they'll say, "if you eat that last marshmallow, I am going to tell this whole Girl Scout troop about that blue rubber band."

Anyway, we have been forced to stay away from the coast. I got a little work done and sent off some stories to *The New Yorker* which I am sure will generate a big check here shortly, but I haven't done much messing about in boats.

That brings up something I must confess to y'all. I don't "mess about in boats" and I don't cruise around in cars either. If you see me using either mode of transportation, I am on my way somewhere to do something I need to do. If you see me in my boat, you may note that my wake is straight, and if you get behind me and line things up you can see that there is an object dead ahead which is my objective. It is the same way when I am in the car. I am going to the post office to pick up my check from *The New Yorker* unless there is a boat on behind, then I am on my way fishing and it is best not to poke along in front of me and get in my way or else, first chance I get, I'll blow your damned doors off with Jane's Kia.

But fishing was been mighty slow in late summer. Fresh water fishing usually is when it is hot. I am told by these gadgeteer style fishermen (I do cruise to the bait store for gossip and minnows from time to time) that the fish just "lay low" down on the bottom. They say they can see them on their fish finders but they won't bite. I know speckled perch (black crappie) are like that. I hate to put down any avid fisherman by disparaging the difficulty of his sport but I think speckled perch are the stupidest fish in fresh water. I believe they'll bite anything that wiggles when they are in a biting mood, but if they aren't they won't bite anything. They are sort of like the way some young men are about women.

I'll make a brief comment here about that and then leave that ticklish subject alone. From certain valid (but unpublished) data I have found that some women like sex just as much as men. It is just that most of them have enough sense to be a little discriminating. They like somebody with a little class to him whereas a lot of men are just like speckled perch... anything that wiggles. I think that's a natural thing, too. I mean, in the wild state it is no disadvantage to the man if he leaves children scattered all over the countryside. Probably one or two of them might succeed and carry the indiscriminate man's genes on to another generation, but a woman has a limited number of chances and she has

Jacks, Specks, Fly Bream, and Cheerleader Wine

By Robb White

to raise the durn child. She doesn't want to work hard all her life to bring up a child bearing the genotype for ugly, stupid, ill-mannered, and unreliable. Whew, how in hell did I get into that... ought to have saved it for TNY, don't you think?

So fresh water fishing has been slow and we are about to starve to death. We scraped out the freezer for venison to the point that we were scraping and jerking the shreds off the durn ribs. You ought to see a three-year-old child eat venison jerky so tough that the best you can do is chew it into a manageable wad and swallow it whole... kind of harks back to the rubber band story.

Finally, one day I went by the bait store on my way back from visiting the post office to see if my check had come (not yet, but any day now) and there were about four or five old regulars standing around Pettis's boat looking in the icebox. I knew what was up immediately. The speckled perch had started. I drove right by and scratched through the floorboards of my junk Mercedes collection until I found enough change for two dozen minnows. Gas is so high that I determined not to waste any by going back for the minnows and then going fishing immediately. When the fresh water fishing starts back in the fall it is strictly an early morning thing. The old saying is, "Soon as the sun hits the water, it is all over." That's right, too.

So I got the boat all ready (the little gray boat... Grumman Sport Boat improvement project) and checked out the little old Martin to make absolutely sure all was well and alerted Jane that we needed to get to bed early so we would be ready, but I forgot that we had made arrangements to babysit some children at a house that had a TV so we could watch the amazing Cybil Shepard rendition of Martha Stewart. It was way late by the time we got home and the only thing that I can remember about the show was that I was able to formulate the opinion that even a brilliantly accurate portrayal of Martha Stewart was not enough to keep me awake... maybe Julia Childs.

So we dragged out of bed after a short nap which was spent mostly being glad that great financial responsibility hadn't landed us in Camp Cupcake and, while Jane was cooking breakfast, I drove the two miles to the bait store and got in line for my minnows. You know when something is important the word gets around. This wasn't no digitorectal FEMA operation at the bait store. It was time to sell some minnows and Charles was up to the job. It sort of reminded me of when I used to work at the galley in the Navy... slapping that chipped beef on top of the toast for the troops. I was out of there before Jane served up my eggs and sausages.

Which, at that, I have to stop this adventure and make an observation about modern civilization. People ought to eat their durn breakfast. I think that's what ails this country... why these little men and little women look so disgruntled while they are driving to work. Man does not live by Froot Loops alone, y'all. Just because Paris Hilton looks

like she crawled out from under a board doesn't mean all of us have to get our navels pierced.

It was a pleasant drive to Lake Iamonia. There was a light mist in the air and the moon was setting down the road (US 319 S heads due west... geographic confusion is a southern tradition). It isn't but about 15 miles to the boat landing and the little Kia barely got warmed up good. It is interesting about that. The car gets exactly the same gas mileage (34mpg) pulling the boat on level road as it does running naked. We have made enough trips to establish that fact and also to convince ourselves that it is a roadworthy rig... will drag brakes without jackknifing for one thing. We are thinking about a little trip or two.

I wouldn't recommend running a little car like that with a boat and trailer if it had an automatic transmission unless you installed an auxiliary oil cooler, and I don't see how you could do that on one of these little front wheel drive cars with that electric fan in front of the radiator. Hell, they don't even have room under the hood for a real battery... has to have a miniature. Anyway, Jane's is a five speed so that's a moot point. It'll pull it alright, too.

You know my mother used to pull a 16' heavy-duty, butthead Lone Star and an 18hp Evinrude on an old heavy, steel Gator trailer behind a 36hp VW all over the place. This rig, trailer, boat, motor, and all doesn't weigh what her old trailer did all by itself and that little Kia is a boy dog compared to a VW... 84hp, y'all. Don't pull up alongside me unless you have serious intentions.

That old VW/Kia comparison has another evolutionary parallel. You couldn't see the engine in a VW and you can't see one in this Kia either. The difference is that the motor in the stern of a VW was covered by tin and the one in front of the Kia is covered by plastic.

The boat ramp was real crowded. It wasn't a yahoo situation with rudeness and incompetence and all, though. Yahoos don't get up before day. They sleep late and eat their Froot Loops on the run. Those people at the boat ramp knew exactly what they were doing and all was running very efficiently, but there were a lot of people trying to put in at the one lane ramp at Lake Iamonia even though it was a Monday.

That was no deterrent to Jane and me, though. We unhooked the trailer and pushed it down through the weeds a good bit away from the ramp and dragged the boat to the water and loaded her up with junk and poled out to one of the boat trails, and one pull on the old Martin (me and Mr. Tillotson have come to an understanding, I got that thing Cadillacking like a Singer sewing machine set on "buttonhole") and we were idling out in the early morning mist onto the big lake. Lake Iamonia is a great big lake (maybe 15,000 acres depending on what all you measure) but it is swampy and weedy and most people don't know how to get very far from the landing, but I do.

Our old home place isn't but about five or six miles to the north of the lake as the crow flies and I spent many an hour at Lake Iamonia. I remember one time my mother and my oldest sister and I were down there. My sister and I were just little children. I might have been six or seven years old. We were playing on the bank while Momma was out in a canoe fishing just outside the weed

line. She was catching fly bream ("fliers" *Centrarchus macropterus*) one right behind the other on long-manure worms

Whew... I better get into that. Some might not know the difference between long-manure and short-manure... probably think short-manure comes from goats and sheep and rabbits and long-manure comes from things like dogs. Long manure is fresh manure that is shoveled up from out of the milk barn or stalls or hog pens or the dog yard or someplace and mixed with straw. It is most excellent stuff for the garden. Sometimes leaves and other sweepings get mixed in with it.

These big old iridescent dark blue (almost black) earthworms just love to live in the long pile. They are very active and do not like to be stuck with a fish hook so they thrash violently all the way down and are best fished on a naked hook with no weight or cork or anything. Just flip them up alongside the weeds with a cane pole and let them sink. They won't get to sink very far, though, and fly bream will fight over them so you always get the pick of the litter and that was what Momma was doing.

She was putting these big fliers on a willow switch stringer which she had wrapped into the gaps in the rail of the canoe, and she already had a good many when something grabbed the bottom fish. She thought it must have been one of the yearling alligators which were plentiful and will do that so she decided to put the stringer in the boat since it was about time to go home anyway and the fish didn't need to be kept alive anymore. It wasn't a little alligator but a great big moccasin which had swallowed the head of the bottom bream down as far as he could before the willow switch got cross-ways his mouth and stopped him.

You know snakes have backwards pointing teeth and, even if they want to, it is hard for them to turn loose of something they are trying to swallow. One time I caught a big king snake which had swallowed a very big rattlesnake about half way down. I couldn't pull the rattlesnake out and my mother and I put the whole mess into the back of the Jeep (old WWII surplus, the low hood kind with the flathead motor and the big gas hole) and took them home and kept them in a steel drum. It took three days for that king snake to gradually digest the big rattlesnake down until his tail disappeared.

After it was over, we dumped the king snake (stuffed absolutely full... you could see white between all his scales) out of the drum onto the floor of the tack room thinking that he might stay and catch rats but he wasn't hungry. He spent the rest of the summer and the whole winter in there just lying on the floor in kind of a daze. When spring came he shed his skin, crapped a little bit of white stuff and crawled off. He was as shiny as patent leather. I think he was the most beautiful snake I have ever seen. That's why I said what I said about eating a good breakfast.

So here was Momma with this big, dangerous snake in the bottom of the canoe. She tried to fling him back into the water with the stringer but it flung him off up into the bow of the boat. Any other kind of snake would have just climbed out over the side but cottonmouth moccasins are very aggressive and have the confidence that comes with being deadly poisonous. Moccasins will run at you if you are between them and the water they are trying to get to. It is prudent to keep your

eye on the uphill bank while working down the edge of the pond or river with a fishing pole.

Ross Allen down at Silver Springs participated in anti-venom research which yielded a fairly good injection for the bites of crotalids (rattlesnakes) but it doesn't work very well for moccasins (cotton mouths and the much smaller copperheads) so it is best not to let them bite you, and Momma had that in mind when that snake started coming aft to resume his swallowing project. She tried two or three licks with the paddle but there were too many fishing poles and seats in the way to get a clear shot.

She thought about trying to paddle to the bank so she could deal with the son of a bitch in a situation more to her liking, but trying to hit him with the paddle had angered the snake and alerted him to the source of his displeasure so he began to advance toward her in cycles of 2' of crawling and 6" of lunging in a strike sort of like a boxer loosening up for the knockout punch. He did not know the exact extent of who he was dealing with, though. Momma fumbled out her Game Getter (I'll come back to that) and shot his head off with the .410 barrel. Unfortunately she also shot a big hole in the bottom of the canoe, but she was able to get to the bank before too much water came in and then stuff her hat in the hole and paddle us all back to the landing. She left the snake but took her fish.

That Game Getter was an interesting gun. It was a long barreled pistol looking thing made by Marble's Safety Axe Co., Gladstone, Michigan. It broke like a shotgun and had two barrels and a little doohickey on the hammer that selected which barrel shot when you pulled the trigger. The top barrel was .22 long rifle and the bottom was .410 shotgun (originally .44/40 shot but most had been converted to 2-1/2" .410). It was the favorite gun for bird collecting and it was an ornithologist who gave that one to my mother when she was a girl.

She did not like to shoot the .410 barrel because the kick hurt her hand but she used the .22 barrel all the time for shooting everything she needed to shoot. The little gun had a folding wire stock and when she was hunting squirrels she unfolded it so she could shoot straight, but when it was a possum in the chicken house she just poked the barrels through the wire and nailed him with the stock dangling. She killed several deer with her Game Getter when we were children and a bunch of snakes and a world of hogs both tame and wild. She also shot quail on the ground out of the window of the car with the .410 barrel... she lined them up and always killed five or six at the time.

Those were the old days when people were different about game laws and laws in general. Game getters and all folding stock shotguns were outlawed by the BATF in the early '30s with a sweeping law intended to keep Al Capone and them from robbing banks with sawed off shotguns and machine guns or something. Getting caught with that Game Getter would have landed my mother in Camp Cupcake for a long time but she didn't know that and they didn't know she had it. Someone busted the window out of her Volkswagen in 1956 and stole it so that was that.

My mother fixed the hole in the bottom of the canoe with a piece of tin and some roofing tar put on the outside and through fastened to a block of wood on the inside

with some little nails. Before she did that she consulted with her Yankee uncle who insisted that she send it back to Old Town, but her patch outlasted the rest of the boat which was replaced by the Lone Star about 1955.

My youngest sister was out scratching around in the long manure pile the other day and dug up that patch... intact. Good galvanized tin and a cypress block. I have it in my artifact cabinet right now. Some day some descendent will be poking through all that junk and wonder what the hell that thing is and what the significance of it is. Maybe I'll staple this story to it.

Oh yeah, short-manure is dried cow and horse manure from the pasture. The rain has worked on it and rinsed out a lot of the nutrition but it is good to enhance the tilth of sandy soil. People used to follow a wagon around in the pasture and throw the cow plops up into the back with pitchforks. Children were expected to participate in this work. That's how I discovered what a most satisfactory whop up side of the head one can make with an overhand throw with a green mule cupcake.

So Jane and I moseyed down one of the boat trails which generations of knowledgeable people have kept open on their way to and from the many little honey holes in the lake. Most people just put in and go out to the middle of the lake where it is too deep for lily pads. It is pretty good particularly if you cast up alongside the weeds but that place is only maybe 75 acres of the lake and the whole thing is thousands of acres and there are many little deep holes where (I guess) limesinks and stuff are under the water. The fish thrive in the weeds all over the lake and hang out in the clear holes to socialize, I imagine.

Anyway, it is not only worth the trouble to learn the boat trails but interesting as well. I advise you to take a good paddle and a big jug of water before you adventure forth on your exploration because it is real hard to figure out where you are and the trails follow the same kind of logic a cow uses while she is walking across a pasture from one place to another spreading those shorts... you might have to wander to the west for five miles to get half a mile's worth of south and all those little islands look exactly alike. If you decide to land on one of those islands be aware that I have never seen any poison ivy anywhere as healthy as on the islands of Lake Iamonia.

Lake Iamonia has some big alligators, too. There are a bunch of them. I guess because it is so hard to get to most of the lake... particularly along the swampy edge of the whole thing... those alligators are not all that used to people and boats. You know Wm. Bartram in *Travels in Georgia and Florida* said the alligators who weren't used to people were not afraid of boats and he was scared of them.

I don't know if Jane is scared of them or not but you know how, if a boat with a fairly long waterline is trimmed right, you can steer it by shifting your weight? Well, when we approached one of those alligators in the trail, somehow, the boat urged over to the off side all by itself without me having to do anything to the tiller at all. The alligator wouldn't even move until we got real close and then he would back slowly down. Jane's neck would get about 2" shorter as we passed.

You know, if someone was to decide it was time to end it all and none of the conven-

tional means of doing so appealed and Dr. Kervorkian was still in Camp Cupcake, I can't think of a more adventurous way to do it than to mosey down one of the boat trails of Lake Iamonia until you saw an alligator with a head about 5' long and just get out of the boat and dog paddle around for a little while. It wouldn't be like one of these young women who take the pills over and over again... it would be a one shot project sort of like Momma and the Game Getter.

The place where we were heading was just a little wide place in the trail where we

had had some luck the fall before. Lake Iamonia had been mostly dried up for ten years prior to summer before last and when it came back in the spring of '03 all the fish spawned in the weedless water like they had a racial memory of what joy really was. There was so much fry in the water all over the lake that it looked like the clear water was alive... and when the weeds came back all those baby fish hid and prospered.

Then the summer of '04 came and the speckled perch appeared in the clear part by the boat ramp in pure throngs but they were real small and thin until the fall came. Then they were still small but not thin and fishermen were the ones thronging. One of the fishermen was a woman in a red Gheenoe with an old 9.9 Johnson. She was pulling those specks in like a machine. We watched her while we caught our supper (small specks fried whole are a delicacy) every day. She was throwing all the fish back. We finally saw her to talk to at the ramp and I had to, like the pedant I am, explain to her that there weren't any big specks in the lake yet and there was no point to catching the little ones in hope of something better.

She opened her live box and pointed down inside. "I ain't after specks," she said. "I am trying to catch me a jack," and sure enough there was a good sized jack (chain pickerel, *Esox niger*) in the live box.

"I always thought they were too bony to eat," said me.

"They are if you don't know how to fix them," she replied, opening the door of her car. "But if you do, ain't no better eating fish in the world and there are still some big ones in this lake. You know they ain't worried by drought and shallow water. They just hide in the weeds until the lake comes back. I try to catch me one for my supper every day if these damned little specks will let me. You

know ain't nothing goes better with a glass of chardonnay than a filet of jack. Have a nice day."

"How do you fix them?" I asked but she had already slammed the door of her Toyota and was gone to fix her jack.

So Jane and I slid into the hole and Jane was already fishing before I cut the old Martin off and she was pulling in a speckled perch before I could get situated. By the time I got him into the live box she was pulling in another one. All I could do was stow fish and catch minnows out of the bucket. Jane caught 11 good-sized (1/2lb or so) speckled perch, two big (3/4 pound) fly bream, and two good jacks (about a pound and a half apiece)... a nice mess of fish and a delight to the eyes of starving people. When we decided to go back the old Martin hadn't even cooled off enough to have to twiddle Mr. Tillotson's tally-whacker... cranked on idle with half a pull of the rope.

Guess what? When we got to the ramp that jack woman was pulling out and I finally got to ask her how to fix a jack. "You filet them like a normal fish and then cut across the fillets every half an inch almost to the skin. That way the grease can get in there and cook the bones and make them edible. You know cooking is what makes sardine's bones edible. Have a nice day."

Jane and I ate the jacks and fed the bream and specks to a bunch of children. You ought to see a three-year-old baby eat a bream as wide as her head. It is in the nature of children to be cautious of bones... of course, they get mighty greasy and wind up with crumbs all over them. We didn't have any chardonnay but we did have a big jug of "red rose" cheerleader wine left over from coast house week which I had bought to try to keep the damned guests out of my good wine collection... didn't work.



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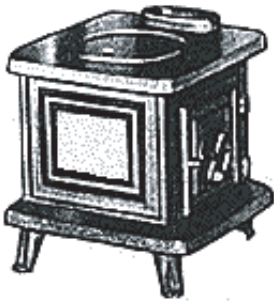
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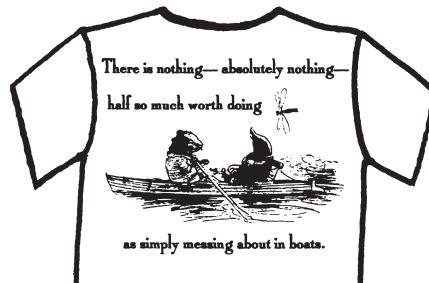
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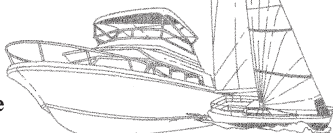
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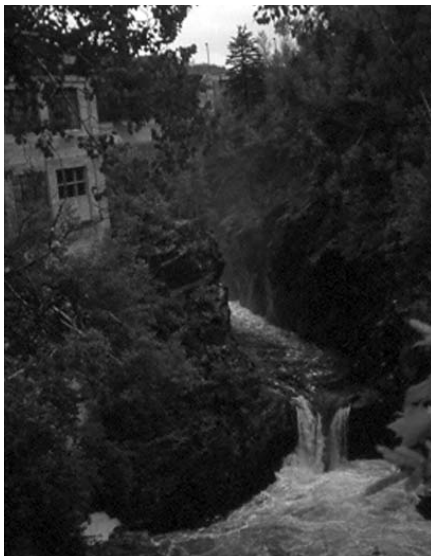
Friday, June 17: Well in advance we knew that the dam and the power plant were but a short paddle downstream. Soon, in the misty morning light, we could see the obstacle ahead, a squat gray building with a catwalk at its base, a catch boom to collect loose logs with a chain, and numerous "Keep Out" signs. We began a long portage on the river-left dirt road, full of puddles. A couple of power plant employees wearing hard hats stood outside the building drinking coffee. They offered minimal information, except to comment on the lousy weather.

To maximize his chances, Mike sized up the situation like an army field general. As he spoke I thought of the Civil War Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest's maxim, "Get there first with the most men" or, for those who contend the Tennessean was semiliterate, "Get there fustest with the mostest." Like military campaigns and battles, canoeing expeditions, successful ones that is, boil down to logistics, personnel, weather conditions, and time to execute the plans or, if need be, to fall back on contingency options. Emulating General Forrest, Mike grasped the optimal strategy and struck quickly. Two possibilities were rejected. The first, an indeterminate portage along the road for another mile or so to begin thrashing through jungly growth to an unknown put-in, made no sense. Likewise, it would have been insane to launch fully loaded canoes just below the dam. In his divide-and-conquer approach, Mike split the difference. Should the first plan fail, there would be two or three contingency options.

We would carry the canoes past the dam and power plant and then lower them down a steep, wooded cliff into the canyon for the put-in. The gear would be transported a quarter-mile farther down the road and then carried down to the water's edge for reloading. Mike described the ordeal of carrying the packs, kitchenware, and food boxes to the river below as "harder to climb back up than to go down."

As we continued our five or more carries I could not resist remarking, "Here we are, showing the grit and determination that built the British and French empires in North America!" After this tiring and time-consuming initial stage, we assembled on a table

Below the power plant, Grand Falls plunges into the gorge.



Canoeing New Brunswick's Nepisiguit River - 3

The Trip That Wouldn't Give an Inch

By Richard E. Winslow III

For Mike Patterson, Shauna Stuber, and Larry Totten, great river-running leaders and best friends, who led me down the Nepisiguit

rock atop the 100' high bluff in order to lower the canoes, one by one, to the water's edge. I glanced down into the gorge carved out by the rush of fast water over the rock, nature's patient work of thousands of years. A waterfall, appropriately named Grand Falls, plunged down the narrow chasm just below the power plant.

Handling the rope, Larry slid the canoes, one by one, down the steep slope of greasy mud, loose rocks, and clinging trees



Either portage or face arrest! Numerous signs above the dam order canoeists and snoopers to get off the river at this point.

No swan diving allowed. A table rock affords a vista of the gorge below the dam.



that prevented a precipitous slide. At a mid-point tree Mike and Tim stopped each canoe and then carefully positioned it for a final drop to others waiting below. Our canoeing expedition had become a mountaineering exercise. I felt as if I were in a Steve McQueen escape film.

Three of us, less agile and less confident than the rest, held onto a standing rope to brace ourselves in the event of a fall. For maximum safety, Larry clipped me in with a carabiner as I rappelled down, mud spattering my clothes and camera. In mountaineering lingo, my descent required two pitches to the rough, ledgy canoe put-in. Thanks to deft handling of the painters, the canoes went in the water one by one and each of the canoeists moved off quickly to free up space for the others in the tight launch area.

Finally underway, Larry and I picked up the fast water in a forward rush down the beautiful gorge lined with crags. This place seemed straight out of a fairy tale, an enchanted home of the gods. I wished that this magical passage would not end. Within a short time, however, we spotted Mike on river left starting to load packs into waiting canoes. "I feel like I'm running a delicatessen," Mike said as we drew near. "Who wants what?" he asked as he attempted to figure out which pack went into which canoe. As heavy rains resumed we beached for lunch at the first available gravel bar.

After a few surprise rapids in Class II water, we noticed a bent-out-of-shape aluminum canoe abandoned on the shoreline, evidently a victim of too many broaches. We finally arrived at the Turtle Trail campsite, featuring an artistic sign of an idealized turtle. Directly across the river was an identical sign, perhaps marking a snowmobile route.

Despite the utterly wretched weather conditions, Mike would not let himself or his friends go hungry. His beef stroganoff and vegetables were excellent, with wine to wash it down. I was pleasantly surprised that we hadn't received cold food for supper, cheese and crackers, fruit and cookies, to eat in our tents. In my days as a trip camp counselor I occasionally had resorted to that solution, albeit reluctantly, for my young charges.

"Guess what?" Mike said. "I was going to bake a cake." He has already done enough

Downriver campsite or bust! Underway through the last section of the canyon



for us, I thought to myself. Pausing a second or two, Mike continued, "But I left the cake mix at home." He had set us up perfectly with another of his jokes. We all smiled.

Talk under the kitchen fly usually centered on faulty gear, a close call during the day's paddle, trips taken in the past, comparisons among rivers, and trips planned for the future. "The trouble is that if you retire too early," someone remarked, "you have no money. If you retire too late, your health may be gone." Whatever the situation, wealth, health, bad weather, or all three, we looked ahead toward next year's river adventure.

Seventh Day

Saturday, June 18: On our last day on the river, the Nepisiguit would not let us go easily. We entered a long section of Class III whitewater, the Chain of Rocks Rapids, with the rain-swollen river picking up added power as it swept down a tangle of ledges, boulders, and hung-up logs protruding at wild angles. At river left and center was the fiercest gray-white water, the black ledges resembled withering, half-submerged snakes. This section would have offered Steve McQueen and his stuntmen a wild ride if even their canoes could have remained upright.

Mike and Larry decided to line the canoes on river right. Even this route amounted to an ordeal of slippery rocks, chutes that often pinched the canoe passage, and jagged land points. The riverscape required a most skillful handling of the painters to swing the canoes, often including a step into knee-deep water.

I knew my physical limits. Mike and Larry did, too, so they assigned me to a temporary job as expedition photographer. The others worked like Volga boatmen, slaving away to keep the heavily loaded canoes from rolling over. I shot the scene, my supposedly waterproof camera jamming at times in the rain. I hiked along most gingerly, planting my feet on level rock as anything on an angle would have meant an instant slip. Here and there patches of soil provided both firm footing and space for low blueberry bushes which awaited warm weather and sunshine to ripen their still-green berries. The shrubs got

me reminiscing about some previous Canadian canoeing trips later in the growing season. On those expeditions I enjoyed luscious berries during remote bushwhacks where very few parties ever came through, let alone harvested the fruit.

After nearly an hour of the most intense effort, the lining was over and everyone was soaked but safe. We jumped into our canoes in calmer water and soon reached our take-out and our vehicles.

The Nepisiguit had fully lived up to its Mi'kmaq name, "the river that dashes roughly along," a formidable, worthy stream in every respect. If they were interested, the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), Outward Bound, Navy SEALs, Army Rangers, or Marine boot camp guides and drill instructors could come here for their training and not be disappointed. I once attended a slide presentation given by some friends about their northern Quebec canoeing expedition, they called it, "The trip that wouldn't give an inch." We certainly had experienced another such saga here.

I have often pondered the meaning of Lionel Terray's title for his mountaineering memoir, *Les Conquérants de l'inutile* (in English, *Conquistadors of the Useless*). Terray, a French Alpinist who had made many worldwide first ascents, ultimately died for his passion in a 1965 climbing accident. Terray's family and others all along had considered his devotion to mountaineering as little more than a fool's errand, a waste of energy in pursuing a worthless, pointless lifestyle. Terray was contemptuous of his critics and became a conqueror of mountains, a courageous explorer who proudly unfolded his tricolor flag on summits where no one had gone before.

Concerning the Nepisiguit River expedition, I suppose others might dismiss our descent of this magnificent waterway, suggesting that the frittered-away time and money could have been much better spent. They are entitled to their opinions, which our party heartily ignores.

Contrary to Terray's somewhat cryptic book title, we had been "conquistadors of the meaningful," canoeing the ancient routes by which the Native Americans (and eventually

Europeans) had explored the vast, watery-veined North American continent. Their heroic pioneering travels live on today in the vicarious reenactments by millions of recreational paddlers, dipping their blades in the same waters to follow Champlain, Mackenzie, and many others on these same lakes and rivers.

The Nepisiguit is waiting for you. We'll meet at the put-in.

Practical Information

For those intending to descend the Nepisiguit, experienced paddlers, coupled with strong leadership, should encounter moderate difficulty. I must emphatically emphasize that this rugged river is not to be taken lightly.

An excellent map, Nepisiguit River and Lake System (in French, Le Réseau des Lacs et de la Rivière Nepisiguit), is essential.

For more information, contact:

Mike Patterson, 192 Congress St., Belfast, ME, USA 04915, (207) 338-3932.

Larry Totten, 21 Millstone Dr., W. Bath, ME USA 04530, (207) 443-9697.

For local Bathurst information and various Nepisiguit River and Mount Carleton Provincial Park services and contacts:

Meredith Caissie, Tourism Manager, City of Bathurst Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, 850 Ste. Anne St, Bathurst, New Brunswick CANADA E2A 6X2, (506) 548-0410, Fax (506) 548-0406, www.bathurst.ca

No pep talk is needed to break away from the rapids and head for the take-out, a change of clothes, and hot food.



Slippery when wet. Lining the Chain of Rocks Rapids section in the rain demands backbreaking and dangerous work.



After breakfast next morning we rowed for about an hour, I went ashore after water, and Ben went after ducks, he killed one and wounded another. We then sailed to the main wharf at Orange Mills and found that the post office was a half mile back. We went back a short distance in the boat and went ashore. I went to the office and Ben got dinner ready. The office was in a private dwelling around which were many flowers in blossom. There was a lemon tree with large fruit upon it and also in blossom. There were no letters for us and I left an order. Close to where our fire was the skeleton of an alligator, out of the jaw of which I got a few teeth. The place consisted of five houses covering a distance of a mile in length.

We then left for Federal Point, five miles below, also on the east side, we made it about sunset. There are seven houses along the shore, for a mile the land is not more than seven feet above the water, one man had about three acres of banana plants. Next morning we started and rowed for a point about seven miles distant. We landed close to the point on which was a deserted plantation, around the partially torn down house stood some wild orange trees loaded with fruit. Some of the trees bore a sweet orange but the peel was very thick. We fired at some quails but missed.

The strong wind came up and we set sail, but hardly got under way when the wind died away and we ran ashore. Ben went upon the bank, and came running back saying, there was a flock of quails up there. We took our guns and went for them, I shot at them on the run and missed, I could see no sign of shot striking anywhere. Ben followed and shot both barrels at them on the ground and killed seven. They were very fat. The wind is from all directions and it is cloudy again. We got about sixty of the sweet oranges.

Sunday the twenty-fourth, went hunting first thing, I shot a partridge, woodpecker and a dove and then got breakfast ready. Ben returned with six greys and a woodpecker. A short time after breakfast three crackers came along, and we talked for about two hours. They found out who we were and we, who they were. The place was owned by a rich man who died leaving it to his heirs, who by the looks have never been near it.

They left and we heard a pounding over to the house; we took our guns and went over

Trip to Florida and Back

From Providence, Rhode Island

Part 5

to see what they were up to; they were tearing off boards and putting them in their boat. Before leaving one went up a tree and shook off a large bag full of oranges. We then thought we would have some, so I went up the tree and tossed them to Ben, who laid them on the ground. They were very large and beautiful, and we got about two bushels.

At about that time came up a strong west wind which lasted about two hours, the waves rolled in so as to oblige us to push off and hitch to a post a short distance from shore and let her swing. We shipped little water for the amount of pitching and rolling she did. If there had been any reeds out beyond us it would have been no trouble to us. The night is cloudy.

Monday went into the woods early. as usual, they were mostly live oak. We had not gone far when my attention was called to an animal walking along the same way as we were, and not more than twenty yards from Ben. I asked him what it was. He said it was a pig. I told him it was not, and to shoot, but he did not and so I shot and killed it. It was a possum good and fat, of about twelve pounds weight and of a grayish color, with a tail like a rat. We saw no other game and returned and skinned it.

In preference to the other mode, after which we started, we pushed along the shore to Tico. It consists of about nine houses, a depot and blacksmith shop. The cars run to St. Augustine fifteen miles distant, fare each way two dollars. We saw the train come in, it consisted of a locomotive, tender, two common horse cars and a freight car about the same size, In fact a short time before they had used horse and wooden rails, I undertook to send a letter but there were none in the place, and had none the last two days. It rained at intervals, there was a store in the place. Ben asked if anybody rode in the cars, he was answered that the Yankees did.

We left and rowed across the cove and landed on a low bank, at which place we

stopped for the night. A little before dark a rowboat navigated by two women, one at the stern and the other at the oars, they looked like witches, with their hoods drawn over their heads and the clay pipes clinched between their teeth. The boat was loaded with moss, for which they had traded, their names were Mrs. Lane and Mrs. Taylor, they got most of their living by gathering moss and finding alligator's eggs which they hatch, and sell the young ones alive. We had quite a chat with them. One of their questions was as follows, "Did ye find right smart er game?"

Next morning we rowed awhile but the wind was against us and we put in. I found the upper part of an alligator's head but there were no teeth in it. I put it in my box to carry home. The bank is nice and green and about three feet above the water, there are some very fine Magnolia trees here, some of which are three feet through and of good height. It seems to have been a camping ground for a great many. It has been cloudy all day and sprinkled at intervals.

Wednesday morning we started for Picolata going along easily. At one of the places we stopped Ben went up into the lots and shot a quail. There were some Negroes digging sweet potatoes that were planted last August, and they did not yield more than thirty five bushels to the acre. The day is very pleasant.

We arrived at Picolata about four, it is forty-four miles from Jacksonville, and on the east side, there are about six houses in the place, one of which is used for a store and post office and a couple of young orange groves. Upon the wharf sat three darkeys fishing, they had spent three hours in catching about a pound of pond shiners, and did better than I expected. for they had a third of one for a bait. The shore here is about seven feet high.

Next morning about nine the wind sprang up in our favor, but the tide had gone out and we had a good job to get her off which we did by laying boards down and rowing her along. The wind was strong and we went along gayly. We steered for a point on the other side of the river and sailed to within four miles of Green Cove Springs, but could not cross, the wind being against us. The shore here is about fourteen feet high. I spent the afternoon in reading and writing

Riding out a squall Sunday afternoon three miles above Picolata.



Friday morning we had a hard pull but arrived at the place a little after nine, we landed at a saw mill which was not in use. I went up to the post office and got three letters for myself and one for Ben. There are two fine hotels in the place, in front of one are the springs, which are fenced in, and they are divided by high fences into three apartments, two for the ladies and gentlemen who visit, the park, which is private property. The other is for those who do not wish to pay anything for bathing. In passing by the odor of sulphur is plainly discernable, according to the advertisements the springs afford three thousand gallons a minute at a temperature of seventy-eight degrees, but I think a thousand gallons is plenty for it.

This place is on the west side of the river thirty miles from Jacksonville, of about two hundred and seventy-five standing inhabitants. Most of the houses are kept white, by either paint or white wash. There is a billiard hall and sample room here. I saw some fine looking people here from North.

We got some provisions and the wind being strong, we set sail, making for a point on the east side. We passed Magnolia, simply a hotel and a dwelling on the west. About two it became so rough that we put in, started a fire and baked some beans. About the time they were done we had a thunder storm, we took the beans and went in. It blew hard, but in two hours it was all over, and we started a fire and had hasty pudding and syrup for supper. They have no black molasses at places along the river.

Next morning a gentle breeze favored us and we set sail but did not go far, for the wind shifted to the opposite direction and we put ashore. The water here is very shallow, cows feed a quarter of a mile from shore, the bank is a full fifteen feet high, covered with live oak. There are more than a thousand coots in a flock, the water is black with them, but we could not approach within shooting distance.

At one we started to row, for the next more than five miles distant the water is as smooth as a mirror, to our right is Juliton Creek. When about half way across, Ben's oar broke but we managed to use it. After reaching the point we continued to push along the shore, and I shot a coot on the fly from the back end. We landed about half a mile from the store at Mandarin, the bank is about four feet high upon which stand some nice oak, from which hangs the most handsome moss I have seen, some of it is eight feet long. I went up to the store, but it was no great sight.

Sunday, January thirty, when we went to bed it was starlight and about two it commenced to rain and ceased about ten. Mandarin is situated on the east side of the Mandarin.

river, fifteen miles from Jacksonville. There are about a dozen houses fronting on the river, and half dozen or so in back. The bank is about twelve feet high, and the water is shoal for a long way out. On the east side of the main wharf there is a walk four feet wide, built up on stakes not in the mud extending more than thirteen hundred feet. Connected with it are walks from the houses, and wharfs.

Mrs. Stowe's house is the first along this walk. It is built of tight boards, a story and a half high, and is about hidden by three live oaks and orange trees, among which oats were sown and are now about six inches high. In one of the gardens I saw a tea rose bush in blossom, and a large bed of geraniums. There is a school house which is also used for a church. I saw a fence over back three logs high, each log about a foot through.

Monday night the wind has blown from the northwest, cleared and cold all day. Tuesday night, it was pleasant all day. The first house to the east is a boarding house, kept by Mr. Webb, price eight dollars per week. Two of the boarders went out hunting and killed a duck. They ran ashore at our camp on the way back and gave us the duck.

Between here and the entrance to Dry Lake, to the west, the beam of a steamer, sunk by a torpedo during the war, is to be seen just above the water. Two of the boarders came and spent the evening with us, and let us take a New York Tribune and Herald.

Wednesday, still at Mandarin, a little after nine, two of the fellows from the boarding house came down and Ben went a hunting with them, but it commenced to rain in an hour or so, and they came back, Ben declaring that, he would not go hunting again while there. It rained until two.

Through the compactness of my memoranda I missed an occurrence which is this. In the evening of Monday, a sailboat towing another ran ashore at our camp. It was navigated by four coons, one a man about forty, two three and four, boys not over fourteen years old, and none of the whole party were related, although the boys called their older Uncle Jack. The water was not deep enough to run their boat to the bank so they had to wade. Three pulled off their shoes for the purpose, but the other waded ashore, going clear over his shoes. When up to the fire he pulled them off and dried them. They were moss gatherers and a lazy looking set. Their dog came ashore when supper was ready and ate with them. It consisted of baked sweet potatoes.

In the morning I came out, they were wrapped up in canvas and about as close to the fire as they could cleverly get and not get burned. The fire was well out, and they too lazy to get any more wood. I started it up and

was soon very comfortable, the boys were goading all the time and I told them to shut up which they did.

The old fellow sent them to the store after a pint of rum and plug of tobacco. He had rather have rum than meat, they had had nothing but potatoes for the last week. The dog looked comical grinding away at the end of a half baked potato. They left about ten, and a lazier lot of beings I never saw. I should suppose by the looks that the old man had brought the boys with him to do the work, and that the boys had come to have an easy time!

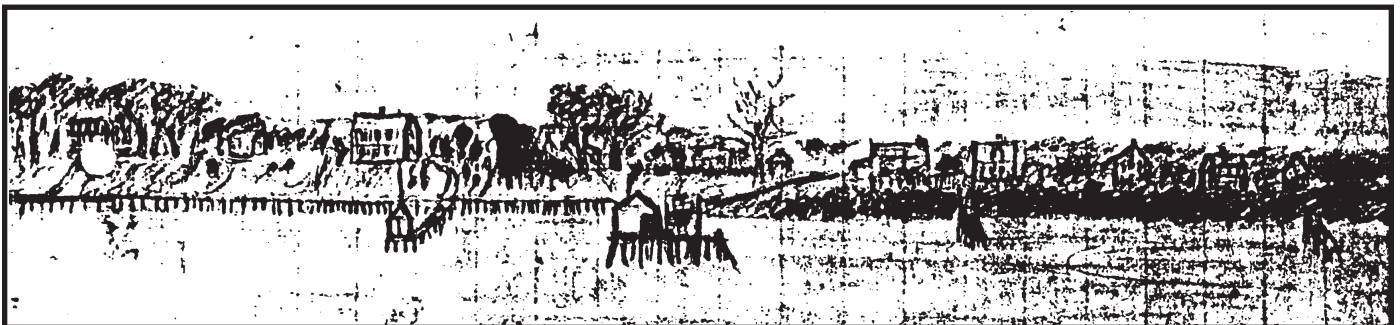
Thursday, it was cold and windy all day, the boarders were around the same as usual. About four, a white fellow about twenty years old ran ashore with his dugout at our camp, it being too rough for him to proceed. He had started from Juliton Creek where he was at work on a sunken steamer, and bound to Jacksonville. He lived down at Yellow Bluff and was the strongest looking fellow I had seen. He stayed all night sleeping side of the fire wrapped up in a blanket.

We cut some wood into small pieces to start a fire with in the house if it should need it. About twelve Ben waked up, which soon waked me, it was hailing and pretty cold. Ben lit the candle and then the pine which he laid in the kettle and then turned in. I put my nose into the moss to get rid of the smoke. It warmed us up nicely. We had three more fires during the rest of the night with equally good affect.

The next morning when we came out we were black as charcoal peddlers, a black specimen of humanity! There was considerable hail along the shore, our visitor left about ten. I took a walk up to the store. In one of the yards was a man working on his house, with his overcoat on and the collar turned up to keep his ears warm, and a pair of gloves, but a few feet off were roses in bloom, and peas in blossom. In the afternoon James Tickle, brought me down seven different kinds of birds' heads, which I boiled and cleaned and put in with my collection of the same kind. We thought we would sleep by the fire tonight, so we collected a large pile of moss and layed it on boards and bushes, close to the fire, then layed on a large stump which burned nicely all night.

Saturday the day is pleasant, Areson and Tickle have gone a deer hunting intending to stay until Sunday evening, I took a walk over to McHaughtons who keeps a store, at which place they had started to build a wharf into deep water, but the shore end rotted down before they got the other end finished. I asked how they got the stakes so firmly in the sand, and was told that they worked them in. I saw one wharf in course of construction and the ends of stakes had not been pounded upon.

(To Be Continued)



After living in New York City, Connecticut, and other parts of the East Coast for about 14 years, in 1974 I returned to Chicago to care for my elderly parents. While on the East Coast I had sailed a small, lapstrake, dinghy extensively in the Long Island bays and off Warren's Point, Rhode Island. Since I had left the dinghy on the estate of a friend in Quogue, Long Island, I wanted a boat for sailing in Lake Michigan. In cooperation with a friend, we purchased a fiberglassed wooden Snipe made about 1950. The Snipe proved fun to sail in Lake Michigan. Although only 15.5' long, it was fast and, if properly managed, could handle about any sailing breeze and wave conditions that were common to the lake. I developed a high esteem for the Snipe class.

Eventually, I obtained sole ownership of the Snipe and, when taking care of my parents became a full-time task about 1986, gave the boat to a sailing museum. After my mother died in 1991 I retrieved the dinghy from Quogue and began to sail it in Lake Michigan. I kept the boat on a trailer on my front lawn, launched it in the Jackson Park "Inner Harbor," and eventually sailed into the lake out of the "Outer Harbor." The dinghy was not as fast as the Snipe, but it was designed for Great Lake sailing and was seaworthy.

On returning from a sail, it was my custom to stop at the Jackson Park Yacht Club to avail myself of the porta-potty that they had on a wharf. One fall afternoon in 2004 my curiosity was aroused by a small sailboat on a trailer parked on a hill behind the club building. On inspecting the rig I found the boat to be a wooden, fiberglassed Snipe. On its side was painted "9106." The canvas cover had been blown off the boat and the cockpit was filled with leaves, twigs, old bottles, and other debris. The boat appeared abandoned.

I asked Al Thompson, the steward of the club, if he knew anything about the Snipe. He said that it had belonged to a student at the University of Chicago (UofC) and about five or more years before had been severely damaged in a storm. The student apparently then had abandoned it. Al had put the hull, mast, boom, and other parts on the trailer, and had parked everything on the hill. The student had never returned. Al did not know his name or how he could be reached. He said that the club was interested in disposing of the boat and trailer and might be willing to sell everything.

I did not really need another sailboat, but had so much enjoyed the first Snipe I had sailed that I was interested in this one.

Al, Betty and Art wheel "9106" down to the parking lot.



An Old Snipe Goes Home

By Bradford Lyttle



"9106" tucked away out behind the yacht club.

Therefore, I inspected it closely. Missing were the sails, daggerboard, and tiller. The forestay was broken, half of the cross stay spreader was broken, several of the buoyancy bags were punctured, and the top of the rudder was crushed. However, the hull appeared to have been well-made and did not seem to be suffering from rot. The trailer, though rusted in places, was exceptionally sturdy. It had 20" wheels, whose tires seemed not to be rotted. In general, probably because the boat had been sitting on the top of a hill, exposed to the drying effects of wind, wooden and rubber parts seemed to have weathered rather than rotted.

Because I wanted the missing parts, I made an initial attempt to find the boat's owner through the University of Chicago's sailing club. No one knew anything about the boat or its owner. Also, since "9106" had a United States Sailing Association decal on its hull, I wrote to the USSA. No reply. And I consulted the Snipe Association website. On its bulletin board I posted a message asking if anyone knew anything about the owner of "9106." No response.

I arranged with Al to purchase the Snipe and trailer and left a deposit of \$25 to hold everything over the winter of 2004-2005. In the spring of 2005 I made a more thorough

search for the owner through the UofC sailing club. Again nothing turned up. I was told that the club had been inoperative for several years and that a building where some of its equipment had been stored had been torn down. All leads through the sailing club seemed to have reached a dead end.

Once again I returned to the Snipe Association website. It had been redesigned over the winter and a little search engine had been installed. I entered "9106" in the search engine and was surprised and pleased to find a message from someone who was looking for a Snipe with the "9106" hull number. I responded and received this reply:

"Dear Bradford: I'd about given up finding her. Please let me know her location. I'd surely appreciate it. "9106" was built by my dad in the 1950s while he worked for Gerber Boat Works on City Island (Bronx, New York). The boat was in my family until the early 1990s. I crewed for my dad when I was six years old until I went away to grad school in 1980. My sister crewed for him a bit but lost interest. By then my dad was no youngster so he sold her to a gentleman from Ohio for use by his son. The boat was never registered to SCIRA (the Snipe Association), thus it was never raced.

"My mom died unexpectedly and my dad has not been the same since. I conspired with my sisters to try to find the only other girl he loved, "9106" (*Bittersweet*) without his knowledge. My plan was to try to find her, make her seaworthy, and try to race with my dad either in a local New Jersey regatta or possibly the Snipe Master's Championships as a surprise.

"I am interested in bringing her back home. Ownership appears to be a bit in the gray area, as you've explained it. If indeed you are the "owner" and thus are able to do with her as you please, let me know what time and expense you've put into surveying her and if it is reasonable I will buy her from you. I'm sure my dad will be pleased to see her and sail her again, but both of us would agree that we'd rather see you take care of her and love her like we did than to see her rot on a trailer. Let me know what you think. Thank you, Art Margulies."

A day later Art Margulies sent me this message: "Brad, I cannot ask my dad too many questions about "9106" because it may give away my surprise. He did say he had put "9106" up for sale via an ad in the *Snipe Bulletin*. The ad was promptly answered by a gentleman from Cleveland, Ohio. He was willing to pay what my dad was asking and came to Lake Quassapaug, Connecticut, to look her over and purchased her. He said it

The team that brought "9106" home: Al, Betty, Art, and Brad.



was for his son. He was not interested in the go-fasts and my dad got the impression he was not into racing her, that she was going to be used to teach his son how to sail.

"My dad raced "9106" on Eastchester Bay off of Long Island Sound on the Bronx side of New York City, in Manhasset Bay off Port Washington off Long Island Sound, and finally at Lake Quassapaug in Woodbury, Connecticut. My dad traveled to regattas up and down the East Coast, first with my uncle as crew, then me, when I was six until I left New York for Oregon and grad school. He tried sailing with a variety of young crews at Lake Quassapaug but it was mentally and physically wearing him down (he was in his 60s at the time). So he put "9106" up for sale.

"If we could get her back somehow I know it would make him very happy to know that she was back in our family again. I hope to sail a regatta with him in her if I can refurbish her. I am very handy like him, I worked as a rigger in a marina for most of early life. I have built, refurbished, and refitted many wooden boats with all the skill he taught me as a skilled woodworker/boatbuilder. I do not care if "9106" is presently missing her centerboard, rudder, sails, etc. They were all built by my dad and I can build them again! The original daggerboard was stainless steel and weighed approximately 80lbs. It was too heavy for me to lift when I was six and Dad had to help me raise and lower it.

"When the Nationals were at Association Island in upstate New York, my dad and I decided to fabricate a centerboard out of sheet of 6061 aluminum utilizing the alternative shape allowed by the rules at that time (it weighed maybe 30lbs). The rudder was made with a plywood core and shaped to a parabola with balsa wood, then covered in Vectra cloth and epoxy resin. The tiller was homemade using pieces of aluminum. The cockpit was widened and the centerboard trunk was cut down, buoyancy bags were added, all to make her "self-rescuing/sail-away" after a capsizing. To bring her up to a minimum weight of 381lbs pounds I believe she carried approximately 5lbs of lead just forward of the trunk.

"I would love to see a photo of her, including one with her registration number routed into the keel plank, if possible. My prayers were answered with your email."

While we were discussing a price for the boat and trailer it occurred to me that the student probably had taken the missing parts to use on a different boat, not again on "9106." Since I did not know the student's name or where he had gone, I stopped looking for the parts.

Art proposed to pick up "9106" the weekend of May 6-8. Art and his fiancée, Betty, arrived with Betty's minivan early the morning of Friday, May 6. We breakfasted at a nearby restaurant, then went to the Jackson Park Yacht Club where Al was waiting for us. We further inflated the trailer's tires, people-handled the trailer down from its perch on the hill to the parking lot, tied on the mast, stored the boom, and attached a set of trailer lights. Finally, after the boat was securely on the trailer and the trailer lights were working, I led the van and trailer south on Stony Island Avenue to the ramp to 1-90 and waved Art and Betty on their way.

On May 8 I received this final email: "Brad: we arrived safe, sound, and exhausted. Thanks again for all your help from start to finish."



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The card you give to the Post Office only forwards 1st-class mail — not publications. You have to notify us of your new address directly.

This is the *Edward M. Cotter*, the Buffalo fireboat, also known as Engine #20. She was named after a firefighter and union president. She was originally named the *William S. Gratten*, launched in 1900 at Elizabeth, New Jersey. Her power was a coal-fired steam plant and she had much narrower stacks. She spent years doing routine firefighting duties until July 27, 1928. The *Gratten* was fighting a fire on an oil barge in the Buffalo River when the mooring lines burned through. The barge drifted across the river and hit the tanker *McColl*. The *McColl* exploded and a giant fireball engulfed the *Gratten*. The boilers eventually ran dry and blew up, causing the ship to burn to the waterline.

She was rebuilt at the Buffalo Dry Dock with a lower profile and new pumps and equipment. The *Gratten* stayed in this form until 1953. She was then converted to diesel power and renamed the *Edward M. Cotter*. One of *Cotter's* claims to fame is when she became the only fireboat to cross an international border to fight a fire. She and a Coast Guard cutter steamed for an hour to the Maple Leaf Mill in Port Colburn, Ontario. There she helped control a fire that had previously been out of control.

In the '70s and '80s she fought fires along the Buffalo waterfront, many unreachable by any other means. There was a push to give her landmark status in the '90s but the city fought it off. They were fearful that they would not be able to update or convert her if necessary. Then she came "under fire" for her operating expenses (typical of our local politicians' penny wise, pound foolish attitude that is still the norm in western New York today, in my correct opinion) and was taken out of service as an active fireboat.

She was kept "operational" to break up ice in and around the Buffalo River to prevent ice dams that occur and cause flooding. It turned out to be a lucky decision. As it turned out, the waterfront fire insurance rates went sky high without a fireboat. Thank you very much, Buffalo politicians. Penny wise anyone? The *Cotter* was "eventually" returned to active duty when this was learned. The local politicians here are slow

Winter icebreaking duty.



The Buffalo Fireboat

By Greg Grundtisch



on the uptake. I believe I'm right about that, too.

The *Cotter's* deck has numerous fire monitors and can send 15,000 gallons of water per minute. The turret platform at the stern can be raised and lowered with hydraulic lifts. She was recently overhauled at Port Weller Dry Dock and is in top shape. She could use a bit of paint here and there.

She still breaks ice in the Buffalo River once a week, or as needed. She is often open for public tours and is always present at waterfront festivities. An interesting thing to witness is that when she begins to pump water, you can actually see her drop down from all the water she can pump at once. Like she is in an indentation in the water.

The Buffalo area does not have too many interesting things left due to some poor

planning and very bad decisions, especially in regard to the waterfront. The *Cotter* is one that has been fortunate to remain and Buffalo is lucky to have her.

You can see the *Cotter* at her dock on the Buffalo River at the Ganson Bridge by the General Mills Plant. You can see her there most days. If there is an extra hand around they probably will give you a little tour. Or you can attend one of many Spring-Summer Events on the waterfront and tour the vessel then.

Some brief stats are; length 98'3", draft 10'10", top speed, 11.5mph, and a water stream of 600' and 15,000gal per minute. For some more info and some really nice photos, just Google buffalo fireboat, or *William M. Cotter*. You will find several interesting sites to browse.

The bow water cannon.

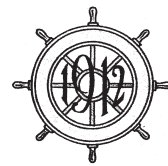


Winter icebreaking duty.



Mullins PRESSED STEEL BOATS

MULLINS PRESSED STEEL BOATS



The W.H. MULLINS COMPANY
-- SALEM, OHIO. U.S.A. --

Thanks to reader Burt Van Deusen we are able to follow up on earlier articles about Mullins Pressed Steel Boats with this cover and introductory pages from the 62-page Mullins 1912 catalog. Mullins cashed in on the surging popularity of the automobile and adopted automobile manufacturing technology to produce boats ideally suited to the arrival of the gasoline engine on the water.

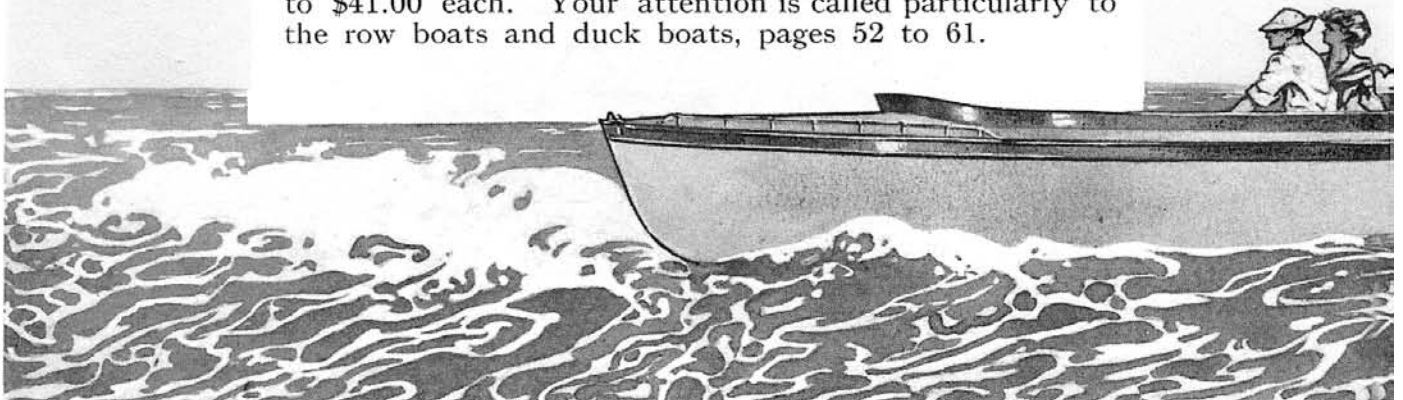
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THE MULLINS line for 1912 will consist of ten power boat models from 16 to 26 feet in length. Power plants from a three horse-power, single cylinder, two cycle engine to a 30 horse-power, four cylinder, four cycle engine. Designed by naval architects of national reputation, insuring perfect models, fast, seaworthy, safe. Built of steel like torpedo boats. Never leak, warp, dry out, waterlog, check or rot. Never requires calking or other numerous repairs so necessary to the life of the wooden boat. Equipped with Air-Tight Compartments, insuring absolute safety. One-Man Control, Mullins Silent Under-Water Exhaust—in fact, all of these launches, from the lowest to the highest in price, stand for **Mullins Quality** and possess the many exclusive features and advantages that have resulted in placing over 40,000 Mullins Pressed Steel Boats in all parts of the world.

For convenience, we divide this line into three types, as follows:

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Pages—35, 36, 37, 38		
Mullins Special Launches	{ 16 Ft., 3 H.P., 1 Cyl., 2 Cycle...	150.00
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	{ 18 Ft., 6 H.P., 2 Cyl., 2 Cycle...	265.00
Pages—39, 40, 41		
Mullins Automobile Launches	{ 20 Ft., 8 H.P., 2 Cyl., 2 Cycle...	550.00
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	{ 26 Ft., 30 H.P., 4 Cyl., 4 Cycle...	1,400.00
Pages—30, 31, 32, 33		

We also build a line of fine row boats and duck boats. Thousands of Mullins Pressed Steel Row Boats are now in use. We build both square stern and double-end models, from 11 to 16 feet in length, at prices ranging from \$24.00 to \$41.00 each. Your attention is called particularly to the row boats and duck boats, pages 52 to 61.





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Construction Explained It is of course, impossible to take all prospective boat buyers through our factory in person. We only wish we could, but as this is out of the question, the next best thing is to conduct you through our factory by a clear, concise and straight to the point description of our construction, making clear to you the wonderful advantages and many superior features we offer. We ask your co-operation and assistance and instead of "lending us your ear," lend us your imagination.

From now on, Mr. Boat-Buyer, imagine you are in the company of the writer, for I am going to take you through our factory as I have taken hundreds upon hundreds of customers before you. I am going to give you the same information and endeavor to impart to you the same thorough knowledge of this construction that you would get were you here in person.

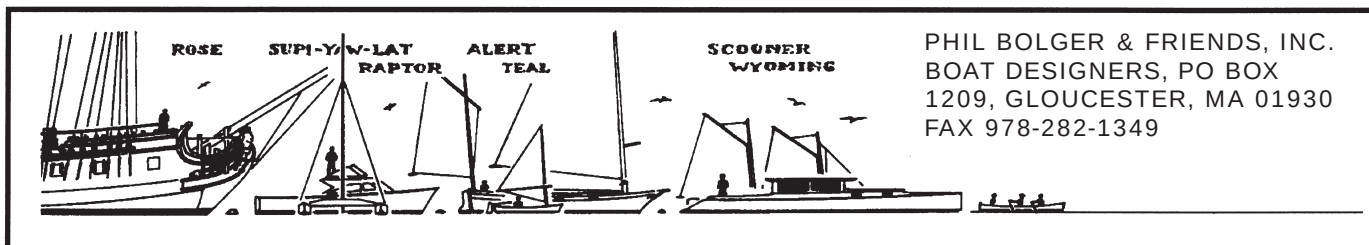
From now on, this conversation will be between you and the writer personally.

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FAX 978-282-1349

This little houseboat was designed for a lady who meant to use it as a weekend camp on a lake just out of the pond class. The design was in an old tradition. William Atkin did several of the genre for his Ideal Series of How-To-Build Designs for *Motorboating* magazine and I've just been looking at detailed plans with many photos of such a boat that Charles D. Mower designed for his own use in 1904. Mower, who was a prominent designer of oceangoing sail and power yachts and of winning racers, didn't disdain putting a lot of thought into this low-end design and obviously had a good time with it.

Bolger on Design Scow Houseboat

Design #481

Length 19'9" • Breadth 7'10" • Height 7'2"

All the designs mentioned were essentially houses that would float, as distinguished from boats with more or less cabin. The Atkin and Mower designs were typical

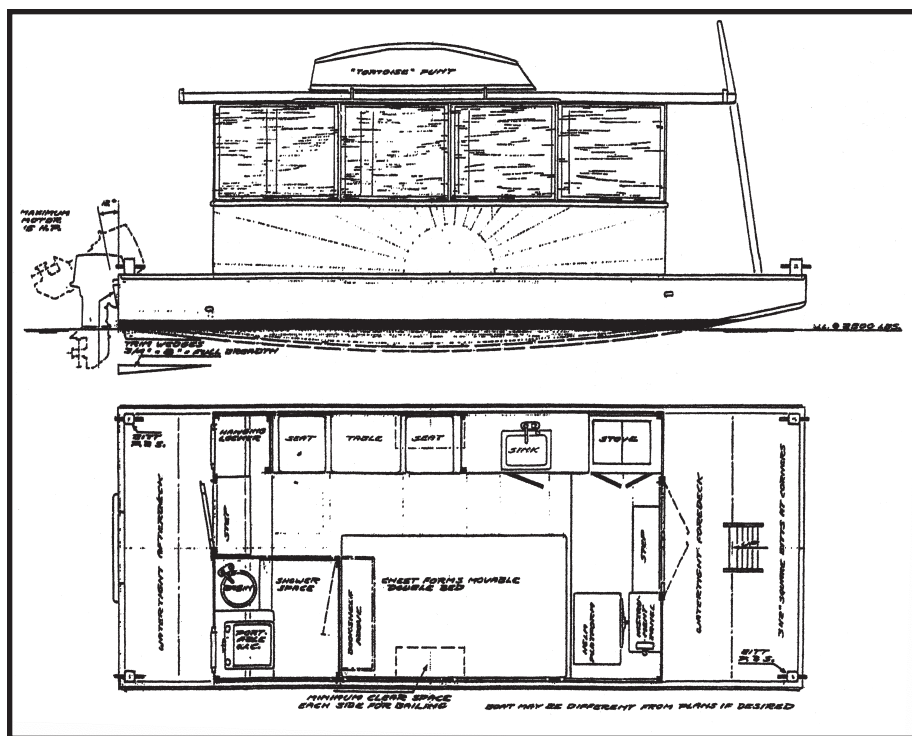
in that they were rectangular scows with no curves at all. The bow and stern of this type was raked enough to deflect small waves downward and to be towed, not very fast, without burying their bows. They weren't supposed to have power, though they sometimes had makeshift sailing rigs for shifting berth (waiting for a fair wind to the new berth), and as soon as outboard motors became available they were used in place of the towboat.

This design makes a little more concession to mobility by giving the bottom profile a fair sweep from end to end. The nominal prismatic coefficient is .66, quite high but still in the boat range and, in fact, a shape like this is easily driven up to 5kts or so. The plans show a built-in trim tab at the stern to allow her to go a little faster than that with the maximum recommended power of a 15hp two-stroke at the time the design was made. This improved performance under power has two drawbacks; the shape is more sensitive to fore-and-aft weight placement, and it's noisier in water that is not perfectly calm. The latter objection is mitigated by the ability of this type of hull to get into very small and shallow places where the water is always smooth. And if the splashing becomes really annoying, the boat can be swung broadside to the wind, when she'll be quieter than the rakedbow type.

The curved bottom is a stiffer shape to stand taking the ground on mud or sand. It's specified to be 1" thick plywood with heavy fiberglass sheathing and three external stringers. It will stand considerable abuse, short of sharp rocks, and its weight, with the buoyancy of the house carried out to the sides, gives her a respectable range of stability to stand off-center weights without danger. She's, of course, not fit for open water on account of the low bow, though she might make a short jump from one inlet to another on a dead calm forecast. I've been out off Miami when the Gulf Stream was glassy calm and one would be tempted to run across to Gun Key and beyond. Better not, though!

The boat on top is a Tortoise, which can be launched by simply sliding it over the side, hanging on end from its painter. It's designed to come down in the water right-side-up and dry and to be recovered the same way. For boats with a finish that discourages this maneuver, more shipshape davits or other hoists could be arranged. There's room on top for two of these punts, still leaving sunbathing space. A fixed ladder forward gives access to the top.

The house is 7'2" by 12'11" with 6'3" headroom. It's laid out for a couple with a decent double bed (it is a bed, movable, with cabinets under the mattress), a reasonably workable washroom, and a two-person dinette. This amount of space, which also lends itself to variations of arrangement, is the best excuse for such a design. I did not think that any attempt to make something on



these proportions look stylish would work, so I left it absolutely straightforward. It's well-ventilated through a double roof; nowadays we would insulate it better by lining the sides and ends with foam panels to make it habitable three seasons.

While this is a very economical and efficient way to get afloat in something livable, it's well to keep in mind that in the 21st century the presence of this kind of craft is resented in many places. They're thought to spoil the view and lead to a floating slum. Some ports simply prohibit their presence. One reason for making it effectively mobile is to allow frequent shifting of locations. One defense is to keep a fancy day racing sailboat or an antique speedboat, etc. alongside.

Plans of the Houseboat, our Design #481, are available for \$150 to build one boat, sent priority mail, rolled in a tube, from: Phil Bolger & Friends, P.O. Box 1209, Gloucester, MA 01930.

Why Epoxy and Paint Aren't Good Neighbors

(And What You Can Do About It)

By Dave Jackson

The growing popularity of wood/epoxy composite construction has done a great deal to stoke the resurgence of interest in wooden boats. The existence of numerous designs using this type of construction, both stitch-and-glue and strip-built, have made it feasible for many people not only to build boats, but boats of a sophistication and complexity that would not have been possible for them using traditional means.

Many of these composite designs are not only assembled using epoxy glues, but derive a good part of their structural strength from fiberglass or other structural fibers used to sheathe and protect the underlying wood or plywood. Even those designs that do not depend on fiber sheathing for strength are almost always coated with two or more coats of clear (unthickened) epoxy that act as a sealer and protect the surface of the underlying wood.

Unfortunately, even if you like the essentially clear finish that results, you can't stop there. So far as I am aware, nobody sells an epoxy coating that will not break down fairly soon when exposed to ultraviolet radiation (sunlight).

Mind you, this is not an overnight phenomenon. System Three's publication, *The Epoxy Book*, Page 18, for instance, states that epoxy degradation begins to be detectable after about six months of tropical sunlight on a horizontal surface, with total breakdown occurring after about 15 months. But while you need not hesitate to use your new boat or kayak for a month or two (if you just can't wait), some further finish does need to be applied to protect exposed epoxy surfaces from the sun's long-term affects.

The obvious answer is to apply an additional coating over the epoxy that contains a so-called UV inhibitor or otherwise accomplishes the same purpose. Thus, paints all afford a surface good UV protection, even though not specifically containing an

inhibitor, simply by virtue of the pigments they contain which physically block the sun's rays.

However, if you want to continue to see and enjoy the wood grain (after all, you did elect to build a wooden boat) a transparent over-finish leaving the wood surface visible, such as varnish, will be necessary. Just check the label to make sure the product you select has a UV inhibitor and remember that that coating will have to be renewed periodically and kept intact.

This is simple enough, but the real problem with applying paint or varnish over epoxy is that it sometimes doesn't dry, or if it does appear to dry, the bond between the top-coating and the epoxy is not as strong as it should be which may mean blistering, peeling, or other problems later. I wish I could tell you that I had a sure solution for this problem, but I don't. (If anyone does, please tell me, scraping off sticky paint is no fun). I have done some reading and I do have some ideas concerning what to do or avoid, but mostly I would like to bring this topic out into the open so if there is a sure-fire solution kicking around that I have not heard about someone will share it with me.

First, let's talk about the genesis of the problem. Epoxies cure by virtue of a chemical reaction. When the proper amounts of resin and hardener are mixed together they combine together to form a solid. Without getting into the chemistry (I couldn't even if I wanted to), certain essential and inescapable by-products of this reaction (referred to in some instances as amines) are formed and both continue to exist in the epoxy and/or rise to its surface.

These by-products, where present in sufficient quantities, inhibit or destroy, to a greater or lesser extent, the driers in any paint or varnish applied over the epoxy. As a result the paint or varnish you so lovingly applied may not dry at all, not ever (or at least for longer than you can wait). Or it may tease you and take a long, long time to (sort of) dry. Or it may dry on the surface but remain soft underneath. Furthermore, even where your paint seems to dry normally, some sources say that there is always likely to be a thin, weaker interface next to the epoxy which may lead to adhesion problems or blistering later.

My study of the web sites and technical publications of the various paint and epoxy manufacturers did not yield anything like a universal solution or procedure, if they addressed the topic at all. In fairness, there may be no one answer that can be used when applying any brand of paint over any epoxy.

However, just to get the ball rolling and to get others thinking, here are some observations. In our shop (the Wooden Boat Workshop of Norwalk, Connecticut) most of our problems seem to result from attempting to coat over epoxy that is not fully cured. While most epoxy develops a great deal of its strength and even becomes sandable in 24 to 48 hours, the actual full and final cure may continue for two weeks or more, particularly if you let the temperature of your shop drop at night as we do. While the cure process continues, more amines are freed up to migrate to the surface and... but you get the picture.

So, rule number one is to let all epoxy coatings cure for as long as possible, particularly if the area where you are working is relatively cool (50s and 60s, not 80s). If you

have to proceed, put a tent or sheet of plastic of some sort over your boat and use some safe source of heat to heat the enclosure to 100 to 110 degrees Fahrenheit for 24 hours or so. If you look at the specs for your particular epoxy it should let you determine better how long you should cook things in order to be sure you have a thorough cure.

Once you think your epoxy should not be generating any more amines, the next step is to remove what is on the surface. Before you ask, no, sanding will not remove them. I can tell you that from experience. Water and a Scotch Brite pad, with perhaps some detergent seem to, other fancier solvents don't.

If you are a belt and suspenders sort of person you can wash off the surface, then sand, and then wash again. This guards against the "sanding first grinds them in" school of thought. I haven't enough data to judge how much washing is really necessary and, given the consequences of a failure, have no intention of finding out. I usually sand, then wash the sanded surface really, really well, going over everything twice and then rinsing off with lots of fresh water, but don't call me if this does not work for you.

By the way, my experience suggests that the problem can "migrate" up through a finish, giving you fish-eyes in a sprayed top coat even where the prime coats seemed fine. There are other solutions that I have run across in conversations with other boat builders or have read about but not tried myself. With that warning, here they are:

International Paints has an epoxy barrier coat (Epoxy Barrier-Kote, #404) that they say should be used over all clear epoxy coatings as a primer "to eliminate the effects of amine blush." It would seem to be worth exploring where you are going to paint (Barrier-Kote is white) and intend to use International's products for the rest of your finish.

I have been told that two-part linear polyurethane marine paints, unlike single part polyurethanes, modified alkyd resin paints, and single part varnishes, are different chemically and so do not have any problems drying over epoxy. This may be a solution for some, if true, but our shop is largely devoted to individuals building their first boats and the two-part paints are much more demanding to use and use safely, so we usually can't use them.

I have not found any similar "magic bullet" (if either of the above are one) where a clear finish is intended. Again, I have been told that you can "seal" the amine blush by overcoating your epoxy with at least one coat of some water-based clear finish. Supposedly, after that one coat you can continue with your build-up using oil based varnish. I can't vouch for this approach since I never have tried it, but I have finished several strip built canoes using multiple coats of water-based varnish (can't remember what brand) and experienced no problems.

Finally, check with a Smith & Co. of Richmond, California. I'm familiar with their CPES (Clear Penetrating Epoxy Sealer) which is infused into partially rotted wood when making boat repairs, but according to their literature they also make a clear coating for use over epoxy.

Hope the above is some use to someone. I'd be happy to exchange wisdom/speculation/rumors on this subject with anyone interested. I can be reached at Dojackson@aol.com or (203) 414-0937.



Proa Update

By Robb White

There is not going to be much to this late-breaking news because it was a short session. Wes has done some improvement to his jacklegger job on the proa and wanted to take it to the coast during Thanksgiving weekend to see what was what. Due to the complications of this and that, the only eligible day was Sunday and a cold front was coming on like a train from the west. I believe there may be some of you readers who know which front I mean. I saw some rough-looking stuff on the Weather Channel up the country.

Anyway, driving down it looked like we were heading into a mess. The sky was black and the wind was blowing pine straw across the road. Jane and I were in the little Kia pulling the little wood sport boat and it was kind of a wobbly ride. Wes and the children were pulling the proa with his four-door Dodge Dakota and he said it felt like he was going to lose the boat to the crosswinds... stopped a bunch of times to tighten up on his lines. We got there, though. It is unusual for us to have a car young enough to have a working odometer. It is 84 miles to Ochlocknee Bay... 32 mpg for the whole trip... pretty good pulling a boat in 25 knots of variable gusts.

Ochlocknee Bay is where the Ochlocknee River meets the Gulf. All those situations where a river that is still eroding its banks and bottom hits the sea make a wide, shallow bay and Ochlocknee Bay is a prime example. It is not navigable at low spring tides in the winter. We had a good high tide, though, and Wes had that proa in the water

immediately. His new trailer jacklegger worked real well. Luckily we were in the lee of the trees on the SW side or he would have had a hard time rigging out. It was really breezing up out in the bay... rocking the Winnebagos crossing the high bridge right beside the boat ramp. The children immediately began acting exactly like coons along the edge of the water as Wes rigged up.

They wanted to go sailing, though, and put on their well-used life preservers and climbed aboard. The tide had begun to fall and the current was extremely strong downriver to the bridge and the wind was sort of that way, too, and I thought it might be best to wade upriver a little bit before getting underway, but Wes thought he could beat away in time to keep from getting swept under the concrete pilings with all those children and that cold water. Jane and I sort of surreptitiously unstrapped the sport boat and I opened the tank valve and the vent screw on the Martin as they eased slowly out from under the lee of the trees. I could see the proa being swept rapidly toward the bridge but just as I was fixing to jump in the car to back down and snatch my boat off the trailer to go fish the children out of the river, a gust hit them and that thing leaped like a greyhound when they turn Rusty loose at the dog track and he had it made.

I won't go into all his recent modifications in much detail until it becomes finalized, but he has devised a reefing system where he can convert the trapezoidal sail into a plain triangle sort of like a lateen but without the bottom boom. It still shunts by tipping the yard to first one end and then the other, and as we watched he sailed about halfway across the bay and then shunted and came tearing back. It is hard to tell the speed of that thing. It makes such a little wake and bow wave that in the distance it looks like it is just sitting on the water until you notice how rapidly it is passing the landscape.

They were sailing a good bit upriver from where we were so I trotted up the bank to see if I could get a close shot with the camera, but before I had run (?) 50 yards they were already there. As soon as the proa stopped all those children hopped off and came running down the beach. "That was a wild ride!" they all hollered. Wes just said, "Need to be able to reef her down a little more for this kind of wind... either that or get me some more children." "NO!" chorused Jane and me.

It was a success. His new yard (still bamboo but well-sleeved with fiberglass) held up under the strain. His new white poly-tarp sail set better than the old gray one and still balanced the rig even when reefed. His complicated looking trailer rig worked real well. As a matter of fact, Wes had that proa out of there in half the time it took these two very drunk fishermen to pull a Gheenoe out. Of course, they had to fall down in the cold water five or six times each.



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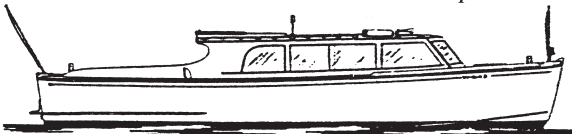


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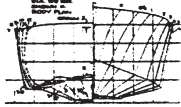
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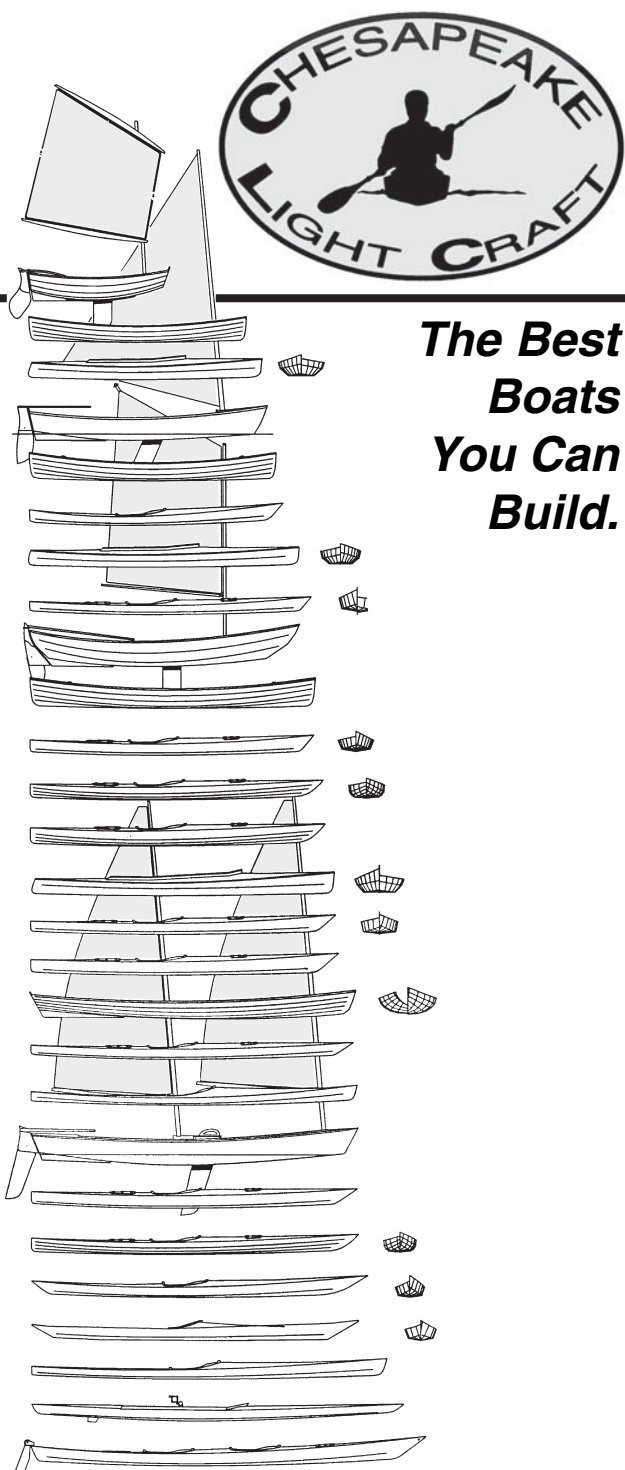
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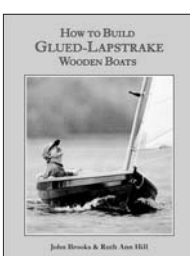
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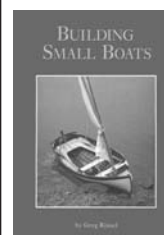
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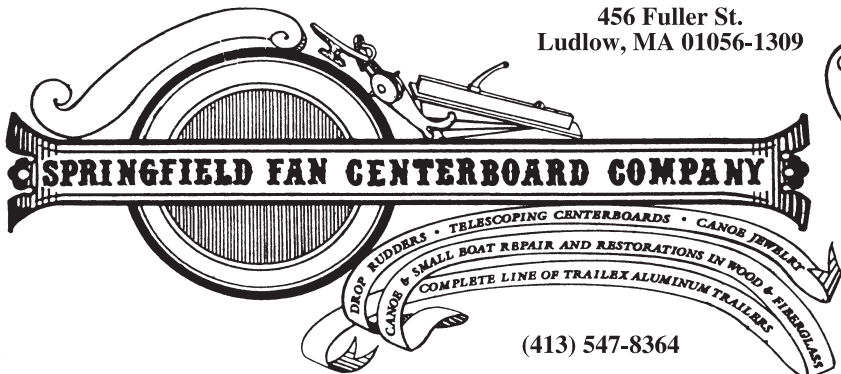
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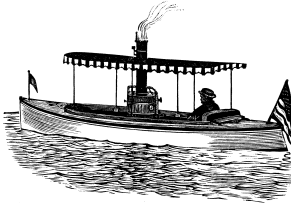
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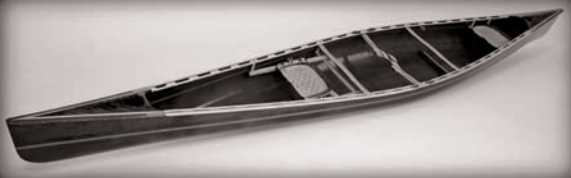
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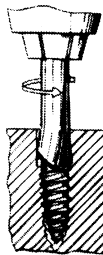
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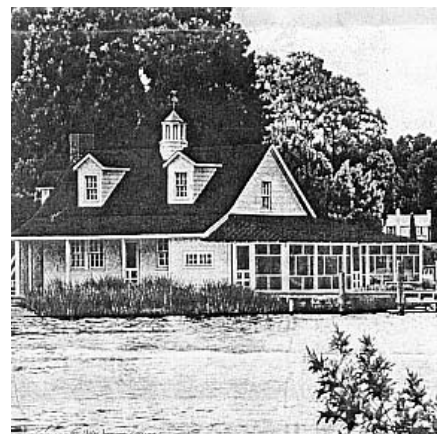
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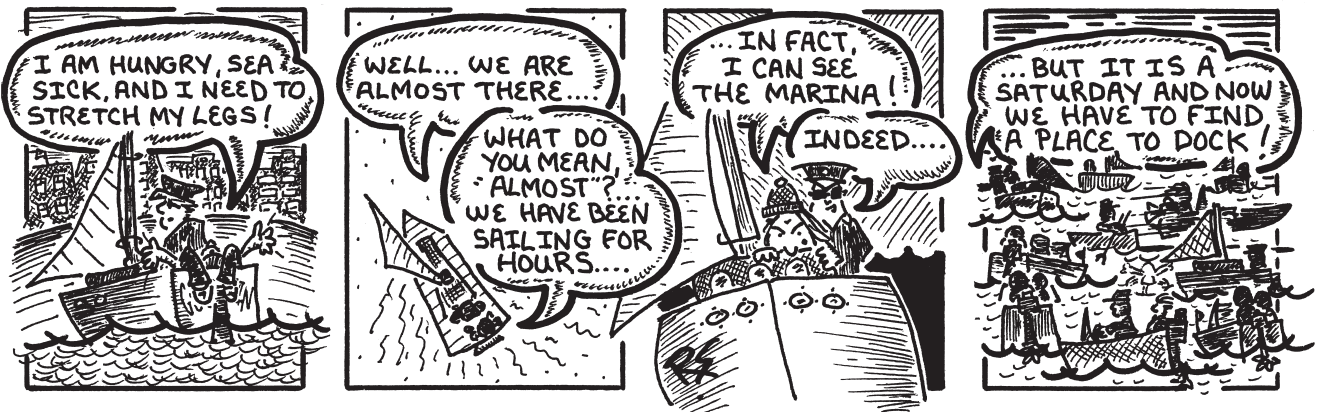
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