

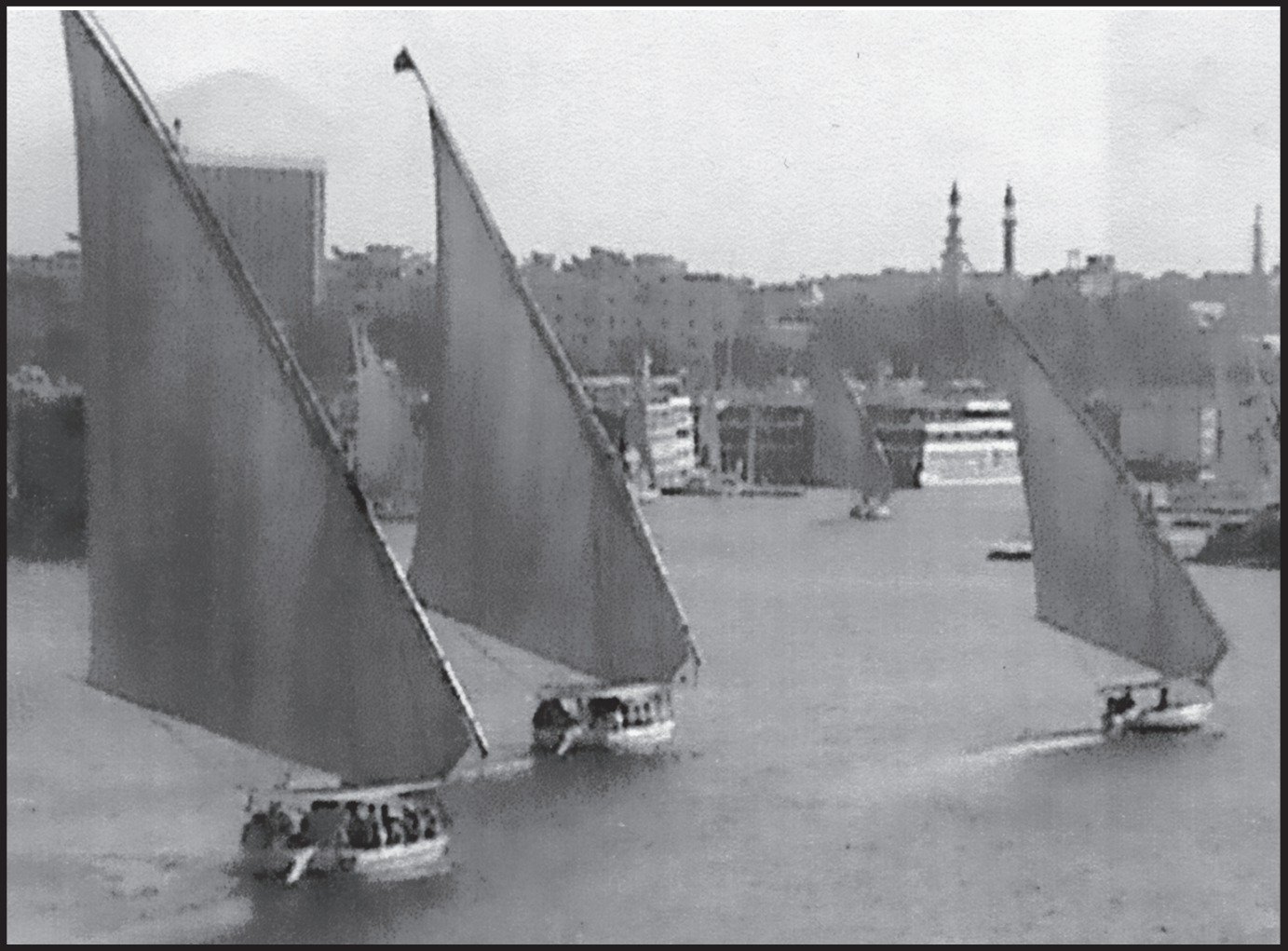
Special Features This Issue

"Cruising the Nile" – "The Art of Beach Cruising"
"In Search of Minto" – "Fast Blades"

messing about in BOATS

Volume 23 – Number 21

March 15, 2006



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On the Cover...

Frequent contributor Jim Thayer took some time away from his beloved desert sailing spots in our own far west to travel to Egypt to experience desert sailing of another sort on the Nile. His report on what transpired is featured in this issue.

Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor



Just about this time every winter (mid-February as I write this) we get word of the upcoming May gathering of small craft enthusiasts at Cedar Key on the northwest coast of Florida. Here is what we received this year:

"The 22nd Cedar Key Small Boat Meet will be Saturday and Sunday, May 6 and 7. It is completely informal. Tides and weather are still the only organization. There are no planned events, sign-ups, or fees.

Cedar Key is an isolated cape of offshore islands, oyster lined channels, and salt marsh on the Gulf in Florida, 100 miles north of Tampa, 12 miles south of the mouth of the Suwannee River. Before the Civil War its huge cedars were cut for pencils. It was a railhead port and commercial center during and after that war. Now its seascape brings sailors and paddlers, fishermen and birders, naturalists, artists, and writers. Cedar Key has no traffic lights, fast food, or golf courses.

All shallow draft boats are welcome, including canoes and kayaks, sharpies, catboats and catamarans, trimarans, rowing skiffs, sailing dinghies, scows, and sampans.

Weather is usually good, 80s in the day, water temperature upper 70s. If it blows, even at lower tides, it's good for rowers and paddlers. For sailing canoes Cedar Key is glorious.

The food chain is jammed full because the Suwanee's nutrients mix with extra oxygen from water riffling around the islands, so think fishing, birding, and wildlife watching.

For information call the Cedar Key Chamber of Commerce, (352) 543-5600; Larry Page, (941) 746-2686, <lhpage@worldnet.att.net> or Hugh Horton, (586) 468-6456, <hhorton5976@wowway.com>"

Hugh Horton is the guy who has been promoting this concept of a totally unorganized event for small boaters each year as spring is about to appear in the frozen north (Hugh's from greater Detroit). In 2004 the event reached its 20th anniversary, some staying power considering its almost total lack of any organization running it.

I was persuaded in 2004 to at long last heed the invitations each year to take in the event. It does appeal to my own preference for the absence of anything "official" surrounding my activities. However, I contracted Lyme Disease early in the year (a relapse from four years before, once you get it it stays dormant within until…), in my case a persistent swelling of my knees, but I still figured I'd be over it in time. I wasn't. By May I still could not sit in my car for more than an hour at a stretch without the aching beginning.

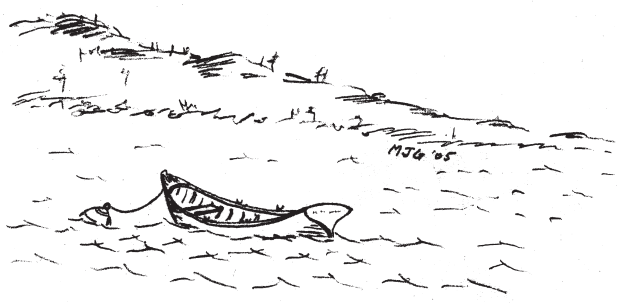
So we did not go. It was going to be a ten-day or so trip, touching base with relatives and friends enroute and back as well as doing touristy things like driving the Skyline Drive in Virginia and North Carolina and the Outer Banks enroute home. We never considered flying, the cost of flying anywhere for Jane and I is more than we can entertain. When we do travel more than a day away (we did a five-day round trip to Ohio last summer) we always tie in the major purpose with supplementary ones to get our time's worth.

Well, this year a new factor has entered the springtime in the Florida small craft scene as the newly established Florida Gulf Coast Maritime Museum in Cortez (down in the Tampa/Bradenton area) is getting the jump on Cedar Key with its first ever small craft meet. The Inaugural Great Florida Gulf Coast Small Craft Festival on April 1 and 2 is more conventionally organized than Cedar Key with organized events, camping on the grounds, a registration fee to cover costs, etc. It will have all the trappings everyone who attends the Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival in St. Michaels, Maryland, each October has come to enjoy as a whole bunch of the Florida guys turned up at St. Michaels last fall to find out how it's done.

Here's the pitch: "Come sail, row, or paddle your classic or traditional boat. Race and/or mess about, sing sea chanties, chow down and pig out on fresh local seafood. Go for a pre-festival Gunk Hole trip. This is a family affair and there will be children's activities. Bring stuff to sell of a nautical flea market nature. There will be stuff to buy. The registration fee includes free on-site camping, an awards dinner, coffee and doughnuts, good times, great company, and some live music. Our guest speaker is to be raconteur, boatbuilder, and writer Robb White.

For further information contact the Florida Gulf Coast Maritime Museum, P.O. Box 100, Cortez, FL 34215, (941) 708-4935, wwwFGCSCF.org, Roger Allen at <Manateeclerk.com>.

Roger Allen has been around the small craft scene forever, in earlier years he ran the Workshop on the Water at the then Philadelphia Maritime Museum, moved on to the North Carolina Maritime Museum, and now is hard at work building this newest Florida maritime museum. Nobody involved in this effort takes themselves too seriously yet, it's a volunteer powered effort, volunteers who know how to have a good time while they pursue their dream.



By Matthew Goldman

From the Journals of Constant Waterman

The three of us left the landing with our usual expedition, something of an accomplishment with a toddler. We loaded the canoe and set off for The Island. From Mike's cottage to ours is scarcely a mile down the slow side of The River, a backwater behind two other islands, the muddy banks strewn with cottonwood and silver maple snags. And everywhere birds, statuesque cormorant, quiet black duck, stately great blue heron, flitting catbird, hovering osprey, chattering red-winged blackbird.

And in the midst of all this was our cottage, an octagon framed with chestnut from an old barn we'd demolished, sided board and batten with western red cedar, 24' across the flats, a steep roof with a cupola and dormer, the building 4' up on concrete posts. And everything brought out by boat, the wood all worked by hand. Yes, I was mad in those days and a poet. We worked in the woods a couple of days at a time, commuted home via canoe or sometimes raft, and raised our son to be a water rat. He's fairly settled these days, has his lair near the riverbank, and doesn't own more than two or three canoes.

The morning I have in mind we were sliding downstream, just us and our little son and his giraffe. "Raffe" was made of rubber, squeaked, and stood about 6" short. He'd become a consummate waterman that summer and knew The River as well as any giraffe I've ever met. Respect for The River, even an old, slow river such as ours, can never be learned too early. There's a bit of tide, from 2'-3', on our stretch of The River but the current is slow and the tide can shove it all the way back to Hartford and beyond. The shad go up as far as the Enfield dam, I suppose for the view.

When the tide is flowing you can get to our place in maybe 20 minutes. When Boreas, the north wind, comes ripping down The River late in Autumn, fighting back upstream against the tide and current becomes a challenge. It's all you can do to paddle and stay in one place. There were days when it was easier to surf down to the Ferry Landing and walk back up the hill. You'll have to pardon all of these digressions, I'm feeling The River beneath my keel even as I write.

Anyway, we were halfway down to The Island when Raffe took a notion to jump into The River. Why an otherwise stable creature would do such a thing I've pondered for many years. As I was paddling stern that day, I fished him out and returned him to my son. "Really, Raffe, you ought to be more careful," I admonished. A minute later, over the side he went. And we thought Raffe could be trusted. I grabbed him by his ear and gave him a lecture. You've probably heard it once or twice if you've messed about in boats. All about the inadvisability of being left behind.

My son was listening to this talk with a mischievous smirk on his face. No sooner was he restored to his boy than Raffe took a flying lesson. This time, after I fished him out, I took a more stern approach. "What goes over the side is in jeopardy of being incontrovertibly, irretrievably lost." Giraffes are always impressed by polysyllabism. I restored him to my son a final time. He cocked his arm and grinned at me. "Three to get ready and four to go," I thought. And Raffe, despite my warnings, flung himself into the tide a final time. "Goodbye, Raffe," I said and waved farewell.

"'Raffe!" cried my son.

"Goodbye," I repeated. "Give my regards to Europe."

"'Raffe!" cried my son and watched as his erstwhile friend deserted us, gaily kicking his little legs as he struck out for the channel. Today The River, tomorrow the broad Atlantic! It was very quiet the remainder of our passage. But since that day I've never had a single giraffe jump out of my canoe.

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The continuing interest in Nevil Shute, one of the most popular novelists of the 20th century, was confirmed in 2002 with the long delayed publishing of *The Seafarers* by Shute and the new *Nevil Shute: A Biography* by Julian Smith.

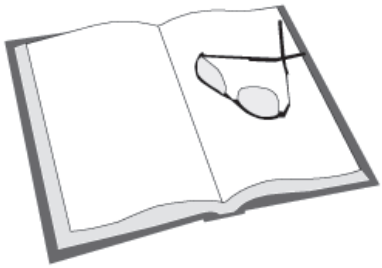
The foreword to *The Seafarers* states that the book "…dramatizes one of his (Shute's) most important themes: the life-giving joy of productive work." This theme is common to many of his novels. Often this message is delivered by the telling of such work by men and women messing about in boats. Smith's biography helps us understand how this theme came to be so important in Nevil's life and work.

Nevil Shute: A Biography was long awaited by the many faithful Shute fans and readers around the world. It is the first full biography of this engineer and writer. Previously, only newspaper and magazine articles and book reviews were available to the Nevil Shute Norway scholar, except for his autobiography, *Slide Rule*, which was published in 1954. However, it only covers his life up to 1940, when he left the aircraft company Airspeed, Ltd., which he had founded, and took up a fulltime career as a writer. He comments on this change in his life, "My gladness is tempered with regret, for once a man has spent his time messing about with aeroplanes he can never forget their heartaches and their joys, nor is he likely to find another occupation that will satisfy him so well, even writing novels." Fortunately for him and for us he was able to find additional fulfillment in his life by messing about in boats.

A Biography expands on *Slide Rule*, his early life, working at the British aircraft manufacturer de Havillands in the '20s, his role as Chief Structural Engineer on the building of the rigid airship RI00, and his years at Airspeed. It then picks up on his very interesting career during World War II as a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve working on secret projects, his time in Burma, his flight to Australia in his own airplane, and then his emigration to, and life in, that far country. Smith ties Shute's life in with the novels he writes. From these works of fiction he finds insight into Shute, the man.

From his first published novel to his last we are messing about in boats. *Marazan* was published in 1926 when Shute was 27. In it much of the action occurs aboard the seven ton black cutter *Irene* as our hero sails the English Channel to the Isles of Scilly and Marazan to thwart smugglers who are using a seaplane to bring illegal drugs into the country.

Trustee from the Toolroom was published in 1960, just after Shute's death at age 60. We follow the saga of the 28' long Bermudian cutter *Shearwater* with the Trustee's sister and her husband as crew. Aboard her they sail from England to their destruction on a reef off an atoll in the Tuamotus. Next we follow the adventures of our Trustee from his toolroom in a London suburb to Hawaii. There he boarded the 40' fishing sailboat *Mary Belle*, built by her owner and skipper, a South Seas character right out of Jack London or Somerset Maugham. Then the two of them sailed to Tahiti. Our intrepid traveler completed his journey to the wreck of the *Shearwater* and the graves of her crew aboard the magnificent schooner yacht *Flying Cloud*. In the Tuamotus he fulfilled his fiduciary responsibilities as trustee.



Book Reviews

Neville Shute: A Biography

By Julian Smith
ISBN 1–889439–30–4
(2002)
The Paper Tiger, Inc.
335 Jefferson Ave.
Cresskill, NJ 07626

The Seafarers

By Neville Shute
ISBN 1-889439-32-0
(2002)
The Paper Tiger, Inc.
335 Jefferson Ave.
Cresskill, NJ 07626

Reviewed by John W. Cooper

Trustee was inspired by Shute's friendship with Miles and Beryl Smeeton. In the Smeeton's sailing journeys aboard their 46' ketch *Tzu Hang*, they were twice rolled over and dismasted west of Chile. In both incidents they had left their young daughter ashore. This led Nevil to imagine what might have happened to their daughter if *Tzu Hang* had been lost with her parents aboard. Shute wrote the foreword to Miles' *Once is Enough* (1959) in which he recounts these events.

In the 34 years between *Marazan* and *Trustee*, messing about in boats figured prominently in many of the books he wrote: *What Happened to the Corbetts* (1939); *Ordeal in the U.S.; An Old Captivity* (1940); *Most Secret* (1945); *Vinland the Good* (1946); *The Seafarers* (written in 1946-47); *Slide Rule* (1954); *Requiem for a Wren* (1955); and *The Breaking Wave* in the U.S.

The Seafarers should really have been titled *The Seafarers Messing About in Boats*. I think I encountered "messing about in boats" at least three times in this short 100-page novel. That, simply, is what the book is all about.

The story begins at the end of World War II when Jean Porter, a Leading Wren in the Royal Navy, meets Lieutenant Donald Wolfe, RNVR. As the coxswain of a landing craft personnel (LCP) she has brought a crew of shipyard workers to the motor torpedo boat *MTB 1029* of which Wolfe is Captain. The workers are removing the boat's armaments and naval equipment before she was to be sold. Reviewer's note: per my 1944-45 *Janes's Fighting Ships* there was no *MTB 1029* in the Royal Navy. However, there were many Fairmile "D" type MTBs with large numbers like 1029. These boats were 115' long and could reach 35kts with their three or four Packard engines.

Over the week or so while the boat was being dismantled, the young Wren and the Lieutenant got to know each other and liked what they saw. But then they were demobilized and returned to the civilian world, both left with a sense of loss. She resumed the life of privilege as the daughter of successful businessman and he to the drudgery of a marine insurance office.

They met once in London but it was a disaster. In the civilian world they had nothing in common. They parted, each very unhappy with the lives they were living.

Then good fortune struck. A friend of Donald's asked him if he would go to Newfoundland and arrange to have his 25-ton yacht *Kittiwake* shipped back to England. While there Wolfe bought *Mary*, a very old 40' cutter fishing boat, fixed her up, and sailed her home to the Solent. Meanwhile, a friend of Jean's family, a Mr. Clough, found out that the motor boat *Joybelle*, that he owned before the war but believed lost at Dunkirk, was discovered afloat in what had been the German occupied Isle of Guernsey. Jean persuaded the reluctant Clough into having the two of them go and reclaim his prize. He was not a messer about in boats, having just used *Joybelle* for partying on the Solent (nowadays he would be a marina couch potato.) The two former Navy sailors were back in boats.

Porter and Clough went aboard *Joybelle* and surveyed her sorry condition. Mr. Clough wanted to turn the boat over to the local repair yard but they were backlogged for months. They would have to do the work themselves. From the book:

"He (Clough) said, "Well, let's see if we can get this bilgewater out, for a start." There was no current in the batteries, so they could not use the electric pump. They found the hand pump and Mr. Clough began to use this; when he had got most of the bilge off the cabin floor, it passed out.

"Sort of choked, or something," he said.

The girl tried it; the handle pulled elastically against her. "There's something bunging up the pipe. Got a dead rat in it from the feel."

"I'll have to get a man to come and clear it," said Mr. Clough.

"Let's just have a look." Jean stooped down and pulled up the wheelhouse floor hatches; together they traced the pipe from the pump down a bulkhead amongst a lot of other pipes all stained black and green with oil and verdigris. "There it goes," she said. "it goes down into the well there between the engines. There ought to be a strainer on the end of it."

Mr. Clough looked with distaste at the black oily bilgewater that swirled between the engines as the vessel rolled. "We'll have to get a man to come and see to it," he said again.

"I don't know. It's probably something quite simple." She slipped out of her jacket and rolled up her sleeves, and climbed down in the narrow space between the engines.

Mr. Clough said, "Here, let me do that."

"I'll just see." She plunged her arm down in the black scum and groped about. "God, its awful stuff!" And then she said, "I've got something here." She reached down further, until her arm was in up to the elbow and the bilge was lapping the sleeve of her white blouse. "There's a strainer here with something soft all around it." She tugged, and brought up a great mass of black, soaked rag, reached down, and brought up

another handful. "Try the pump now Mr. Clough." He moved the handle, and the black bilgewater flowed again into the harbour. Jean climbed up into the wheel house and threw the rags over the side. "Hitler's pants," she said scornfully." (End of excerpt.)

You can't get "messier" than that! Eventually they repaired *Joybelle* well enough to sail her back to England. Later Jean and Donald were back together when *Joybelle* and *Mary* met. The rest, as we say, is history.

Shute wrote *The Seafarers* in 1946-47. However, he did not publish it. He may have thought a novel about the dignity of work might not be what his reading public wanted at that time. So he reset his characters and transformed them in *Requiem for a Wren*, a dark story with death, suicide, and loss. With the permission of his daughters, *The Seafarers* was finally published in 2002. 1 believe *Messing About in Boats* readers would like *Requiem* but would enjoy *Seafarers* with its emphasis on boats.

Reading both *The Seafarers* and *Nevil Shute: A Biography*, we see that messing about in boats was, indeed, an integral part of Shute's life, from sailing the British coast in his youth to owning boats that he sailed on the Solent and on Port Phillip Bay near Melbourne and his farm in Langwarrin. The depth and joy of this aspect of his life is measured by his having his ashes scattered over the Solent after his death on January 17, 1960.

The enduring legacy of Nevil Shute to future generations is ensured by the fact that all of his novels and *Slide Rule* are still in print. His legacy is also honored by the Nevil Shute Foundation at its website www.nevil-shute.org and at bi-yearly gatherings. The first was in 1999 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in celebration of Shute's 100th birthday. Subsequent gatherings have been in Australia, England, and, in October, Hyannis, Massachusetts. I was in Albuquerque and Hyannis, where I arranged and directed a partial reading of Shute's screen play *Vinland the Good*. We were with Leif Ericson as he poked his Viking longship around the backwaters of Cape Cod.

Maine Lobsterboats:
Builders and Lobstermen Speak of Their Craft

By Virginia L. Thorndike
Down East Books, Camden, Maine, 1998
168 pages, soft covers, many B&W photos
plus drawings by Samuel F. Manning
ISBN 0–99272–403–X (pbk.) $16.95

Review by Hugh Ware

"Dinnie" Thorndike, ex-dairy farmer and town selectman, also book writer, has written other books, some of which I will review in due course, but this one is about a type of motorboat she likes. She and husband Phil bought one, a "lobster yacht" they named *Sea Smoke*. In it they cruised Maine waters and saw other lobsterboats and, about the same time, the urge to write about what she was seeing snuck up on her and she had to start writing. (This happens to us writers. Can't help it.) This book is the result.

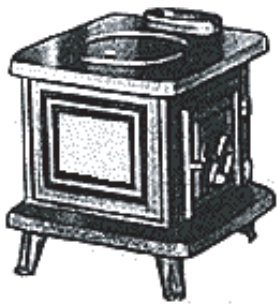
Don't expect a scholarly epistle on the origins of lobsterboats and their evolution, although Dinnie somehow includes an awful lot of such information. Nope, this book is what its title says it is, a series of lively interviews with those who design, build, operate, and race lobsterboats (race as in "up to 55 mph"). She gets people talking, she listens, she remembers, and it all goes down on paper so pat and smooth I can but envy her skill.

A chapter may be the result of talking to one person. Old-timers Leroy Dodge and George Allen. Designers Arno Day and Spencer Lincoln. Builders-in-wood Peter Kass and Dick Pulsifer of Hampton Boat fame. Builders-in-fiberglass like the Young Brothers. Lobsterboat racers like Gweeka Williams and the Holland family. Did you know that Maine lobsterboats were invaluable support vessels in the unsuccessful effort to defend the America's Cup at San Diego in 1995? One was the famed racing lobsterboat *Red Baron*, which was used as a weather boat.

Or a chapter may be Dinnie's assemblage of facts and stories about a subject. Rum-running. Old-time "fishing" (meaning lobstering). Lobsterboat superstitions. Lobsterboats as water taxis and tugs. Lobsterboats as valued family pleasure boats. Lobsterboats seining, hand-lining, gillnetting, and even lobstering.

Dinnie keeps up an easy flow of quotes, stories, facts, and fun. Of all her books to date, this is my third favorite (imagine what number two and number one are like!). I highly recommend this book if only for the pleasure the reader will get from watching a very good writer stoutly march through a subject. Buy a copy from that bookstore downtown or on the Web. Or contact the author at www.virginiathorndike.com for a personally signed copy.

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You write to us about...

Editor's Comment…

A number of you have responded to my "Commentary" in the January 15 issue on how I have chosen to run "This Magazine…" so I have devoted most of these two pages in this issue to a selection of your responses. I thank those of you who have ordered gift subscriptions for friends in an effort to help bolster our slowly eroding new subscriber ranks. Such a gift is not just a one-time fix, for if the person who receives the magazine for the next year due to your generosity comes to enjoy it, he or she will renew thereafter. It's the year after year sustained subscriber list that makes a non-commercial publication like ours possible.

This Magazine...

Family Support

For some time I have been meaning to write to say know how much we enjoy your magazine. We have subscribed to many sailing magazines over the years, but yours is the only one that has held our interest year after year. I may have scribbled a few words of appreciation on an occasional subscription renewal, but I've never sent a proper note.

MAIB first came to our family as a gift from my brother to our son when he was only a few months old. That was about ten years ago and it is still delivered to our house in my son's name. Mindful of your recent commentary concerning declining subscriptions, I enclose a check to purchase a gift subscription for the brother who introduced us to *MAIB*.

John Pollard, Arlington, VA

More Family Support

I am sending in this gift subscription for my godson, he has just been accepted at SUNY Maritime. He has aspirations to become a marine architect and has been a "water rat" since he was a small boy. His family has a camp up on the St. Lawrence River near Ogdensburg, New York. He and his brother can identify just about every laker that comes down the river. I think he will get great enjoyment out of your magazine, I have!

I have only received the magazine for the past year. However, I did subscribe back in the late '80s and early '90s. Somehow the subscription expired and then I lost track. I thought you had stopped publishing. So I was delighted last spring when I went to WoodenBoat School and there were copies in the lounge. I immediately subscribed. I look forward to each edition.

I am currently building a Duck Trap Wherry and love reading about how others have solved problems building boats.

Ian McNeil, Doylestown, PA

Appreciation for a Friend

Please add my friend Nick to your subscription list for two years. Nick has been most helpful to my wife Pat and I in setting up our summer house on the Annisquam River in Gloucester, Massachusetts.

We will be sailing our Melonseed or SeaPearl 21 in those local waters this summer as we await a deep water mooring for a future keel boat.

Malcolm Kerstein, Punta Gorda, FL

Don't Change A Thing!

Don't change a thing! Unless you want to add more Robb White stories. I never fail to learn something with every story. Don't fix what ain't broke. Thanks for a great magazine.

Gus Schultheiss, Hampton, VA

How to Get the Message Out?

Please send gift subscriptions to the enclosed two persons. One is a like-minded member of the Milton (Massachusetts) Yacht Club, a peculiar little mudhole/gunkhole located at the head of the Neponset River estuary. I joined about two years ago just before buying a used 22' Marshall catboat and it has changed our lives for the better.

The other is to the son of a friend who used to work for *Small Boat Journal* and is now a magazine marketing consultant. My friend is impressed with your 80% renewal rate but is amazed that your subscription rate is still only $28 for 24 copies. This gift is my way of keeping *MAIB* to my friend's attention.

I doubt if you care much for mainstream marketing advice but your publication obviously has a following. I never heard of it until a couple of years ago when a cousin clued me in. So how can we get this message out to all those future *MAIB* readers?

Spencer Day, Milton, MA

Editor Comments: Mainstream marketing involves investing substantial money up front in hopes of gaining a return commensurate with the cost. I do not have the capital to utilize this approach. Referrals such as yours (gifts or samples even) seem to be the most effective way to reach those who might enjoy the magazine.

Anxiously Awaits Each Issue

I subscribed last year around this time on a whim and found myself ever since anxiously awaiting each new issue. Phil Bolger, Hugh Ware, Chris Kaiser, Robb White, the old Weston Farmer articles, and your editorial commentary will keep me coming back for more. The old stories like "Trip to Florida and Back" and "Running the Blockade" give us a peek into the past and are greatly appreciated. Enclosed is my renewal check for 2006.

R. Dean Fuller, Davenport, IA

"Fatuous Prolixity" Indeed!

"Fatuous Prolixity" indeed! I am the superintendent of a wastewater treatment plant, not a profession that demands top notch writing skills and, like you, my training is not in putting words on paper. And yet I have been told by many that I write the best memos, etc. that they have ever read. They say I write like I speak, say what I mean, and get to the point, and they wish they could write as well as I do. I imagine that you, as well as Robb White and many other regular contributors to your publication, do the same when you all put words to paper.

You are publishing a magazine about messing around in small boats, not the *New Yorker* or the *New York Times Book Review*. Keep those prolixities coming. Thank God I didn't have that guy for Freshman English.

Dane J. Martindell, Manchester, NJ

With Some Regrets

I write this letter with some regrets to tell you I won't be renewing my subscription. Your magazine has given me countless hours of entertainment in the past. I have always appreciated your magazine's unpretentiousness and honesty. However, lately I haven't been enjoying boating as much as I used to. And, like some others, I do not read Robb White. I don't like his style nor his subject matter. Just counting the last four issues (12/1-1/15), there were eight articles and two letters written by him, that's too much for me.

I have always enjoyed the articles written by Reinhard Zollitsch, the recent article by Ann Rougle, and the current and past articles by Richard E. Winslow III. It's always pleasurable to take a vicarious adventure with them and the many others who have written about their messing experiences.

George Jacobs, Ellijay, GA

Robb White? Phooey!

Robb White? Phooey! In recent times Mr. White's long-winded, gee ain't I great, articles have invaded the pages of *MAIB* like those invasive plants clogging ponds and rivers.

Don't get me wrong! There are many fine stories and articles in *MAIB* which make the magazine well worth the modest subscription fee. Apparently there are those who enjoy Mr. White's writing, I do not. But that's what makes a horse race.

Lee Kemble, Portland, ME

Editor Comments: My view on publishing articles that may create strong pros and cons is to continue publishing them, those who do not enjoy them need not read them, while those who do can continue to enjoy.

Immortalized

I have immortalized you by quoting part of your last editorial comment on my workshop wall. "I think I have solved the problem of how to finance our old age... Keep on working," Bob Hicks.

When your magazine arrives in the mail I truly try to rationalize when I will get to read it. I have too much to read already and try to put it aside. Then you get me back with great articles like "Dinghy Towing" by Steve Axon. I have towed my hard dinghy with a double painter, for the same reasons, for 20 years. It rows well and I leave the outboard and the inflatable in the barn. The only thing I have done differently is to lash a 2" hawser around the gunnel to act as a rub rail. Looks very salty that way.

Your article "Genuine Forgery" brought tears to my eyes. When we old guys die and our workshops get auctioned off, the loss will be beyond measure. To shoot hoops and play with a joy stick is counter productive to the great joy of producing something useful and decorative for the world to use.

The article "Seasonal Attitude Disorder During an Iowa 'Winter" by Stephen Regan was great. I looked at the accompanying picture to the article and saw a woman's breast before I recognized snow-covered, upside down dinghies! That is what a New England winter will do to you. I want to invite Stephen Regan to go sailing with me in Maine this summer. Anyone who writes that well deserves something special in their life. I know Iowa is out west somewhere, so just get on a plane and fly east. I'll pick you up at the airport of your choice. Remember, summer sailing in Maine is the way to get even.

Edwin Howard, Essex, MA

Years of Enjoyment

This note has a two-fold purpose. First it is to inform you that my macular degeneration has progressed to the point where I can no longer read so I am not renewing my subscription. Second is to thank you for the many years of enjoyment, as well as education, that your very fine publication has brought to me.

Warren Ziebell, Petoskey, MI

How Does He Do It?

I love "Beyond the Horizon"! How does Hugh Ware do it?

Edward Walker, Mystic, CT

Editor Comments: Hugh has many connections in the shipping world via personal contacts, the internet, and trade publications. He says he has much, much more to offer than the two pages every other issue that I can allot.

MASCF Layout Maybe the Best

I wish to tell you that the photo layout with the December 1 story about the 23rd Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival was maybe the best I have ever seen in any boating magazine (not that I read any other magazines, mind you). One could easily spend the same amount of time feasting on the photos as it took to read the article itself. Thanks for a great job.

Somewhere along the line I lost the December 15 issue. Normally I would not bother writing to you to order up a back issue, but I must say I am "hooked" on the serial story of the two youngsters and their trip to warm Florida and the St. Johns River rather than fight the ice and snow of Rhode Island in 1874-1875. Someday it is my hope to spend weeks or even months on the St. Johns.

PS: I really feel sorry for Robb White, who is forced to eat mullet and squirrel on Thanksgiving because of one wild turkey that damaged his nose and ear so many years ago. Do you think professional counseling help might get him over his fear?

Capt. Kent Lacey, Along the Peace River, Arcadia, FL

Right on the Mark

The magazine just keeps getting better. Robb White is a jewel and Bolger is… Bolger, national treasures both of them. Your formula for editing is right on the mark, stick with it.

Bob Shipman. Houston, TX

Volunteer Book Reviewer

As always, I enjoyed your "Commentary" in the February 1 issue and it was great to see you in the photograph sitting at your desk as well!

I'd like to volunteer to be one of your book reviewers. I'm a retired Navy officer (27 years) currently attending classes in Contemporary Boatbuilding at the North West School of Wooden Boatbuilding in Port Hadlock, Washington. I can't claim any expertise in "fatuous prolixity" (laughter) but I would be delighted to contribute what I can towards what I consider to be one of very best magazines, bar none, out there.

Secondly, I am trying, belatedly, to assemble a collection of *MAIB*s, so am looking for issues prior to 1999 (my most recent subscription date, I did subscribe in the '80s but can't find any from that early date). Should anyone be willing to part with theirs, I'd certainly be interested.

Peter Leenhouts, 142 Pioneer Dr., Port Ludlow WA 98365

Activities & Events...

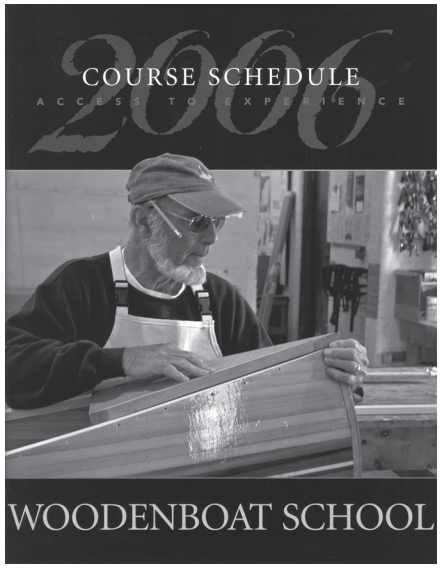
WoodenBoat School 2006

The catalog for the 2006 season of WoodenBoat School arrived containing 100 course offerings (my count from the gatefold cover calendar). The major subjects are Seamanship, Boatbuilding & Woodworking, Related Crafts, and Family Week. From the full color front cover showing a very salty looking boatbuilder type with white chin whiskers and a pencil stuck in his visored cap laying a breasthook in process on the bow of a stripper canoe, through 48 pages of detailed information on every course and teacher, the catalog is a very persuasive siren song for those dreaming of a summer vacation messing about in boats.

While I am no longer susceptible to this siren song, I did attend once in 1987 to take a sailmaking course with Nat Wilson. It was a totally absorbing week and I did finish my spritsail and test it at the end of the week on a peapod in nearby Center Harbor.

If you have the time and the wherewithal and an understanding family, it makes a great summer vacation. Write to the WoodenBoat School, P.O. Box 78, Brooklin, ME 04616 for a catalog if you're serious. They list a phone, (207) 359-4651, and also a website, www.woodenboat.com, for those who do not write letters.

Bob Hicks, Editor



Information of Interest...

Equivalent Epoxy

In a recent issue Bob Whittier asked about an equivalent epoxy paste glue to one that was discontinued. Here in Florida I rely on Fiberglass Coatings products. They have a variety of epoxies to serve every need. The Superbond is available in three cure rates. One can visit by internet at www.fgc.com or phone (800) 272-7890. Ask for their catalog.

Larry Page, Bradenton, FL

The Kometa Lives

I found this ad in the *Boat Shopper* in Lakeland, Florida, for a Kometa as described in Chris Tierjen's article, "Messing About in Georgia" (of the former Soviet Union) that I greatly enjoyed.

Patrick Mehr, Coconut Creek, FL

Yet More About Gronicles

Mr. Spectre's response in the February 15 issue to my remarks about gronicles clearly requires a rebuttal. I must say that no one has ever before considered my scholarship doubtful. Before the old annex to the Boston Public Library was torn down to make way for the new building, I found the original log of Captain Ole which is dated 1864.

The Captain was descended from Swedish seafarers on his mother's side and Irish seafarers on his father's side. He had spent his entire life in deepwater sail and was an astute observer and meticulous recorder. He provides us with a lengthy and contemporary description of the use of gronicles prior to 1858.

The log of Captain Ole O'Margarine has generated great interest both here and abroad. Until Mr. Spectre examines this log himself, this issue remains unresolved.

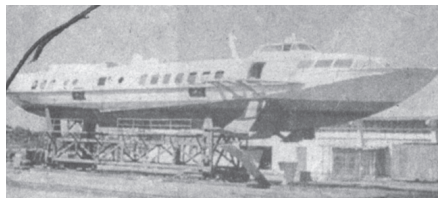
Captain Gnat

Gundalow Prequel

Here is an 1875 prequel from a recent issue of *The New Hampshire Gazette* to Molly Bolster's letter in the January 15 issue, "Good Year for the Gundalow:"

"Thursday, December 30, 1875: Send a Gundalow. There is one style of shipping that the centennial committee should send a sample of to Philadelphia next year, and that is the gundalow with the lateen sail, which seems to be a curiosity to visitors who first see the Piscataqua."

Clarence Burley, N. Brookfield, MA



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Poet's Corner

The Shed

By George Haecker

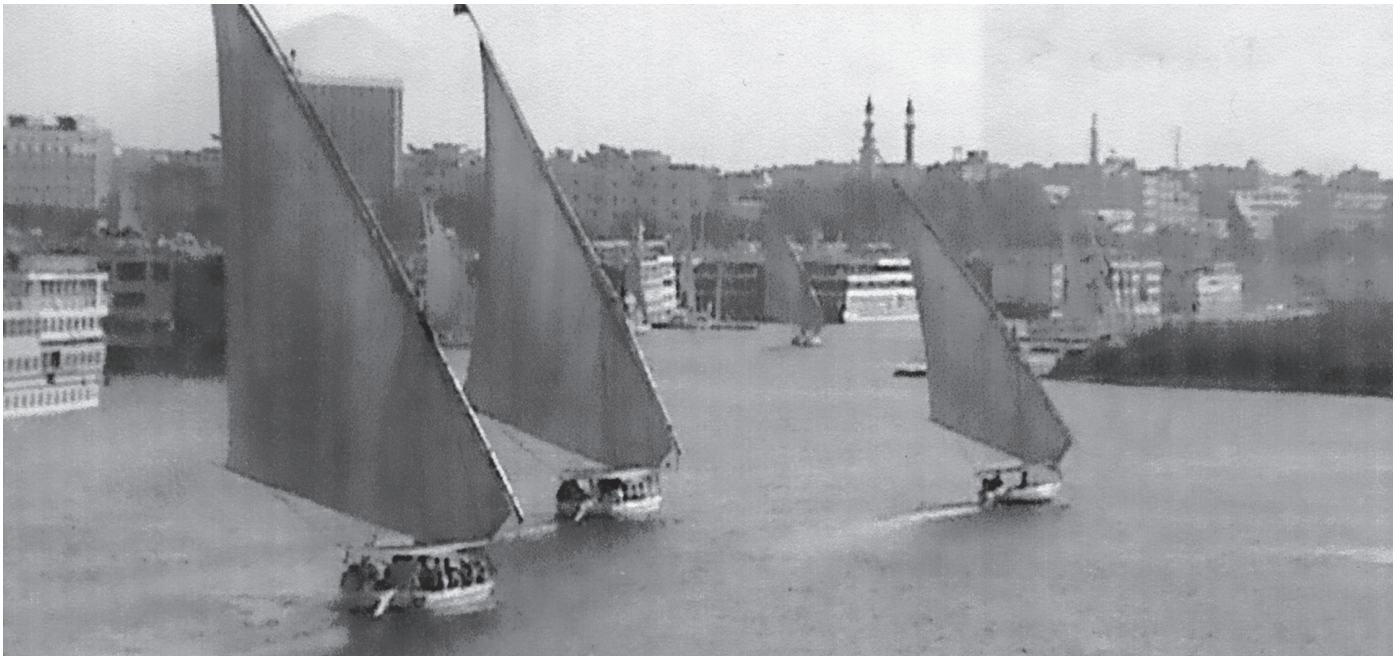
The shed
On the lake
Encloses summer.

Full of gear,
Cushions, oars, tools, rope, and soap,
Pieces of summer life.

Then the sun lowers,
The wind chilly
And leaves color.

And the shed takes summer within,
Holds and shelters it
In its dim and silent world

With the promise of
Another summer
To come.



Feluccas sailing free.

Cruising The Nile

By Jim Thayer

Along in August and September the steady stream of travel brochures takes a tilt toward palm trees and deserted sugar sand beaches. These slick entreaties, in lush limpid colors, are slanted toward those benighted prisoners of the northern tier who, along in November, lose even the light at the end of the tunnel. But they also touch a chord here in sunnier climes.

My price point is $100 per day including airfare. The come-on prices in large print usually turn out to be for the Baltic in November or some such. However, as departure time approaches, some marketing man's miscalculation results in desperate emails to fill the last beds.

As a child I pored over old *National Geographics*, entranced by the bare breasts and wonders of ancient civilizations, especially Egypt. Thus the fateful day when the card was put in play and planning started. Word that the passport must be valid for six months after return precipitated a rush to the local P.O. where the man seated me in the lobby for all to admire while he took my picture. We had about seven weeks so, "no problem," he assured me.

Rivaled only by the travel lit is the stream of credit card offers that pours in here. Selected ones offer no interest balance transfers. Among them are a few with no transfer fee. These carefully culled gems go into a holding pile awaiting the moment of need. I had worked this deal once before, even making a second transfer and stretching the thing out to two years.

Be aware, however, that this is a guileful trap which could render you a pauper unless you are on your toes. One late payment and on top of the usual $29 late fee, the interest jumps to 23-1/2%. Whatever happened to usury laws? Read the fine print! You may be liable to flaying on the kerb in front of your neighbors. If you have nerves of steel and a good office system, you can win.

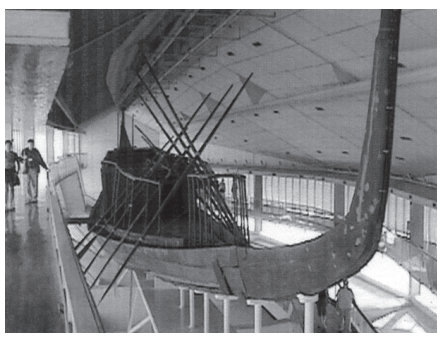
In the instant case, I was uncharacteristically slow in getting organized. When the man came on the line (from India, I suppose) he said that it would require a credit check and it might take as long as 30 days. Well, okay. I rang up the second fellow and got the same story. Well, okay. I hung up with a slight tinge of uneasiness.

The P.O. man got on the phone and was assured the passport was in the mail. Sure enough, it showed up Saturday with three days to spare. Friday morn after Thanksgiving we were off over the hill to a basically employee, but apparently unrestricted, parking lot to catch the $4 bus to DIA.

Cairo defines the term "dun colored." However, every vacant lot is a cultivated oasis of green. A problem with Egypt is their incomprehensible alphabet. One can't read anything except a few main road signs. Even Arabic numerals are completely different. Explain that.

The iconic sight at Cairo is the pyramids. They are impressive, no question, but still lack the mystery of later wonders. Their construction was straightforward, albeit labor intensive. The view of the great pyramid is marred by the adjoining, rather temporary looking industrial building which houses the Solar Boat. The boat itself is amazing and the structure displays it well, but I would have preferred it sunk in the ground to simulate the original grave. It's a tribute to the Ancients that, before the scale of their work, the buses and hordes of gawkers pale to insignificance.

The reconstructed Solar Boat.



We took a train through the delta (whence comes the name, I expect) to Alexandria, which gave us an intimate look at the peasant culture. Alexandria has an attractive sea front but no sign of a commercial port. There must be something on one of the other distributaries. At the western end of the corniche there was a harbor with many small fishing boats moored out. There was one small basin where 12'-14', heavily built, high-sided, carvel skiffs (like in Brittany) were for hire to row local tourists around.



Nicely maintained hire boat for local tourists in Alexandria.

And now for the main course. We flew to Aswan, site of the high dam which, according to which source you credit, is the largest or second largest reservoir on the planet and 500km long. There appeared to be a serious commercial port at the east end of the dam. Lake Nasser would seem to be great place for sailing. The sailing itself would be the only attraction as there is no infrastructure, although some must be developing, especially where the terrain would encourage irrigation. The climate is so arid that there is no plant life, not even a crust of lichen.

At Aswan the granite crops out and produces the first cataract. It was here that the British built the low dam with a lock for navigation. The lock is no longer in use as there is just a short pool below the high dam. In this pool is the Temple Philae which was moved stone by stone from a location which had been flooded by the low dam. The temple is reached by a short launch ride. The 50 or so launches moored out intimated that we were off season.



Young boy with hand paddles, loudly singing American folk songs for money.

The ubiquitous Nile launches appear to be all from the same mold. Of classic form, with canopy and fantail, they appear to be inboard but are, in fact, driven by an outboard in a cutout aft. Around 40' with 8'-9' of beam, they have benches around the sides and a plank down the middle. There is a swarm of them below the low dam, mostly ferrying people. One served the boats as a garbage scow, sorting bags as they came aboard, storing some on top of the canopy and some below. There is some trash in the water but not unreasonable considering the traffic. I saw our boat pitch out some fluorescent tubes.



A launch and a felucca.

There is a incredible number of tour boats, over 400 according to our guide. They vary somewhat in length but nearly all have four decks with deck levels accordant within a few inches, the need for which soon becomes apparent. They raft up to the bank and, on one occasion, we had to hike through 11 boats to get ashore. One gets to see a lot of imposing lobbies. Our ship, the *M/S River Anuket*, was fairly typical at 237'x47' with a capacity of 138 passengers.

I made some inquiries about propulsion but never found anybody very knowledgeable. There are no thrusters. They tie up forward at a large angle and the aft end walks right in. They are jockeyed around with finesse and no fuss, sometimes tying up several times per day.

The Nile, which runs pretty much straight north, with curves but no meanders, varies from a couple of hundred yards to maybe a mile in width. There are often mid-channel islands or mud bars. Great stretches of the banks are rip-rapped or, more commonly, faced with laid stone. The boat often runs close to shore which gives an intimate view of community life and a chance to exchange "hellos" with the kids ashore. The boats carry a set of multiple horns and some boats, friends, I suppose, exchange short riffs.

There is an irrigation dam above Luxor with a lock but the lock was out of service for maintenance during our visit. So we backtracked some and then returned to Aswan to get our full measure of cruise time. Sitting on the top deck, under the canopy, or with feet in the pool, with a good pair of glasses to put you right in people's dooryards, is a marvelous way to travel. A cold drink would be the crowning touch but I'm too cheap to buy booze on a boat.

With great anticipation I was looking forward to seeing some feluccas sailing, so I certainly got a treat at Aswan. There were 20-30 lateen rigs sailing about among the islands. The sails against the setting sun and the palm trees made a most romantic sight, scarcely diminished by the modern surroundings.



Feluccas, rig detail.

A felucca ride is included in our package deal, so let's get started. A launch is tied alongside and we go out the second deck onto the launch canopy, thence down a ladder to the boats. There is much trepidation amongst the geezer ladies but all goes well.

The feluccas, which seem to be all of the same size and model, are about 40' long, quite full forward, with some taper aft and 12'-14' of beam. All I saw were of welded steel but some seen at a distance seemed to be made of wood.

The wind being very light, the launch was going to tow us out to the fairway. The outboard, unencumbered by a shroud or the expense of a battery, was attacked by its engineer with a length of cord. Being under the gun his exertions were strenuous but futile. Our captain went aboard and, after a moment's diddling, got it on the first pull. Outboards are the same the world over.

Our boat, unlike most we saw, had a tight harbor furl. Once clear, our man began setting sail by vigorous jerking on a line, doubtless a chain of slipknots, which loosed the sail. Small blocks nailed to the mast allow him to climb up and secure the sail or check rigging. Next he freed the foot of the yard which was secured to the mast, allowing it to swing out to the extent of its tether, about 6' of chain. He then got on the halyard and hoisted the top part of the sail, on hoops, to the top of the yard. Lastly he lowered the boom and the sail began to fill. The operation took about as long as it takes to tell. The rig proportions are evident from the photos. The yard must be 60' and I couldn't see any splice or fishing.

The large transom-mounted barn door rudder had a tiller about 6" square on which rode a teenaged boy. On the wind or tacking he was facing athwartships with his bare feet braced against blocks nailed to the deck. Downwind he straddled it.

Once underway the captain broke out the slop chest and proceeded to beguile the tourists with rare and valuable trinkets. The boat sails well in light air and tacks reliably. This is, of course, a lateen rig, just like a sunfish except that there is a short luff stretched between the forward ends of yard and boom. There is no provision for tacking the yard and, indeed, there appears no reason to. The sail sets just as well on one tack as the other. On the wind a heavy steel centerboard is handled by a 2:1 tackle.

When the felucca is run ashore to be idle, for perhaps the whole day, the boom is simply brailed up. I suspect that strong winds are rare and the prevailing wind is from the north or northwest. Possibly the rig wouldn't be suitable for waters subject to sudden thunder storms or gales. Dropping the peak would ease her a lot and would still allow much of the compass, but perhaps not to windward.

Most of the feluccas are concentrated at Aswan, doubtless dependent on the tourist business, but you do see one here and there down the river, some beating north as if on a serious trip. We did see several ketch-rigged boats, half again longer than regular craft with an after lateen rig about two-thirds that of the main. We saw two small bunches of these, one painted bright blue, and both far from any tourist landing. Perhaps they were some sort of local party barge business. In Cairo on a Friday there were a number of large party/tour boats on the river. With more time or a little planning we would have tried one.

There are many (one or two per mile) fishing skiffs of 12'-15' with a crew of two or sometimes one with a pole. The singlehanders tend to work the mid channel shallows, poling the boat while the net pays off the after deck. From time to time he whacks the water with the pole to herd the fish. With two man crews, one rows while the other pays out or takes in the net. I watched a good bit of this activity and never saw a fish.

In very light air the feluccas are sometimes rowed with two oars well forward. They are worked by two men facing each other. The oars appear to be mere boards with no shape. The oars on the small boats also appear to be just boards but with a grip and a large wooden counter weight near the grip.

We saw one very attractive cruising boat, but smaller and much older than the current crop. She had a stack and paddle wheels outboard of the hull on the aft end. Forward of the wheels, and of the same width, was a platform that ran clear forward. It was clearly necessary to prevent hooking the wheels on something. Two stern wheels, especially if steam powered which permits easy reversing, would give wonderful maneuverability. She was clearly steam powered to begin with but I saw no hint of smoke and concluded that she had been converted to diesel. However, upon studying the video I saw steam emanating from in front of the wheel. It didn't look puffy enough or of sufficient volume to be powering the boat. A good web man could possibly track her down.

It was a great trip and I certainly recommend it. We went with Grand Circle, geezer specialists, who we have used on three occasions with nary a complaint, The downside of organized tours, of course, is one does not get much chance to mix with the locals or poke into all the curious things one sees. However, in a place like Egypt and with my degraded physical state, it's the way to go.

Back in Colorado with a horrible cold, my standard souvenir of a trip abroad, I barely took off my coat before I was on the phone to my credit card people. A $4,500 credit! The mail pile offered two credit card bills, both from the same outfit, differing only in account number. Eureka. I have beaten the

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Feluccas towing. Last has boom brailed up



Of course there is a video! I think we will put it on with Starvation and Pend Oreille. Send check, cash, or money order for $18.60 to Nile, Grand Mesa Boatworks LLC, 15654 67-1/2 Rd., Collbran, CO 81624.

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The Dreaded Straits Of Bonifacio

An Unfortunate Incident

Copyright 2006 by John R. Pollard

The Straits of Bonifacio range from 58 miles wide and divide the vast Mediterranean island of Corsica from even larger Sardinia. The geography of the islands and the prevailing winds make the Straits into a funnel at the end of a very long fetch uninterrupted all the way from Spain (some 400 miles to the west). Consequently, the sea state and winds have a tendency to be augmented in the Straits which are also strewn with many low, homogenous-looking islets and barely awash unmarked rocks. There may now be, but were not then, many, if any, aids to navigation besides the lighthouses on the northern and southern tips of Sardinia and Corsica respectively. At least they were not apparent on our poorly detailed, weathered chart of Corsica.

We hiked out to the lighthouse on the Cliffs of Bonifacio (at the southern tip of Corsica) the day ahead of our departure in order to get a better look at the notorious Straits through which we would navigate. Conditions appeared somewhat confused out there but we were not overly concerned since our boat had already proven itself in some challenging weather (that is an entirely different story, in which I learned too late that an arriving Frenchman who tells you it is blowing between "sept a neuf" ("seven to nine") is not speaking in terms of knots but Beaufort sea-state!).

The next morning we set sail in *Wandrin' Star*, a 38' sloop, under overcast gray skies to make the west-to-east transit of the Straits. I do not recall feeling the least bit apprehensive, perhaps because we would be sailing with, rather than against, the wind and waves. As it turned out this "free ride" would be our undoing.

Although we departed Bonifacio's stunning harbor, a mini fjord whose entrance is completely obscured by high cliffs in moderate conditions, as foretold by the cruising guides, the conditions surely did become "augmented" as we proceeded further into the Straits. Both the swell and breeze increased notably as wind and waves spawned by the Spanish fetch converged in the Straits in an attempt to squeeze through and proceed on their way to Italy. It felt appreciably colder, too, which seems always to add to one's sense of unease. But aside from being moderately over-canvassed (even though we were running before the wind), the conditions were manageable. That is, until we became uncertain about our correct position.

We were perhaps nearly halfway through the Straits. I was on the helm as my crewmate and the boat owner began to vocally doubt our precise whereabouts. Their misgivings quickly infected me. I grew rather anxious, and with the seas running as high as they were, every whitecap suddenly began to look like the barely awash rocks we knew were out there in abundance. Making matters worse, in the thick overcast conditions the low islets were pretty much indistinguishable from each other, making it extremely difficult to identify one and triangulate our position with certainty. The lighthouses were many miles away at this point so our bi-angulated position from them had a fairly large margin of uncertainty. Even today I can recall vividly the rolling gray-green water, the overcast skies, and the heavy sense of foreboding as our situation appeared increasingly precarious.

We retrieved the low-detail chart from the nav station and brought it to the cockpit in an attempt to help identify some nearer landmark and thereby improve the certainty of our triangulated position. With tension running high, disagreement arose as to which nearby islets corresponded to those we saw on the chart, and depending on which interpretation was correct we were either in imminent danger of grounding hard, probably fatally, or we were okay. It was at this point that I (the helmsman) decided to study the chart as well, which directly precipitated the unfortunate incident.

While I was focussing my attention on the chart, a somewhat larger wave caught the stern and caused the sloop to yaw more than usual (remember, we were running before the wind). Ordinarily I might have compensated in time, but my attention was directed to the chart and I did not react quickly enough. I probably had also let the dead downwind course stray so we may have been steering by the lee already. To ensure the inevitable, we very atypically had no preventer rigged. Predictably, the mainsail backwinded and we jibed quite violently.

Fortunately for the crew everyone's head was low at the moment of the jibe. Unfortunately, when it came up short at the end of the mainsheet on the opposite tack the mainsail exploded, tearing asunder up and down its length and crosswise. The other crew and I stared agape at the canvas carnage. The owner, demonstrating his mettle, calmly but firmly ordered "leave it." We would positively determine our position before tackling the shredded, flogging sail.

We eventually got a good triangulated fix with the compass and determined that we were right on course and in no serious danger. We then proceeded through the Straits under working jib alone, there was no shortage of wind to propel us even with this reduced canvas. My heart was heavy and the mortification I felt was exceeded only by my concern for how I would ever compensate the owner for the damage I had caused. Being an indentured college student, I had barely scraped up the funds to join this little adventure. I had no idea of the cost of a mainsail for a 38' ocean cruising sloop, but I was certain it was denominated in figures to which I was unaccustomed.

Upon exiting the Straits, we took down the shredded mainsail and tucked up into an anchorage on the tiny island of Caprera, off the northeast coast of Sardinia. We rummaged around in the sail locker and found a used but serviceable spare mainsail. After removing the old shreds and bending on the spare mainsail, we enjoyed a tranquil pasta dinner in the cockpit under clearing skies and pleasant breezes. We were now in the lee of Sardinia and the Straits seemed leagues away from this snug anchorage. Fortunately for my spirits, the owner made light of the incident and, true to his nature, my offer to compensate him was summarily dismissed.

The next morning we sailed into Porto Cervo, Sardinia, just in time to watch Dennis Connor and crew firmly plant *Stars and Stripes* in the mud while attempting to exit the harbor. She missed her race (this was the first 12-meter world championships held shortly after the America's Cup in Perth). Though I was still smarting from embarrassment over my inattentive helmsmanship, it was some small consolation to witness that the pros make mistakes, too.

The embellished version of this story includes mermaids, clashing rocks, and whirlpools and has thus become known to my kids as "The Dreaded Straits of Bonifacio." I use the story to emphasize the importance of rigging preventers when sailing off the wind. The aforementioned chart of Corsica (Ile De Corse, Carte Generale, Paris, 1897) now hangs framed on the wall of our living room, a gift from the owner given after another voyage some years later. There is a nice inscription on the back that reads in part:

"To those of us born under a *Wandrin' Star*, a chart such as this has a magical fascination hardly understood by our land-bound fellows. I hope the memories of our cruising, on this chart and others, will last a lifetime."

Indeed they will.





Loon underway at Caletus Mujeres, Islas San Lorenzo and San Esteban in the distance

The Art Of Beach Cruising

Observations from a Three-Week Baja Odyssey

By John Sperry

Introduction

Long distance beach cruising in a sailboat doesn't seem to be a common mode of adventure travel. It falls in the cracks between muscle-powered sea-kayaking or canoeing on the one hand, and yachting between anchorages on the other. If there's any higher purpose to this contribution, it is to call more attention to the pleasures and problems of extended beach cruising by sail. It is Reinhard Zollitsch with a small sailboat instead of a sea canoe.

Reinhard's mode of travel is more practical and probably safer, I think, because it is not so mercilessly shackled to the whims of Aeolius, and landing a canoe is easier than landing a sailboat so there are more bail-out options if the water gets dangerous. It is certainly better exercise.

But for those who love the feel of the wind in a sail, being blown on your way by Aeolius is a big part of the thrill. So why not go yachting and ride at anchor every night? Well, a big boat can rob you of certain freedoms, mainly the freedom from having to find anchorages and from having to be cooped up in a boat much of the time. The sailing is just one part of a beach cruising trip, a lot of time is spent enjoying camp, hiking, fishing, swimming, bird-watching, and plant hunting.

The first problem with beach cruising is to find somewhere to do it. "Somewhere" has to be uncrowded and extensive waters with good small boat sailing conditions and long stretches of wild shoreline. The coast of the Carolinas was great and we spent many long weekends exploring the sounds and barrier islands when we lived there. Now we live in Salt Lake City and the Great Salt Lake can be a terrific place for short weekend beach camping, but the legal itineraries are limited and wind can be fickle.

Surprisingly we have yet to try Lake Powell (we really should join one of Jim Thayer's Kokopelli affairs). We've had trouble overcoming a bias against fake lakes and southern Utah is such a backpacking paradise that boating there ends up taking a back seat. Plus, Lake Powell can get pretty busy with motorboats and houseboats. The best place we've found for long sailing trips is Baja Mexico's east coast on the Sea of Cortez, also a haunt of Thayer's (*MAIB* V2-N15). Over the years we have sailed and camped our way from Bahia de Los Angeles in the north down to La Paz in the south. Remote coastline, great fishing and snorkeling, manageable sailing conditions in season, and fascinating landscape have us addicted.

The second problem is to find "the right" boat. This is probably impossible because every boat has its disadvantages. But in the opinion of my wife Lynn and I there is one absolute essential, the boat must be readily beachable, and by beachable, we don't mean just yanking its prow a foot up a sand beach, we mean dry-docked above the surf at high tide. We camp on shore every night and haul the boat probably half of the nights. Camping on shore releases us from the problem (and danger) of having to find a sheltered cove every night, plus there's more room on shore and a lot of interesting things to see.

Big boat people, in particular, ask why don't we just anchor the boat while we're camping on shore? For lots of reasons, beginning with the fact that we are usually not camped in an anchorage. Second, we cannot predict weather and do not want a gale to blow up in the middle of the night and sink our open boat or drag her away to oblivion. Third, and most importantly, the peace of mind of having your link to the world safely on the ground beside you is priceless, especially when it makes a handy platform for cooking and other camp chores! During the trip I describe here, we went five days on a rugged coast in tricky weather without seeing a soul and peace of mind about boat security was very important to us.

Readers of *MAIB* might recall our boat, *Loon*, from an earlier article of a Baja trip from La Paz to Loreto (V20-N10). She is a Bay River Skiff designed by Graham Byrnes of B&B Yacht Designs in Vandemere, North Carolina. Her builder was Tom Lathrop of Oriental, North Carolina. Tom and Graham have written earlier pieces in *MAIB* on *Loon*'s design and history (V20-N18). She is a 15' open sailing skiff with an unstayed catketch rig. Watertight compartments provide positive flotation and there are also watertight hatches at the bow and under the cockpit bench seats towards the stern. She's built of plywood and epoxy and painted blue and white except for some brightwork accents.

The boat was very well put together and I confess that I've done practically no maintenance since picking her up from Tom back in

Our boat Loon with Lynn and three weeks of supplies ready to sail forth.



1997. Is *Loon* the perfect boat for our purposes? I don't know! But she's plenty good enough not to go restlessly in search of an alternative. We don't have extensive experience with lots of different boats and can't make comparisons, but in the trip account that follows I will offer some observations about what we think is needed in a boat for these kinds of trips. I hope this will inspire readers to weigh in with their own notions of beach cruising boats and favorite destinations.

Preliminaries

Recently we took a three-week trip from LA Bay (Bahia de Los Angeles) down to Punta Chivato which is just north of Mulege. This is only 200 miles but we like to average just 10 miles a day. When the weather is good this distance leaves plenty of time for all there is to do besides sailing. When the weather is bad it is easy to make up lost miles and stay on schedule. On this trip, when there was plenty of questionable weather and tough coastline, the 10-mile plan was a real godsend, for a time we were hard put just to stay on schedule.

We chose October, thinking that by doing so we would escape the summer's heat and occasional thunderstorm or hurricane while also missing winter's prolonged northerly gales. In retrospect, I think this would have been the right decision if we had been traveling further south along the peninsula below Santa Rosalia. As it was, however, we were farther north where October weather can be (and was) influenced by the Santa Anas swooping down out of the Mojave. If we do this stretch again we'll do it in September and see what happens.

Another challenge for the boat is to be able to carry enough supplies and gear to be self-sufficient for weeks on end. We had to carry three weeks of food and gear, and in Baja you need to carry all the fresh water you'll need between rare re-supply points. We left LA Bay with 31 gallons of water in five plastic containers. On top of this we had three Duluth-style packs with 21 days of food, a backpacker's stove, and four liters of fuel, backpacking tent, bedding, clothes, and other supplies. As backpackers we like to keep it simple. Our luxuries are folding chairs and happy hour fixin's. We put all this stuff in a few big totable units so that unloading is rapid and hassle free, important when the surf is crashing just off the stern!

Loon doesn't have a good spot to put our big packs so we do our best laying them on the seats forward or squeezing the smallest one in the narrow space between centerboard trunk and bench seat and tying them all down. The packs are lined with large plastic bags and a nylon bag inside of this to minimize abrasion of the plastic liner. This helps to keep stuff dry from spray and bilgewater.

We don't enjoy motor-boating but we take a small 3.3hp Mercury outboard. Its main use is for fishing once we've made camp. A real virtue of *Loon* is that the masts can just be lifted right out of the boat and we can concentrate on trolling the reefs without all the sailing gear in the way. We also use the motor for safety when underway if we need to land or round a point before nasty weather hits. On this trip we took six gallons of gas and used less than two-and-a-half in three weeks. This trip we ended up doing most of our fishing while sailing.

A four-day drive from Salt Lake City brought us to LA Bay. What a sight for sore eyes, the deep blue bay sprinkled with bluff islands and ringed by a rugged coast. Wild rocky mountains stacked up in jumbled ranges. Things were not starting auspiciously, however. We had to extend the drive down by one day to allow a late hurricane (Otis) to pass through Baja ahead of us, which it did without much fanfare, just watering the plants here and there along the coast south of LA Bay. More ominously, we were delayed after arriving by strong NW winds blasting the bay into a froth. This was not good! LA Bay, however, is a notoriously windy spot so we could only hope that once we escaped its clutches things would moderate. We used the time to negotiate a shuttle of our vehicle down to distant Punta Chivato.

An Adventurous Launch Day

The next day the local salts at the ramp told us we had until "once" (11am) to reach a natural harbor, Puerto Don Juan, before the winds roared back. "Don't go any further!" they intoned in Spanish, "Queda!" (stay there). They seemed a bit shocked that we would set to sea in such a little boat all by ourselves, and I have to say I was beginning to wonder if this was such a good idea myself. We jumped in and, given the time constraint, we didn't fool around wafting about the bay on the morning's light breezes. We fired up the "iron sail" and put-putted towards the safe haven of Puerto Don Juan, assisted by growing puffs of wind.

Well, we almost got there in time. Just as the bay was opening up to the gulf and we could see the opening to the little inlet, ROAR comes a 30-35mph wind out of the NW, complete with instant rollers and white caps. Four-foot waves is not an exaggeration, and they were surely higher. They were steep and close together with breaking crests. Life jackets on and white-knuckle sailing with one eye on the waves coming in on our beam and the other measuring our progress to safety.

We were motor-sailing still, but the motor plus wind was pushing us too fast and *Loon*'s bow was stabbing the waves rather than rising over them so that water rushed over the foredeck. I cut the motor to idle, which helped, and when possible I altered the angle of attack. I also had her loaded too heavily forward, something I corrected later. However, this experience suggested that a fuller, higher-volume



Baja coast from Bahia de Los Angeles in the north ("start") to Punta Chivato in the south ("finish"). Squares show our 19 campsites along the coast. Insert at lower left shows position of detailed map on the Baja peninsula of Mexico.

The load: three Duluth packs, five water containers, two gas cans



bow might be a good thing for big water like this. That said, for an open boat with such small freeboard (probably about 10" at the middle of the boat), *Loon* does not ship much water when sailing. The sails steady her very nicely and the waves, never far away, lift her up and roll on by. The only bailing we did on this trip was on this first day, and yet we saw our share of rough water.

The mile or so to the inlet seemed to take forever and the wind and waves only got worse. Eventually we got to where we could see the way into the inlet where a dozen big sailboats were smugly resting (and watching the show, we learned later). But now we faced another problem, we had the wind on our left side and had to turn downwind so as to have the wind behind us on the right side. As I understand it, the proper way to do this is to come up into the wind, circle about, and proceed on the other tack. I was not in the mood to demonstrate this ballet step under these horrifying conditions.

Instead we jibed, big time! Wham! The sails slammed over as I chose a wave trough to turn her. But an advantage with *Loon* is that jibing is not such a big deal, no stays to catch on or boom to bang about. Both of her sails are "loose-footed" spritsails, I believe. Note that I am not proficient at sailing jargon (as Robb White may recall) so I might have this wrong. See the photographs!

So now we are absolutely flying on a downwind slant on foaming white horses. We sit and lean as far back as we can to keep the bone in her teeth and not in our laps. I spill as much wind as I can by letting the sails out a bit, another virtue of *Loon*, we can let the sails fly free even on a downwind run because there are no stays for them to hang up on. Somehow we avoided surfing and broaching and pitch-poling and roar through the surf and into the calm waters of the inlet. Oh my god, what an adrenalin dose! Lynn won the medal of honor, stalwart, helpful, and most of all calm when the panic button was flashing. This was the hairiest sailing she had ever been in, and for me it was topped only by a much longer duel I fought out in the Great Salt Lake.

We spent the rest of the day hiking from Puerto Don Juan and wondering to ourselves what the hell we were getting into. We did not relish the thought of playing sailor's roulette with the weather, fighting tooth and nail for every mile of coast down to Punta Chivato. Feeding this worry were the additional challenges of very strong tidal currents rushing past numerous bold points and several long stretches of mountainous coast where landing places were doubtful for kayaks, let alone *Loon*.

Plus, once we turned out of LA Bay it was 150 miles to the next civilization at the town of Santa Rosalia. In between we had one stretch of limited contact where rough roads wandered down to the hamlets of Bahia San Francisquito and rancho El Barril. Beyond resupplying our water, these places promised little in the way of a safety net. In contemplating the trip we were hoping for decidedly mellower winds, such as blessed our previous trips taken further south and earlier in the year. We did not want to play chess with Mother Nature for three weeks.

Punta Chivato or Bust

We let the next morning make up our minds about the trip. Arising before sunrise, we dutifully packed and loaded and motored out through the phalanx of anchored yachts to the gulf. A calm morning greeted us with a light northern breeze. Okay, we'll take it. Off with the motor and we waft pleasantly but nervously around Punta Quemalo (yes, this means "bad point") and out into the big water. Wind astern and wing-and-wing we are on our way, the die is cast, Punta Chivato, here we come.

That day was a real charmer, the light wind held nicely and there's nothing as relaxing to me as sailing wing-and-wing. The boat is nicely balanced and there's nothing to do but drift along with the wind, another advantage of *Loon*'s cat-ketch rig. We saw and heard finback whales, saw sea turtles, and at about noon swooped into a jewel of a bay (Alacran or Scorpion) and spent the rest of the day snorkeling and fishing. Camp was on white sand and dinner was fried trigger fish. But happy hour is most important, we take Tequila and a slurry made of lemonade powder and key lime juice. We put perhaps a tablespoon of slurry in, add a finger or two of Tequila, and top up with water. No day is a bad day with our "Jimadors" in hand ("HEEM-ador" named after the Tequila). Four liters of Tequila and one of slurry is sufficient for three weeks with double Jim's allowed on needful occasions.

The next day continued the mellow trend with morning calms and sea lion choruses giving way to a brisk afternoon breeze. Lynn sailed us across the trip's biggest open water jump, five or more miles across Bahia de las Anim and we hoped the spirits (Las Animas) would be kind. We are pretty conservative about getting too far from land and this trip only encouraged this habit. I took over and we battled restless chop and slop around towering Punta de las Animas, tide current and wind making for strange waters. We saw a lot of this kind of spooky water and got increasingly good at understanding what was happening rather than panicking from ignorance. It was best to round these points at slack or ebb tides and we took a tide table for that purpose. This and other sailing information is available from Sea of Cortez Guru, Gerry Cunningham (google him).

The shore, always mountainous and rugged, here became a bold cliff, and with the point behind us we headed for one of the voyage's most magical camps, the so-called "Animas Slot." This little bay lies nestled in a pocket formed of rugged foothills of the Sierra Agua de Soda. Closing one side of the pocket is a bread loaf rock islet and rimming the protected bay is a beautiful wide sand beach. We eagerly sailed thither, unloaded our gear and masts, and trolled the cove. Hardly had we started than we had double hookups, Lynn with a bass, me with a trigger. That's dinner!

To top off the menu, two fishermen in a panga (fishing skiff) dropped by and donated lobsters they had been diving for. They'd come from the mainland all the way across the gulf in their 20' panga and were on an extended fishing itinerary. As the sun set and we dined on fried fish with our Jimador, we began to relax and feel more comfortable about the trip.

In the night, however, the north wind returned and morning saw the white horses riding the open gulf outside our cove. But we spent a marvelous morning hiking to the small mountain that loomed over the mouth of the cove and gazing at a wonderful panorama. There was much to hold our interest. A catamaran was bravely stomping the waves before a 35mph wind on a downwind run across the Canal de Ballenas (whale channel). Across the channel the long spine of Isla Angel de la Gaurda formed a jagged horizon.

Down in our cove we spotted "Larry" the sea lion romping about, diving for our discarded fish carcasses and exploring the turquoise shallow behind the bread-loaf island. On the rocky ridge inland we spotted two coyotes, one waiting for the other who was lame. We had fabulous views of the sure-diving boobies as they lined up their targets and plunged for the kill. With all this to study it was only the call of lunch time that brought us down to camp. Lobster sandwiches were a good break from our usual cheese and pita bread fare.

A few hours later we observed a moderation in the wind, and after some hemming and hawing we decided to see if we could ride the north wind for five miles down to Bernabe rocks, a reef and point where it looked as if landing was feasible. In the late afternoon light we sailed into the rolling waves. It was very much the heaving bosom of the sea, as someone wrote. But more importantly, the wind had moderated to 10-15mph and we had a fun roller coaster ride along a very picturesque coast to Bernabe rocks, even sighting a noble arch worthy of Utah.

(To Be Continued)

Wonderful Animus Slot, one of the protected coves on our route



The Hubbard Expeditions of 1903 and 1905

By Steve Lapey

Part I – The 1903 Leonidas Hubbard Expedition

In 1903 the interior of Labrador, Canada, was one of the last blank spots on the map of North America and Leonidas Hubbard, Jr., a recently married 31-year-old outdoor writer, was looking for a story that hadn't been told before. His outdoor experience was limited, but he managed to secure an assignment from *Outing* magazine in New York to explore the little-known interior highlands of the Labrador-Ungava peninsula. Hubbard recruited his good friend Dillon Wallace, 42, a fellow outdoorsman and a recently widowed attorney, and hired George Elson, a young Scots-Cree guide and woodsman from Hudson Bay. The trio set off from a small beach in front of the Hudson's Bay Company post in the North West River on July 15, 1903, in a single 18' canvas canoe with the audacious goal of crossing Labrador's vast interior and reaching George River Post on the southern tip of Ungava Bay, some 600 miles to the north. Along the way they intended to witness the Naskapi caribou hunt near Lake Michikamau.

Almost immediately the Hubbard expedition made a fatal error, mistaking a boulder-strewn brook (Susan Brook) for their intended route up the Naskapi River. A series of additional mistakes ultimately led to Hubbard's decision to turn back before reaching the halfway point of their journey. During their forced retreat the explorers abandoned their canoe, completely ran out of food, and were overtaken by the early onset of a fierce Canadian winter.

At the junction of Susan Brook and Goose Creek, Hubbard made the difficult, yet sound, decision to remain behind while Wallace and Elson made a desperate attempt to reach a trapper's cabin on Grand Lake. They would also search for flour they had cached in the Susan Valley three months earlier. Wallace was to return to Hubbard with the flour and Elson would continue down the valley to the lake in search of help.

On October 18, 1903, Hubbard wrote these words in his journal, "I am not suffering. The acute pangs of hunger have given way to indifference. I'm sleepy. I think death from starvation is not so bad. But let no one suppose I expect it. I am prepared,that is all; I think the boys will be able, with the Lord's help, to save me."

His companions reached the 3-4lb lump of greenish-black moldy flour, but Wallace became lost in blinding snow on his way back up Susan Brook and was unable to locate Hubbard's campsite. Elson would make it to Donald Blake's cabin and a four-man search party would find Wallace, but when they reached Hubbard's camp it was too late. Exhaustion and starvation had claimed the life of this intrepid explorer.

Wallace kept his promise to Hubbard and wrote a full account of their journey which was published in 1905 under the title, *The Lure of the Labrador Wild: The Story of the Exploring Expedition Conducted by Leonidas Hubbard, Jr.*, which became a best seller.

Think about setting off on a 600-mile expedition into uncharted territory with a single wood-canvas canoe, overloaded with three men and provisions for several months. I have read that this was an 18' Old Town. If so, it would have been one of the earliest ones made by the company. Anyone planning an expedition of this magnitude today would probably take at least six people in three canoes. That way one canoe could be lost and people could triple up in the remaining two canoes and at least have a slim chance of getting home.

My references for Part I of this story are: Packet 115 – *Chemun Magazine*, 2003 wildernesscanoe.org and *Canadian History News* @ Northern Blue Publishing.

Part II: The Rest of the Story: Mina Hubbard's Amazing Feat

The 1903 expedition of Leonidas Hubbard was a complete failure, resulting in the death of the leader and the narrow escape of the other two members of the team. After surviving the adventure, Dillon Wallace wrote what was to become his popular book, *The Lure of the Labrador Wild*. It infuriated Mina Hubbard because she thought Wallace blamed her husband for the ill-fated expedition, and when he said that he would try again, the young widow made plans for a competing voyage. This time it was to be a party of five, traveling in two wood and canvas canoes.

Within hours of the time that Wallace started his expedition, Mina Hubbard set out on June 27, 1905, with George Elson, who had turned down an invitation from Wallace, plus a local guide, Joseph Iserhoff, Job Chaples, a Cree from Rupert's House, Quebec, and another local man, Gilbert Blake. Reportedly she was armed with a revolver and a hunting knife and she brought along a sextant for navigation. She wore a long skirt and sealskin boots and brought along "a blouse for Sundays."

As was true of many 19th century explorers, she needed no exceptional physical endurance as she neither used a paddle nor hauled on a line during what must have been an arduous trek at best. When the men portaged the canoes and the gear, she walked the trails unencumbered, except for the heavy skirt. She was the leader of the expedition. Her sextant was used to establish their position along the river and she used it almost every day, but the revolver remained holstered for the entire trip. Mina apparently knew how to command and with George Elson she had an ideal assistant. There have been reports of some romantic interests between the two and they did stay in contact with each other in later years.

Mina Hubbard later wrote in her book, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, "It did not seem strange or unnatural to be setting out. Rather there came a sense of unspeakable relief in thus slipping away into the wilderness with the privilege of attempting the completion of the work my husband had undertaken to do." Interestingly, Mina chose to stay with her late husband's planned route. For 50 days they navigated up the Naskapi watershed and over the height of land to the George River.

Tortured by black flies and mosquitoes and soaked by rain, they almost turned around when they met a hunting party of Montagnais shortly after arriving on the George River. The women of the hunting party told Mina that they had another two months of travel ahead of them! Two more months would have put them in danger of winter weather, but Mina made the decision to continue on, trusting her sextant readings, and ten days later they finally arrived at the Hudson's Bay Company post in George River, Quebec, on August 27, 1905, six weeks before Wallace.

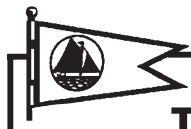
Wallace, on the other hand, chose a more overland route and, although they completed their journey, he and his men were in a sorry state when they pulled up on the mud flats of Ungava Bay, almost missing the last ship out before the winter freeze-up.

Dillon Wallace went on to become a popular writer; he published 26 books and wrote articles for many outdoor magazines, including *Outing*, *National Sportsman*, and others. In 1913 he returned to Labrador and placed a memorial marker where his friend had made his last campsite. He spent very little time practicing law after his expeditions as he was able to earn a good living from his writings.

The American Geographical Society and the Geographical Society of Great Britain both accepted Mina Hubbard's maps. She provided valuable details on Labrador, including the massive caribou migration that had originally lured her husband to this wilderness. Mina moved to England, remarried, and had three children. She was divorced in 1926. At age 86 she was struck and killed by a train on May 4, 1956, in Coulston, near London.

Quite a woman was Mina Hubbard. Expeditions like those undertaken by the Hubbard's make our outings and trips seem like child's play. Just think, these people set out in "new-fangled" wood and canvas canoes into unknown territory and duct tape hadn't even been invented!

References for Part II include: *Canadian History News* @ Northern Blue Publishing, paddling.net, and wildernesscanoe.org



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Legendary Fishneck

By Jim Niederlehner

Fishneck is a peninsula on Virginia's "Western Shore." In the days of abundant oysters and fish, Fishneck was known as the home of the most skillful watermen of the Chesapeake Bay. The Fishneck watermen were also known as the most rowdy characters on the bay, with a propensity for fist-fighting on Saturday nights.

Several articles on the internet claim that the original Fishneck residents were either mutinous pirates marooned by their captain or British army deserters. An article in the Richmond newspaper quoted a Fishneck resident as saying, "Thirty years ago you wouldn't come down here without an invitation."

In case you haven't guessed, Fishneck is the pseudonym for a real location, coined by a lady sociologist who studied several isolated communities of watermen for an academic book. I think the sociologist lady used the pseudonym in order to avoid being lynched if she returned to the scene of her interviews. I am using the pseudonym because I am depending on third-hand libelous testimony and I don't want to get lynched either.

I had been curious about Fishneck for many years, ever since my first visit to Tidewater Virginia. Unfortunately, the sprawl of urban Tidewater is expanding inexorably towards the formerly isolated waterfront communities on the north side of York River.

A friend of mine served his surgical internship at a big teaching hospital in the city across the river from Fishneck. He had spent many Saturday nights sewing up Fishneck watermen after beer-fueled late evening altercations. He also had some concern about my desire to visit Fishneck by automobile. "Those Fishneck people are rough!" he said. He also said, "they sure talked funny, like people caught in an English time warp."

Another friend used to keep a sailboat at a marina on the boundary of the Fishneck area. He harbors a certain grudge against the residents of Fishneck ever since his dinghy's outboard motor was stolen. When he reported the theft to the county sheriff's office, the deputy on duty made some remarks about how the sheriff's deputies never visit the Fishneck peninsula alone. When I told him that a "Fishneck Heritage Museum" was in the planning stages, he told me to keep an eye out for his outboard motor when the museum opens.

I recently had a full day to explore the paved roads of the Fishneck peninsula. I wanted to scout out new boat ramps to launch from next season. I was driving an old pickup truck, so I hoped that I wouldn't be too much of a conspicuous outsider. I definitely did not plan to get off the pavement, as I assumed that the off-the-paved-road Fishneckers value their privacy. Also, I didn't want to be mistaken for a county building inspector, a child welfare investigator, or any other sort of authority figure.

The sociologist lady, Carolyn Ellis, visited with a number of Fishneck families way off the paved roads when she did her research in the 1970s. Ms. Ellis spent several nights with the families that resided on the marshy island off the eastern tip of Fishneck. At that time the families on the island had neither plumbing nor well water, they had to bring water from the mainland in plastic jugs. Ms. Ellis noted that this had a predictable impact on the bathing practices of the island residents.

Much to my disappointment, when starting down the road to Fishneck I found new tract housing extending along the first half mile from the main highway outside Fishneck. Even worse, as I approached Fishneck proper I encountered a huge resort-style house under construction. In the old days, said my sailing friend, you never had to worry about condos going up in Fishneck. The first truckload of building supplies would catch fire before construction began! (Remember now, I said I was reporting from questionable sources).

After an hour of poking around on paved but narrow roads, I felt we were in a genuine watermen's community, even if many of the watermen have had to give up on seafood harvesting and take city jobs.

A ramshackle marina on a beautiful creek clearly served the remaining working watermen. Several of the classic deadrise workboats on the premises were clearly abandoned and another beautiful draketail workboat was advertised for sale at a minimal price, if someone would just take it away. I hope to come back and launch my skiff from their ramp someday.

At another corner of the peninsula a seafood packing house appeared to still be in operation, but apparently at a fraction of its former capacity. (The big fenced-in parking lot was nearly empty.)

We finally found the bitter end of the main county road into Fishneck. It terminated as a gravel boat ramp on a narrow channel surrounded by beautiful marshlands. Several outboard crabbing skiffs were anchored nearby. The view of the marshland and anchored boats was gorgeous. Unfortunately, the area immediately surrounding the ramp was a refuse dump. Household refuse was scattered around the last hundred yards of the road. Several rusty boat trailers were abandoned and a fiberglass runabout had been chainsawed into 3' square chunks and left alongside the road.

After viewing the trash, I finally concluded that the traditional waterman's "free plunder" philosophy died with the last century. As much as I am frustrated with government regulation, I can see that there is a place for municipal landfills and seafood catch limits.

On the way back toward the suburbs I stopped off at an ancient, wood-framed convenience store to get a soft drink. It was about 3:00 in the afternoon and quite a few young men were lined up purchasing 12-packs of beer. Some of them were wearing rubber workboots, so I assumed they were still hanging on at seafood harvesting. When they saw that I had picked out a "Yoo-Hoo" chocolate drink rather than beer, they all laughed and invited me to cut to the front of the line.

Their accents were somewhat non-standard Tidewater, but not nearly as distinctive as far-eastern coastal North Carolinian. I get tired of hearing all of these stories about isolated communities where people still speak "Elizabethan English." I didn't notice it in "paved road Fishneck" and I haven't noticed it on Tangier Island either. Maybe I needed to get past the paved roads to get the real picture. On the other hand, maybe my ears are simply no good.

I appreciated the friendliness of the people I encountered, they certainly didn't seem ferocious at 3:00 in the afternoon, although they had a lot of beer to go through. I did feel like Kevin Costner's character in the movie *Dances With Wolves*, he wanted to see the wild frontier "before it was gone."

References:

Lawrence Latane III: *Letter From The Middle Peninsula*, *The Richmond Times Dispatch*, December 12, 2004. Posted on www.timesdispatch.com.

Carolyn Ellis: *Fisher Folk*, The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, 1986, ISBN 0–8131–1584–1.

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A Square Rigger On a British Pond

By Mark Steele

Photos by Brian Clark

Brian Clark of Newcastle on Tyne in the United Kingdom is one of these ship modelers blessed not only with immense skill but also endowed with an abundance of patience, together enabling him to produce a wonderful replica of a 12 gun Man o'war of the 1840s.

Because he wanted it to be a fully working sailing model, the scale had to be both practical and as large as he could make it and still enable it to be transportable, as big as his little car trailer could carry. Having bought plans from a Glasgow plans service in Scotland, the dream started to take shape at a scale of half inch to the foot or 1/24th scale.

This worked out at a hull length of 63" with a total length including the bowsprit of 84", the hull a scratch built fibreglass shell with a planked deck. *HMS Killingworth* is of a class but not of a particular vessel, named by Brian after his local sailing lake. A number of these ships remained in commission in Britain's Royal Navy and were operational well into the 20th century as seagoing training ships, *Nautilus*, *Seaflower*, and *Liberty* among them.

As publisher of my own little model sailboat magazine (*Windling World*), I was aware that, whereas just a few years ago there was little activity that of in the choice of square-rigged model ships that could actually be sailed, over the last three years there has been increased awareness and interest that has led to several ship modelers tackling such products. Of course, there was always interest in producing such models for static display purposes, but to sail them on the pond and make them as working models, probably because of the large size required, was another matter.

Brian Clark is a very innovative person and the guns aboard *HMS Killingworth* are fired by 12 volts being put through fine cables weakened in the middle of the charge, the charges are all hand-rolled and, using cigarette paper, they do smoke. Clever? I think so. The anchor winch is a battery screwdriver, the anchors themselves and the guns are cast in phosphor bronze and blackened, and all cannon trucks are wired for electrical firing using Pyrodex for powder with each gun able to be fired individually.

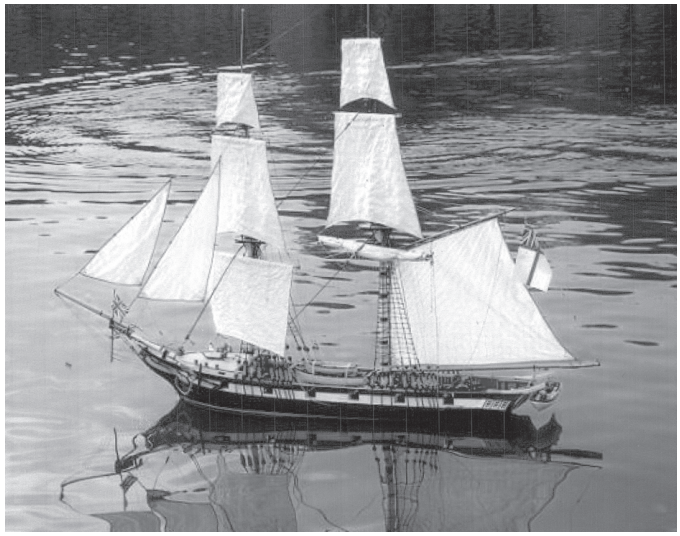
A modeler knows well that he or she must always "think ahead," and in order to facilitate easy of transport, Brian hinged both masts above the fighting tops. By removing brass pins the masts can be folded forward and locked in place.

I first heard about this model from Model Boat Mayhem, a wonderfully comprehensive website in Britain, enabling me to make contact with the builder who finally launched the boat in August 2005 after three years and three months spent building it. Later Brian sent me a selection of wonderful photos of the completed radio-controlled ship under sail, some of which appear here

Of course, building a model of this magnitude is not for either the faint-hearted or the impatient and is one where time at one's disposal is paramount. It is not a model that has to be finished by a set time! When it is finally completed, however, a model of this kind is guaranteed to be a magnificent sight on the water of one's local pond or lake, one that will attract immense interest from passers-by, one that that will stand as testimony to the skill of the modelmaker responsible for its creation.

I, for one, stand in awe of his abilities.









In Search of Minto

By Michael Ellis

First published in abridged form in the Puget Sound TSCA Chapter Newsletter

This is a story about a 9'1" sailing dinghy with a lapstrake fiberglass hull, teak gunwales, thwarts, knees, and breasthook, Sitka spruce boom, and two-piece mast. It is called a Minto. It has been one of the most popular boats in the Pacific Northwest for the past 40 years and it is hard to find a long time Northwest sailor who hasn't owned or sailed a Minto at some time.

I don't remember exactly when, or how, my story of the Minto Sailing Dinghy began. However, in piecing together the past it seems to me it must have been at the Seattle Boat Show in 1979. For several months prior to the show my father and I had been talking about the possibility of being partners in a sailboat. I had looked at an Aquarius 23 in Gig Harbor, which I thought was too small. I drove out to Southworth to take a look at a used Balboa 26, but it wasn't in great shape and we didn't pursue it. Then my dad started talking about American 25s and Buccaneer 24s and I started to get nervous. Not that those aren't just fine boats, but I was looking for something with more of a classic appearance and with 6'2" standing room. You see, I wasn't really a sailor but I thought I knew what one looked like.



At the 1979 Seattle Boat Show I found Ranger Boats of Kent, Washington, was displaying their Ranger 26 sailboat and I fell in love. However, the cost of a new Kent Ranger 26 in 1979 was about $23,000, which was around twice our sailboat budget. So I started searching for a used one while holding my dad's American and Buccaneer urges at bay. I am pretty sure I remember seeing a Ranger Minto at the show, but my focus was on the Ranger 26. I had driven past Howard Smith's Ranger Boat Company on Highway 99 numerous times and noticed the cute little boats he had on display, but it never occurred to me to stop. After the show we did stop at Smitty's to get another look at the Ranger 26, and I remember standing in the display room and admiring the beautiful little Minto.

Ranger built only about 70 Ranger 26s before shutting down its production, and since in 1979 they had probably only built about half of these, finding a used one took some time. As this was before the Internet my searches were restricted to regular checks of the two main Seattle papers. Then, after several months of fruitless checking, my wife and I left the kids with the grandparents and took a short weekend getaway to Vancouver, British Columbia. After taking in a Friday night movie I got up Saturday morning and went out for some donuts and coffee and, of course, a newspaper. And, of course, there was an ad for a Kent Ranger 26, which just so happened to be in Bellingham, which just so happened to be on our way back



home, which just so happened to cut short our first weekend without kids. So we bought our first Kent Ranger 26 in 1980 and sometime in 1982 we bought a used Minto.

I bought the Minto primarily to be used as a tender for the 26. However, it came with a sailing package and I discovered how much fun it was to sail. It also became a fishing boat, crabbing boat, and crawfish catching boat. It went on just about every family vacation that we didn't go by plane, sometimes on top of a motor home, sometimes on top of the car, sometimes in a trailer, and sometimes even behind our boat. When we moved to a new house and sold our first Kent Ranger 26 in 1997 there was no question of selling the Minto. For the past eight years it has been a common sight in Rich Passage between Waterman Point and Bainbridge Island, serving as both a rowboat and sailboat.

So that was my 25-year introduction to the Minto, and until this year when I started building the Minto I hadn't been all that curious about how the boat got its name or how the boat came to be. Over the years I had heard a number of stories about the origins of the Minto. Initially I just assumed it originated with Ranger Boats. Then I read an article published in *48º North* magazine that identified Ed Hoppen, the boatbuilder who was the first builder of the Thunderbird sailboat, as also being the father of the Minto. That story told of Ed finding an old wood boat washed ashore somewhere in south Puget Sound and using the boat to make the mold for the first Minto in his Eddon Boat Yard in Gig Harbor.

After that the Minto history is pretty straightforward, at least the authorized history of the Minto. The roots are undoubtedly Eddon and the main trunk is Ranger, but there are numerous offshoots to the Minto sailing dinghy tree. As one of the most popular boat designs in the Northwest, it has been frequently pirated, both commercially and as home projects.

After building a couple hundred Eddon Mintos, Ed licensed Ranger to make the Minto in the mid '60s. Ranger built about 1,000 Ranger Mintos until Ranger was sold in 1999 to Dave Livingston and his sons. The Livingstons decided to concentrate on power boats and by 2002 both Minto molds had been sold. One went to Hal Palmer in Gig Harbor, who subsequently sold it to Ed's son, Guy Hoppen. The other mold went to Steve Metz, also of Gig Harbor, and this was the mold I used to put the Minto back into production this year as the Rich Passage Minto. As the latest in the line of Minto builders, after owning one for 23 years, I finally got interested in the Minto history.

My first step was to find out why the Minto graphic was a little steamship. I did an Internet search and discovered the steamship *SS Minto*, built in 1898 and used in service on Upper Arrow Lake in British Columbia until 1954. This seemed too much to be coincidence, but I wanted confirmation and an explanation. I called Ken Wheeler, who for many years was Smitty's production manger at Ranger Boats. Ken confirmed the graphic and name did come from the old steamship, and according to the story he was told it was because Ed Hoppen had found the original wood boat lying in the weeds next to the derelict steamer.

Well, that was a nice little story and with that information I wrote a nice little article for *Small Craft Advisor* magazine. The problem was, like other handed-down stories, it was mostly true but not entirely so. When I contacted Guy Hoppen for confirmation, he told me his dad's friend, Heine Dole, was the person who actually found the boat and it came from a barn on Orcas Island, not the weeds holding the old *SS Minto*. Guy speculated the Minto name was adopted for the dinghy because it reminded Heine and his dad of the lifeboats carried by the *SS Minto* and to make the dinghy distinctive. Guy said he remembers watching Heine and his dad designing and cutting out the first little Minto steamer icon to go on the dinghy's sail.

I would have been satisfied with the Minto history at that point, but shortly before we left for our 2005 San Juan Island cruise in our second Kent Ranger 26, I received an email from Mary Schoen saying, "you might be interested to know the wood boat used to make the original Minto mold came from my barn." Obviously this was something to be investigated. So when we were in the area we stopped to see Mary in West Sound Orcas Island and learned more of the story which began after Bob Schoen graduated from the University of Washington in 1943 and he and Mary married and traveled to Orcas Island for their honeymoon.

Since they never left, I guess it was a long honeymoon. Bob played many roles on the island. He delivered oil and logging equipment to the outer islands, raised sheep, worked with the ferry system and Union Oil on charting local tides, and in 1947 he started the first commercial air service for Orcas Island. He also loved boating and had many friends involved in Northwest boating, including Heine, Ed, and a man named Rob Whittlesey, who in 1946 had purchased a 24' four-ton sloop built by Hugh Rodd at Canoe Cove on Vancouver Island.

The boat Rob purchased happened to be named after the *SS Minto* and it came with a fancy skiff which had Minto RVYC carved into its transom. Besides thinking the skiff was a little too fancy to be used as a dinghy, he also thought the 10' skiff was too long for his 24' sailboat, so he traded it for a shorter dinghy Bob Schoen had bought in Vancouver for $65 for his larger Chantey sailboat, and after the Chantey was sold the original Minto dinghy eventually got stored in the Schoen's barn. That is where Heine, a naval architect, saw the boat and convinced Bob it would make a great boat reproduced in fiberglass, but would have to be shortened.

At this point I should mention that before Rob Whittlesey sent me a photo of the original Minto skiff, everyone had remem-



bered Ed and Heine lengthening the plug by about 2'. When I got the photo from Rob I suspected perhaps the photo was of the wrong boat. We are talking about something that occurred about 60 years ago and those involved still living didn't realize they were engaged in creating a Northwest classic. However, Rob's memory was confirmed by another old friend, Terry Dalton, who was with Bob on Chantey when the trade was made.



Ed Hoppen died in July 1985. Bob Schoen died in March 2003 and Heine died one month later. Mary Schoen and Peggy Dole both remember Ed Hoppen's Eddon Minto #1 being destroyed, #2 going to Ed, #3 going to Chuck Ogden, #4 going to Heine, and #5 going to Bob. Mary still has #5, which she still sails in front of her home on West Sound, and she also has the last Eddon Minto built. Besides having my curiosity satisfied, the real reward in this search has been learning about and meeting some of the wonderful people behind the story, each of them owning a part of the Minto sailing dinghy history. Even though Bob Schoen was known for many achievements in his life, according to Mary he took special pleasure in having provided the wood boat which was used to make the Minto sailing dinghy.

So, with the question about the origin of the Minto sailing dinghy sufficiently resolved, my next question was from where does the Minto name come? There are numerous geographic applications of the Minto name, but they all relate back to Minto village in south Scotland, near the border with England. But the use of the Minto name does not refer to the village itself, but to the persons who have carried the title of Lord Minto. At the time the *SS Minto* steamship was built the Governor General of Canada was Lord Minto, Gilbert John, 4th Earl of Minto. It is assumed by the British Columbia History Museum archivist that the *SS Minto* was named to honor Lord Minto for his recent selection as Governor General and his previous service to Canada from 1883 to 1885 as the military secretary to the then Governor General of Canada, Lord Lansdowne.

However, during his first stay in Canada, Lord Minto, who was born Gilbert John Elliot but assumed his father's title of Lord Melgund, was commonly known as just Melgund. It gets a little confusing with given names, titles, and the names actually used by British aristocrats. Regardless, as Governor General of Canada from 1898 to 1904 and Viceroy of India from 1905 to 1910, he was known as Lord Minto and is considered in Britain's history one of its most notable diplomats and administrators.

If the British Columbia History Museum archivist's assumption about the name relationship of the *SS Minto* steamship on Upper Arrow Lake is correct, then it probably also applies to the icebreaker *SS Minto* built in 1899 for use around Prince Edward Island keeping the shipping lanes open during the winter. If naming one boat to honor the current Governor General of Canada was good politics, then naming two should have been better. So Canada had two co-existing *SS Minto*'s, until the icebreaker *SS Minto* was sold to Russia during WWI and subsequently sunk, thereupon eliminating significant opportunity for confusion. Then again, one or both of the *SS Minto*s could have been named for one of the three Lord Minto's that preceded Melgund in honor of him or one of his ancestors. So we will just say the *SS Minto* of Upper Arrow Lake was named for Lord Minto and leave it at that. And be thankful they didn't name the steamship the *SS Melgund*.

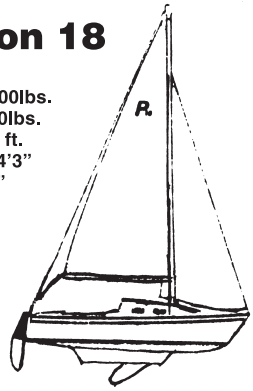
So now you know why the pretty little sailing dinghy created by Heine Dole and Ed Hoppen in Gig Harbor is called a Minto. The Minto sailing dinghy is the namesake for the Minto skiff, which was the namesake for the Minto sailboat, which was the namesake for the *SS Minto*, which was the namesake for Lord Minto, who was himself a namesake for Minto village. So does that make the dinghy a Minto fourth removed? I think we will just continue calling it a Minto.

If you want more information about my Rich Passage Minto sailing dinghy you can go to the Rich Passage Boats, LLC website at http://www.richpassage.com, email me at <mike@richpassage.com>, or call me at (360) 769-3972.

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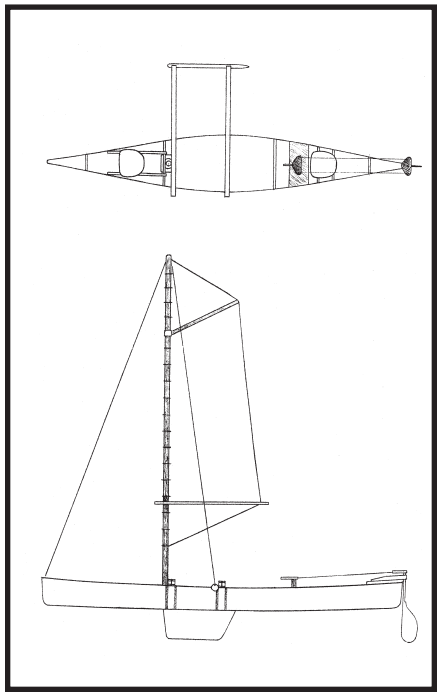
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The Shakedown Sail of *Lamka L*

By Eric Johnson



It was a dark and stormy night and my frozen fingers were barely up to the task of raising the sail as I pushed off into the raging surf of Lake Monona… Well, actually, it was about 70 degrees at 2:00 in the afternoon, with a northeast breeze, steady at 8-10mph. But the launch felt dramatic because it was my first chance to get this canoe rigged for sailing out onto the lake and there were many questions.

The design and construction had taken two years but the idea had taken root a decade earlier. Surely there must be some way to rig the 17' Wenonah canoe for sailing? This particular boat, purchased locally in 1980, has seen a lot of use in rivers and streams across Wisconsin. Now it was time to try something new, closer to home, in the lake that the dog and I stroll along every day.

The math looked promising. A plywood outrigger fin had been designed, laminated up, shaped, and finished. It weighed 38lbs. With 75" outrigger beams, the fin would sit 40" off the starboard gunwale. The 16' mast was made from four sections of Hollowood, 2-1/2" diameter. Since our local lakes can get busy in the summer, I wanted good visibility. The 44sf spritsail was cut to allow a forward view free of obstruction. My calculations showed that we could stay upright in a 16mph wind if I hugged the windward gunwale. But they are only calculations, an imperfect estimate of how nature will behave.

This first sail, lasting about an hour, was actually my third attempt. It was exciting and not very dramatic. Pretty much everything worked the way it was supposed to. At first I had problems raising and lowering the sail. The mast hoops (plastic cable ties) were binding too much. Some twine was used to install a mast hoop lace and now the sail moved up and down smoothly. Under sail the boat made its way nicely with no need for heroic measures. The tiller was light, the boat tracked well, and the rig was balanced. It did not spontaneously turn downwind (lee helm), nor did it tend to turn upwind. It could be tacked in either direction, but it preferred to turn toward the outrigger fin.

I have long wanted to adapt a canoe for sailing. My canoe is small and light enough to be cartopped and it can be launched from any available beach or reasonably accessible shoreline. This sailing rig was designed to be light and to allow beach launching. An outrigged fin was chosen to provide needed roll stability. The size, shape, and position of the fin allow the boat to be sailed across and tacked into the wind.

My first sail design looked a bit like the elliptical wings found on a Supermarine Spitfire. But I did not want to build and install all the required battens, and settled on a simpler spritsail with an embedded gaff. David Gray, of PolyTarp Sail, provided helpful instructions on experimenting with paper models to develop a correctly shaped sail. The sail took several days to fabricate. It looks good and works well.

There is more to be done to reduce the time required to set up this rig. Thanks to John Haugen-Wente at The Paddlin' Shop, here in Madison, Wisconsin, for suggesting the use of cam-loc straps to fix the outrigger beams.

When the lake clears of ice I will be out there for more testing. The fin provides good stability in winds of 8-10mph but I don't know how it will perform in the 16mph winds the rig was designed for. The Hollowood mast held up well with little flexing. However, the mast has a wall thickness of 1/8" and my calculations show it won't hold up in winds over 20mph. A stronger mast, with thicker walls, is under construction and will be ready soon.

A construction workbook with notes and drawings is available for $35. Contact LAMKASmallBoat.com to place an order, or if you're not on the internet write to me at LAMKASmallBoat, 3122 Center Ave., Madison, WI 53704.

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The Wizards

By Kathy Smith
Reprinted from *The Beetle Sheet*



In a southern New Bedford, Massachusetts, location, barely a half-mile from the original Beetle Boat Co. site, lays an unpretentious, yet productive workshop. "The Shop," as it is referred to, is the place where the Clarke father-and-son team create, maintain, and restore boats amongst other creations and "fix-sations." In years gone by Bob and Bobby Clarke have designed and created sail and power boats as a hobby. One sail boat, *Last Dance*, was 42' in length. Another vessel, *Tap Dance*, now located at the Fairhaven Shipyard, calculated out at 39' and is adorned with a teak interior! A speed boat, *Fast Dance*, can get an individual from Fairhaven to the Vineyard in less time than it takes to have a pizza delivered.

The Wizards, (a term coined to describe the team's ability to fix just about anything) most recent, and probably most special project, was the restoration of a much neglected Beetle Cat. Both men sailed Beetles in their youth and have favorable memories of both individual and group sailing adventures in the waters of Buzzards Bay.

Wizardry was what was needed from the onset of rebuilding to completion. Ribs were broken, planking was patched, the skeg was separated from the hull, and the stern was even cracked and spliced together with another board! Of course, the boards were discolored and paint was peeling inside and out. To their dismay, Team Clarke had an interesting surprise when progressing with the Beetle's planks, they found them loaded with sheetrock screws. What a challenge! Each screw had to be dug out, one by one, until all 1500 or so were replaced.

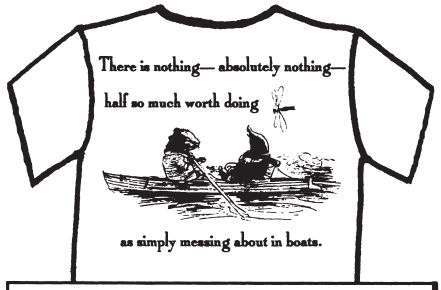
In order to remedy the need for straight boards to become bent, the duo researched how to create a steam box, and did! They also invented their own rotary disc sander with a salvaged shop vacuum.

It takes approximately 140 hours to construct a new Beetle Cat. In contrast, the Clarke's resurrected sailboat summed up over 500 hours over a period of five months this past spring and summer. Their efforts were well worth it!









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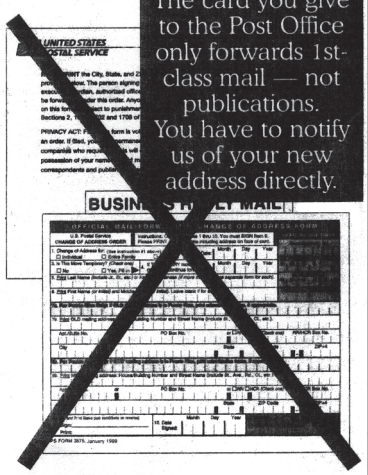
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Evinrude Lightwin Weedless Three

By Robb White

I know this is the age of the four-stroke outboard. Running a two-stroke motor is a little like polluting everybody else's world by continuing to smoke cigarettes. No matter how belligerent your defense of individual liberty is, you still feel funny when you have to step outside to do your thing. I know one woman who is so self-conscious about serving her nicotine addiction that she plays like she is talking on the cell phone while she palms that coffin nail like kids at school used to do out on the playground back in my day. My mother, as a teenager, burnt a hole in her jacket pocket, and then burned her belly so bad that the scar remained all the rest of her life, trying to hide a red hot Home Run… or was that a Picayune?

Well, dammit to hell, if the outboard motor industry and the EPA wants me to quit running my old childhood, 1953 weedless three, they need to quit fooling around with cutting edge new millennium hi-tech and come up with something just as good as the tail end lo-tech of the first half of the old millennium. There is no weedless motor made anymore and surely no two-cylinder motor that only weighs 32lbs.

The four-stroke outboard motor people are having a bit of trouble with two-cylinder four-cycle engines. I am not going to draw any diagrams for you, but it is impossible to make a two-cylinder engine with both cylinders in line that fires alternately at even intervals unless both connecting rods hook up to the same side of the crankshaft. I don't know why they don't go back to the opposed situation like the old original two-cylinder engines but two-cylinder four-stroke engines all run with a skip like an old John Deere, pap, pap… pap, pap… pap, pap… like that. It takes a big, heavy flywheel to carry through all those missed opportunities to fire and that skipping makes them vibrate much worse than a smooth running two-cycle engine like an Evinrude Lightwin (Johnson made a copy, too, but we won't get into that… had an inferior shroud design).

So what they do is make all little engines below 8hp with only one cylinder. They call them "portable" but you just try to throw a four-cycle 9.9 up on the taffrail sometime. I have tried all the new "small" engines and you better keep your teeth apart when running one of those one-cylinder fives or you'll chatter like a cartoon squirrel. If I was the design magnate of the world I would dictate that small outboards be built radial like airplane engines… say five little bitty cylinders running on a single throw of the crankshaft. The resultant low rpms would more closely match the notions of the propeller and the engine would be light. Aluminum cylinders, pistons, and rods don't weigh much and a single throw crankshaft would be lighter than one with multiple cranks and, since each cylinder carries the next in close sequence, the flywheel could be much lighter. But I am not in charge so everybody is stuck with these engines designed by salesmen (I guess).

An Evinrude Lightwin is a highly evolved little thing. There were many predecessors before the design was mostly finalized in 1952 and they continued to make it without many modifications through model year 1967. Not only were Lightwins made in the U.S., but in Canada and even Belgium. I don't know the sales statistics but those little engines may well have been the most popular outboard motor ever built and no telling how many of them are still running in the capable hands of people who still know a thing or two about a thing or two.

In '68 OMC changed the configuration of the case and added the idiot side mount, plastic recoil starter (an original Lightwin had the best recoil starter I ever saw) which was slow to suck in the rope at any temperature below 50 degrees F… if it did it at all. The throttle on the new engine was where the gear shift on an ordinary engine is and that gave you the twitchy-fumbles when you came to a stump or a log or something you might want to slow down for. OMC also claimed 4hp out of the new fiberglass hooded engine but I could not detect the presence of that extra stud in the harness but it was still weedless.

To my notion, 1968 is when OMC began their decline into the bankruptcy that showed Enron how it is done. One oddity is that in the years 1966 and '67 the Lightwin lost its high speed knob and OMC claimed that it would run on the new 50:1 gas mix. I wouldn't know about that. I like a high speed adjustment on an outboard. You can clear a trash stoppage with a little twist.

I'll give you the specs right off. The weight varied through the years from an even 30lbs in 1952 to 35lbs in the 50:1 mix engines in the last years. It is a two-cylinder opposed firing engine with the crank throws 180 degrees apart. The bore is 1-9/16" and the stroke is 1-3/8"… little pistons about like a D cell flashlight battery. It'll run 4,500rpm turning a little 6-1/2"x5-1/4" two-blade, weedless wheel at 2,700. An optional three-bladed semi-weedless prop was available. Evinrude called that a "power prop" but it was hard to tell any difference.

One peculiarity which Evinrude had developed in predecessors (namely the "Sportsman") was the "Fisherman Drive," which was an angled gearbox that made the thrust of the prop blow down instead of straight back behind the boat. Not only did that help the little engine shed weeds (a Lightwin will go through any lily pads and a good bit of grass without fouling) but lifted the transom so the boat ran better. They made them in several configurations through the years. One, called a "Ducktwin," was just a regular Lightwin painted olive drab. Another one folded up and went into a silly fiberglass carrying case. Another one called a "Yachtwin" had a straight drive gearbox and lower gear ratio and turned a bigger wheel for sailboat use.

A Lightwin has the best gas tank I ever saw on an outboard motor. About the time this engine came along the automobile salesmen who must dominate all boat and outboard motor design had begun the ridiculous fad of trying to hide the fuel filler cap under some kind of cover. I guess it is an offshoot of the human tendency to hide any part of yourself that has anything to do with functions of the body… wouldn't want anybody to know you had a gas hole on the tank of your outboard motor.

I was sorry to hear of the recent death of George Martin, who designed my next favorite outboard, the Martin 60 (7.2hp, 40lbs in 1946… try that on for size in 2006, Mr. Honda) but now I can freely say that Martin engines have the worst gas hole I ever saw… invisible, hard to hit, and apt to ooze and leak at any time… impossible to wipe around. Anyway, Evinrude was just as bad. By 1955 they were not only hiding the damned gas hole but even had a little rattling door disguising the pull rope on some engines. My old three has a respectable filler neck sticking up where you can get to it and a big, knobby cap with a legitimate gasket and a tight sealing vent screw. The big eared fuel shut-off sticks out the side of the engine and actually cuts the gas off to the carburetor so you can carry the engine in the trunk of the car without asphyxiating yourself and your companion… of course, it'll still stink like all-get-out… from the crap condensed inside the exhaust, so it is best to get out as soon as you can and take a breath of fresh air.

I mentioned the recoil starter. It is the style that dogs directly to big notches in the flywheel without any cute linkages or plastic Bendix looking trash. It is tightly built (a lot of the noise made by two-stroke outboards is the clattering of the recoil starter… four-stroke noise is mostly the valve train rattling) and almost fool proof. The way an over zealous fool can defeat that perfection is to lubricate it with some congealing oil. My theory is that, since all it does is make about a quarter revolution maybe once or twice each time the engine is used, it doesn't need any lubrication. I rubbed the little bushing with a pencil one time and my recoil starter has never let me down in 52 years.

I mentioned that quarter turn of the recoil starter. That's right. A Lightwin (when it is right) will start with a pull of less than a foot of rope. You want to ratchet it around so you can feel the compression start on one cylinder and then give a pretty good little twitch and she'll fire right up even when cold. That business of everything being right is the trick. For one thing, the choke has to fit tight. That's why you see people pulling five or six times to get an engine started. The choke isn't closed all the way. On new engines it has to wear into the carburetor bore a little bit or there'll be too much of a crack showing. When I furnish a new engine with a boat I built for a customer, I always break in the choke by pulling and pushing it a bunch of times until I can see that it is closing good.

Another thing that has to be "right" is the points. It is natural for points to get wrong. One thing that happens is the centrifugal blower effect of the flywheel when the engine is running. That pumps air and stuff up through gaps in the stator plate and may even draw a fume or two out of the crankshaft seal and maybe a little oil. All that boogers up the points. Never spray WD40 on magneto points… that catches crap. You want them dry and clean. There are a bunch of ways to clean them. My favorite way, when the engine goes to skipping on me way out in the boondocks, is to carve a dry stick down to a little blade, open the points, slide that in there, rub up and down a while, then re-carve a new blade and do it some more until the wood comes out clean.

If the condensers are good you hardly ever have to file magneto points like you do battery powered ignition. I mean, you ain't working with enough electricity to shine four headlights three miles down the road so the points don't burn. They just get dirty, is all.

So, one might ask, do you have your flywheel puller with you all the time so you can work the points to your satisfaction? Hell, no, and that's one of my favorite things about this little engine. You can clean the points with no tools but a straight slot screwdriver (and a pocket knife and a dry stick). The recoil starter is held to the top of the engine with four screws (if yours are Phillips, take them out, throw them overboard, and replace them with straight slot screws… some were and some weren't). There is a little plate held on top of the flywheel with some more straight slot screws. When that is off you can see the points as plain as day down through the spokes of the flywheel.

That brings up another thing. The old Lightwin has two sets of points, two condensers, two coils, two spark plug wires, and two plugs (J6J Champion… accept no substitute). The ignition system is completely redundant. My mother once ran my engine on the Ochlocknee River all the way from the Lake Talquin dam just east of Tallahassee almost to the coast at Panacea on one cylinder. She had a troop of Girl Scouts out for an adventure (back when Girl Scouts did "adventure") and I hadn't showed her how to clean points. Of course, she did have the sense enough to ascertain which plug wasn't firing and clean it but that wasn't the trouble so she put it back in there but she forgot to hook up the wire.

The reason she didn't have to go all the way to Panacea on one cylinder was that she finally heard a little popping noise back there and reached back to find that dangling spark plug wire arcing to the shank of the engine… or at least it had been doing that until it found her hand in the way. When it bit hell out of he she realized that she had some fire so she re-cleaned the dead plug, hooked up, and commenced to show those Girl Scouts just exactly what a two-cylinder engine would do.

So, do I hide in shame every time I fire up my old three? Yeah, well, I try to. One way I do that is to mostly use it on our own old weedy pond where what I do is nobody's durn business. I couldn't do without it. As the people who worship guns say, "They'll get my weedless three when they pry it from my cold dead fingers."



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Fast Blades

By Alan Glos

I grew up racing small one-design dinghies (Rhodes Bantams, Lightnings, Penguins, Thistles, and the like) and given the strict one-design requirements for these boats, there was not much one could do to make one boat faster than another. However, there was usually some wiggle room in the shape and construction of rudders. In one-design rudder designs there was usually a maximum thickness requirement that was checked by a template at regional and national regattas, but other than this thickness requirement and the two dimensional shape of the blade there was often quite a bit of latitude in the actual cross-sectional shape of the rudder blade itself. Hence, rudder shape and construction was fertile ground for eking out a little more speed.

Let's start with some basic observations. If the maximum thickness for a dinghy rudder is, say, 7/8", one could find an appropriate board, plane it down to 7/8", cut out the prescribed shape, hang pintles and tiller fittings on it, slap it on to the stern of the boat, and go sailing. Even with the squared edges it would work, but with all the turbulence and drag it would be deadly slow. A better solution would be to shape the underwater portion of the rudder blade into a proper hydrofoil by rounding the leading edge and tapering it off to the trailing edge, allowing the water to move over the foil with the minimum of drag, back eddies, and turbulence.

To make the design considerations even more complex, the rudder must perform well at all angles of attack as the rudder is moved along its axis when the skipper steers the boat over the race course. It didn't take long to conclude that there were an infinite number of shapes one could carve into the blank, but only one of them was the best shape. A trip to the local library yielded a few books on hydrodynamics, and the image that stuck with me was an overhead photo of a trout with a fairly blunt head (leading edge), maximum thickness about one-third of the way aft of the leading edge, and a smooth taper leading to a fairly sharp tail (trailing edge). There was a lot of other scientific jargon mentioned about laminar flow separation, coefficients of drag, etc., but it was the image of the trout cross-section that stuck with me. God don't make no slow fish, so "trout shape" was clearly the way to go.

My first attempt at making a racing rudder was a Penguin rudder for a friend who raced at a local lake. He had an old boat and his rudder was damaged. Knowing my interest, he purchased a beautiful piece of Philippine mahogany and got me a set of the official plans from Philip Rhodes Naval Architects, the designer. I was a high school student at the time and usually took a wood shop class in lieu of an end-of-the-school day study hall and I was always looking for projects.

The plans were very specific about the shape and, after planing the board down to maximum thickness allowed, I made a full size template, transferred it to the plank, and cut out a blank on the bandsaw. I then scribed a center line on the edge of the blank using a depth/marking gauge and, per the plans, made a grid on the blank. Using this grid I scribed a maximum thickness line down the face of the blank on both sides and then penciled in several stations that would later be used to check the cross-sectional shape. I then constructed a set of sheet metal shape templates from the plans that corresponded to the several stations on the blank.

The next step was the hard one, carving the desired shape into the blank. There is a story about a man who approached a master sculptor and asked him how he carved a statue of a horse from a block of marble. The artist responded, "It's easy, just cut away anything that doesn't look like a horse." Hence, my task was to simply cut away anything that didn't look like the desired rudder shape.

My shop teacher, Mr. Nelson, told me that using a hand plane was the best method to rough out the shape. The planes in the shop were old and dull and my first task was to grind a proper cutting angle on one of the plane irons and then hand sharpen it with a flat sharpening stone and cutting oil. I recall the process took the better part of three hours, but the result was a sharp plane that could shave a thin ribbon of mahogany without gouging or making burrs. I must admit that I became enthralled with the romance of using a sharp tool on a fine piece of wood.

Over the next few weeks I slowly planed the blank down on what amounted to four sides, the two leading edges on each side (from the center of the leading edge aft to the maximum thickness point) and the two trailing edges on each side (from the maximum thickness point to the trailing edge center line.) I set the plane to shave off only a fraction of an inch at a time, maybe 1/32" at a pass, and I checked the shapes frequently with the sheet metal templates that I had made from the plans.

When I finally got done rough shaping and the templates matched, I switched to sandpaper, starting with 100 grit and working up to 220 grit. As good a tool as a sharp plane is, it still makes flat cuts with each pass and the sandpaper rounds out the surface into a continuous curve. Mr. Nelson often said, "Don't forget that sandpaper is a tool," and even though we had a power sander in the shop, he made us do most of our sanding by hand. I sanded for days and when I was done the results were gratifying and the unfinished rudder blade looked great.

The only problem was that in my zeal to achieve a perfectly smooth surface I had sanded too much and the maximum thickness ended up about 1/8" under the desired specification. It was still a nice rudder and a big improvement over the original, but in retrospect I should have rough shaped the rudder a bit "proud" (i.e., oversized) and then sanded it down to specification. Yep, sandpaper is indeed a tool, lesson learned.

My next project was a Rhodes Bantam kick-up rudder for my own boat and this time I did away with the templates and tried to eyeball the shape as best I could. Like the scene in the first *Star Wars* movie where Luke Skywalker goes on manual attacking the Death Star, I decided to go with the force and see if I could come up with a fast blade by eye. Working without templates made getting a fast, symmetrical shape a bit more of a challenge and required looking down the length of the blade often and then touching up here and there to get the desired end result. It was a good project but, with the necessity of having to use 3/16" aluminum plate for the rudder cheeks, it came out heavy and useful only for off-the-beach cruising, not racing. Still, the shape was a big improvement over the stock rudder that came with the boat from the Gibbs Boat Company.

About this time I read an article in a sailing magazine by Mark Lindsay. Mark had, and continues to have, the reputation of being the best rudder carver east of the Mississippi. The article showed how to build a small boat rudder from laminated 1"x1" Sitka spruce strips and the result would be a very light, stiff, racing grade rudder. I had to travel an hour to buy clear Sitka spruce stock, but I did find some and ripped it to the 1"x1" specs and then, following Lindsay's instructions, I rotated each strip 90 degrees to change the grain angle for added stiffness and anti-warping, and I also built a glue jig to hold the strips in alignment for edge gluing. Last, I threw in one strip of mahogany just for color contrast and a little more stiffness in the middle of the blade.

Modern epoxy resin for amateur use was still a few years off, so I used Elmers brand waterproof resorcinol glue that was mixed from a brown liquid and powder catalyst. I didn't have proper clamps and ended up stacking cement blocks on the top of the gluing jig, but with a nice, even runout of the goopy glue I figured I got a strong, even glue joint. When the glue cured I scraped off the excess glue, rough belt-sanded the resulting blank, and then convinced a local mill works to run it through a surface planer to get an even 7/8" thick laminated plank. From then on, it was simply a matter of band sawing out a rudder shaped blank and planing and sanding it to shape. With all the different grain exposures, having a very sharp plane was imperative and I recall pausing often in the shaping process to resharpen the plane iron.

Mark Lindsay said a little judicious belt sanding was allowed but I was too cautious and opted for hand sanding the final shape. This time I also intentionally made the blade a little under the maximum thickness as I planned on fiberglassing the underwater section of the blade for added strength and smoothness.

When the shaping and sanding was complete, I hung the rudder sideways with the blunt leading edge at the top and covered the entire underwater section with one piece of lightweight fiberglass cloth draped over the blade and then wetted out the cloth with catalyzed polyester resin. When it cured I trimmed off the excess fiberglass cloth, sanded the glassed blade, and recoated with a flow coat of resin. After sanding again, I recoated with a second resin flow coat and then got serious with finer and finer grits of sandpaper, ending up with 600 grit wet-or-dry paper used wet.

I finished the project with 1/4" mahogany plywood cheeks (per the plans) and new stainless steel pintles. The laminated spruce and mahogany showed clearly through the fiberglass covering and it carved through the water with a minimum of fuss and turbulence. (Author's note: A few years later, while refinishing this blade, I wondered if I could lighten it by removing the 1/4" plywood rudder cheeks. File this idea under "bad ideas" as it cracked end to end the first time I sailed the boat in heavy air. I keep the cracked blade around to remind me that good naval architects know what they are doing most of the time and we amateurs usually don't).

Several years later, while a graduate student in North Carolina, I met a young couple who were building a Rhodes Bantam from a kit from the now defunct Bay Craft Boat

Company in Bay City, Michigan. The rudder that came with the kit was a single blank of Philippine mahogany, but not shaped. We struck up a friendship and I ended up volunteering to do the basic shaping of the rudder and did so in a single night at their married



student apartment at Duke University. I didn't even own a plane at the time and ended up buying a cast iron Stanley plane from a local hardware store, a tool that I have used and enjoyed countless times since. The rudder came out pretty good for a one night effort.

In the mid-1970s I bought a new, second hand Rhodes Bantam that I planned to race and the heavy plywood mahogany rudder that came with the boat had to go. By this time WEST™ epoxy resin was readily available and I ended up building not one but two Sitka spruce rudders using WEST™ resin for the lamination gluing and coating. These were my best efforts to date and although I did not dispense with the plywood cheeks, I did drill the cheeks full of lightening holes (see photos) and both rudders are still going strong years later. The completed rudders went on my Rhodes Bantam, *Spirit*, and a friend's *Amazin' Grace*, and both boats with these rudders on board won three Rhodes Bantam International Championships in subsequent years. I like to think that these homemade rudders had something to do with their success, but even if they didn't they were great fun to build.

These days most of my spare time goes into small boat repair and restoration projects rather than new construction, but I still have a fascination with crafting fast blades. Just last summer I repaired a badly damaged Sunfish synthetic dagger board, making a mold from an undamaged board and filling the mold with thickened epoxy (but that's another story.) The technology has changed a bit over the years but there is still no substitute for a sharp plane, a fine piece of wood, and a good eye… and sandpaper, don't forget the sandpaper.



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A deckhand riding out a squall off Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada, 1884.

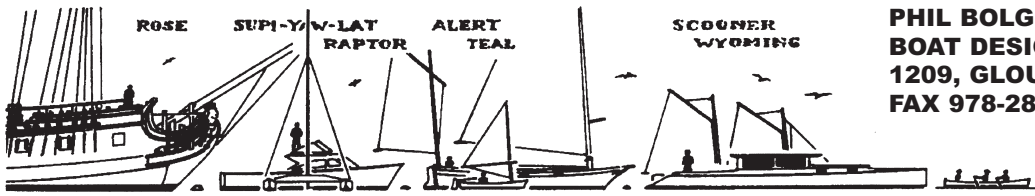
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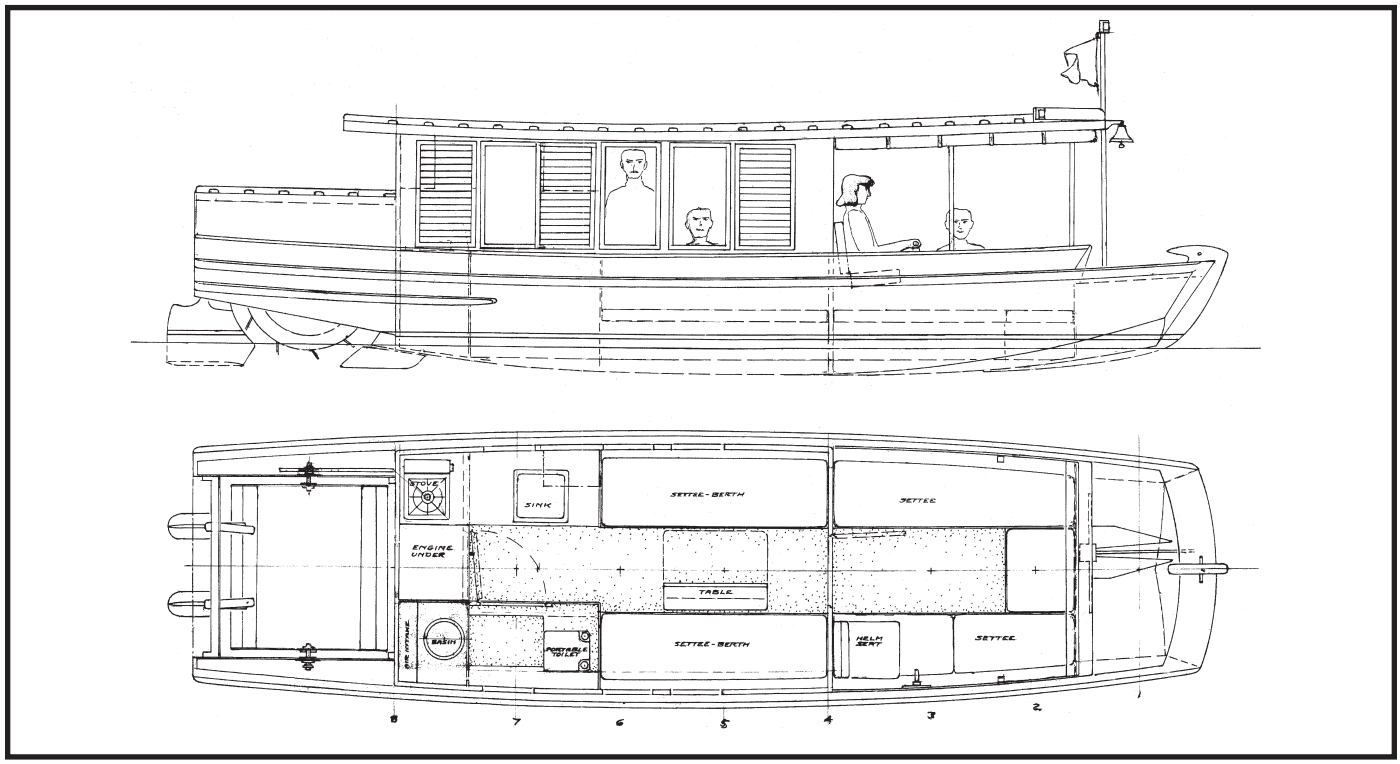
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18-25 hp

As we were trying out the Becky Thatcher sternwheel pedal boat (February 1 issue), her attractions started us thinking of how nicely a cruiser could be arranged with a similar layout in a larger boat. At one-and-a-half times the size we got the proportions shown here. Scale-ups usually don't work well, but this one did. Length and beam still within trailer limits in all states; good standing headroom in the cabin; four sleeping length settees; a workable galley and enclosed toilet space with shower, and enough length left over for as much engine as the hull could efficiently use. The "flipping" paddlewheel also took the new scale perfectly. It all fell together in spare time relaxation.

We named the concept for the grown-up woman we'd imagined from Mark Twain's pretty little girl in *Tom Sawyer*. Unexpected to quite a few around town, she has grown to become Captain Rebecca Thatcher, a no-nonsense riverboat owner/operator, somewhat notorious for her impatience with "out-of-town" pilots who claim to know "her" stretch of the river better than she does. Dialing in, when useful, a fair measure of the charm that captivated the boys, she has built on her childhood adventures with Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer to mature into a woman very unconventional in her era. Her big chance came when she ran into a fair inheritance that allowed her to eventually own and run her own boat.

Even today, in the right waters, paddlewheels have huge advantages. The only penalty she suffers cruising in a foot of water is that she'll drive harder and be slower than in deep water. Benjamin Franklin did pioneering tank tests to demonstrate this effect and drew the correct conclusions about 230 years ago. Any screw-propelled boat needs some depth for the prop (some tunnel-stern designs do almost as well on paper but they're still vulnerable to fouling their props whereas the wheel is perfectly non-fouling). Jets foul their intakes while this paddlewheeler has no underwater openings at all. She could even break through a little bit of ice if the paddle blades were reinforced.

The 18-25hp V-2 engine is an industrial (very cheap) gasoline four-stroke of the kind made for generators and such. Air-cooled, with an integrated 10/20amp alternator, it lives in a weather and spray protected compartment well above the waterline with fumes drained overboard. Transmission would be either through conventional gears or hydraulic drive, depending upon budget and owner's inclination; in either case the wheel would be turned by chain or belt, running like Becky Thatcher's final drive inside a dry box, keeping the chain/belt from being perpetually water doused. Soft-mounted in an insulated compartment 16' and two bulkheads separated from the controls and underway view, it's possible to make it nearly inaudible from where people would be when underway.

Looking at all that rooftop "acreage" one might be tempted to dream about solar powered propulsion. But a naked roof fully covered in photovoltaic panels might offer somewhere between 1,200 and 1,400 watts, or at most 2hp in propulsion power on perfectly bright day. Not bad in sheltered conditions actually, but who lives with cloudless skies when you need to move your cruiser, even on Lake Powell blue skies are not guaranteed. If you moved just a few hours per day, with the rest of the day spent vegetating while the electrons flow into the batteries, this might be tryable with a straight face, with a back-up generator on stand-by duty. Expense, though, is significant with panels alone punching through the $10,000 mark! Might as well just move a few hours every day under plain gasoline power, very, very gradually burning your way through that $13-15,000+ solar system budget.

Boarding Captain Rebecca Thatcher would be over the bow. Step to the foredeck

and down two steps into the cockpit. The helm seat is raised for the helmsman to see over the heads of the others without turning her back on them. The seat folds up out of the way when she's not underway to clear a nearly 7' settee on each side. Side lever steering saves the intrusion of a wheel mount. Instruments would be overhead or to the side. This space would have fabric and clear plastic curtains for wet weather, as was done on Becky. The curtains also turn the cockpit into overnight sleeping space for two guests. Though intended as a real cruiser for a couple, she wouldn't be very crowded for four good-humored people. And speaking of a couple, it would be easy to arrange a double bed athwartships with a couple of fill-in panels.

The galley and washroom aft have respectable clearances. A serious holding tank will work in without complications, as will generous battery capacity. Over the paddlewheel shroud there will be space for bicycles and a compact punt to get ashore in places where anchoring off is convenient or desirable for quiet and privacy. A couple of kayaks can stow on top of the house. In all cases the view aft is provided through big truck-type mirrors on either side of the forward cockpit.

This is obviously an inland waters boat. This continent offers multiple lifetime's worth of cruising itineraries on its rivers, canals, and lakes of all sizes, with much of the coastline featuring estuaries protected by barrier islands. Multiple mighty rivers call to run them from the shallow headwaters, assuming locks in dams or local transportation around such manmade obstacles. Before dams, the head of navigation on the Missouri, for instance, was Fort Benton Montana, typically using no more than 2' draft sternwheelers. Capt. Rebecca Thatcher could go up higher yet, assuming hull speed is adequate to buck the current.

On the other hand, if you hate dams and locks, there is the Canadian Mackenzie River system, an "expedition of a lifetime" experience. Then we'd use a diesel engine, trading more noise for more range per pound of fuel carried. Picking any tributary such as Hay River, Peace River, Atabasca River, Slave River, etc., or just the Great Slave Lake, you'll find only natural narrows, with the fastest on the Mackenzie topping out at well over 9kts. So we'd go "downhill," timing our passage just so through the Arctic summer fading fast way up north. What we do with our boat once we arrive at Tuktoyaktut, Kugmallit Bay, Beaufort Sea around the time first snowflakes fly remains to be figured out. Yukon anyone? What's wrong with the Tennessee Tom-Bigbee Waterway anyway, or just three weeks on the Erie Canal and its lakes?

Wherever she'll go, she could handle some occasional and limited rough water pretty well. Her bow will likely be wet but she has respectable reserve stability and ample positive buoyancy in her foam backed side panels and elsewhere. The watertight drum of the paddlewheel alone has over 2,000lbs of positive buoyancy (assuming, as happened once in Becky, an access plate into the wheel's interior volume is not left open). In some kinds of chop, the wheel may lose effectiveness and she has considerable wind resistance. Beware of lee shores with much fetch to windward.

This is just a feasibility study. There will be working plans when we get around to it, probably not soon.

Editor Comments: I got the "flipping sternwheel" flipped upside down in the February 15 issue layout, the drawing was freestanding, unattached to the boat, and I didn't pay attention. It's back rightside up in this issue as it is attached securely to the boat.

The Neighborly Boatbuilder:
A Worthy Goal

By Rodger Swanson, Swanson's Boat Shop

The 2006 construction season at SBC (not to be confused with the communications conglomerate) officially began February 1 with the erection of the building jig for a 14-1/2' sharp stern rowing skiff. Winter quarters are half of our heated basement. Certain power equipment is housed in our garage. The process of moving materials and equipment into efficient alignment brought to mind this fact, all of the space I use is shared with someone else.

Question: In the using of this space, do I conduct myself as befits a good neighbor?

Answer: Not always.

Why?: Mostly because of a lack of forethought.

Response: Well, let's try to do better this time. There are, after all, potential benefits to be reaped.

Historically, my wife's chief complaint relative to my woodcarving and boat building endeavors has centered around one by-product, sawdust. She has a natural aversion to sawdust. She hates it! She especially hates it when she discovers that sawdust from whatever job is currently underway has migrated to the very furthest reaches, nooks, crannies, and comers of our abode. So.

This year, Aaron (redoubtable apprentice extraordinaire) and I have gone to great lengths to capture said sawdust before it wreaks havoc on relationships important to our well being. Judicious deployment of the shop vacuum, equipment mounted dust catchers, brooms, dustpans, and waste containers (with lids) looks to be adequate to the task. Not only will my wife look more kindly upon us, we will avoid some of last year's problems when errant sawdust marred what would otherwise have been a great paint job.

There is also the matter of literal neighbors. I am blessed with being surrounded by two of the greatest neighbors on this planet. But, one of them happens, also, to be a snow removal and landscape maintenance customer. Guess what? When doing some yard work for her last fall, I discovered (a LOT of) planing curls in a hedge. They were unsightly and not easy to remove. Their source, next door at SBC. So this year, all (ALL) work conducted in the garage workspace will experience immediate clean-up.

Whether amateur or professional, many of us builders operate out of our homes. A little extra effort on clean-up pays big dividends in terms of keeping our neighbors happy with us. Lack of consideration in this area can engender unpleasantries like calls to the zoning board and the like, usually avoidable if given forethought.

Same goes for noise control. My power equipment is LOUD. By checking with my neighbors as to their customary daily routines, I've been able to get power-related work done (usually) at times when it doesn't bother them.

Still speaking of power equipment, I've made it a practice to complete at least one house related project per boat or carving commission. There is always a backlog of such projects and finding the time to do them (and do them right) isn't easy. I've found that fitting them in when I already have my equipment set up for a boat works out well. Also, I can usually set the item aside and apply whatever finish is required when I'm painting or varnishing the boat.

Lastly, most builders require a cup or two of coffee (or other beverage of choice) while at work on the masterpiece. DON'T use your significant other's cup or favorite vessel. You WILL drop, break, or in some manner ruin and wreck it! So only use your own stuff. You'll probably break, wreck, or ruin that, too, but the penalties are much less severe. Same goes for clothes. If there's something your wife really thinks looks good on you, DON'T wear it for boat work. It, too, will come to a bad end!

I expect I've missed some items. I'm sure of it. These will be brought to my attention and I'll duly report on them next time.



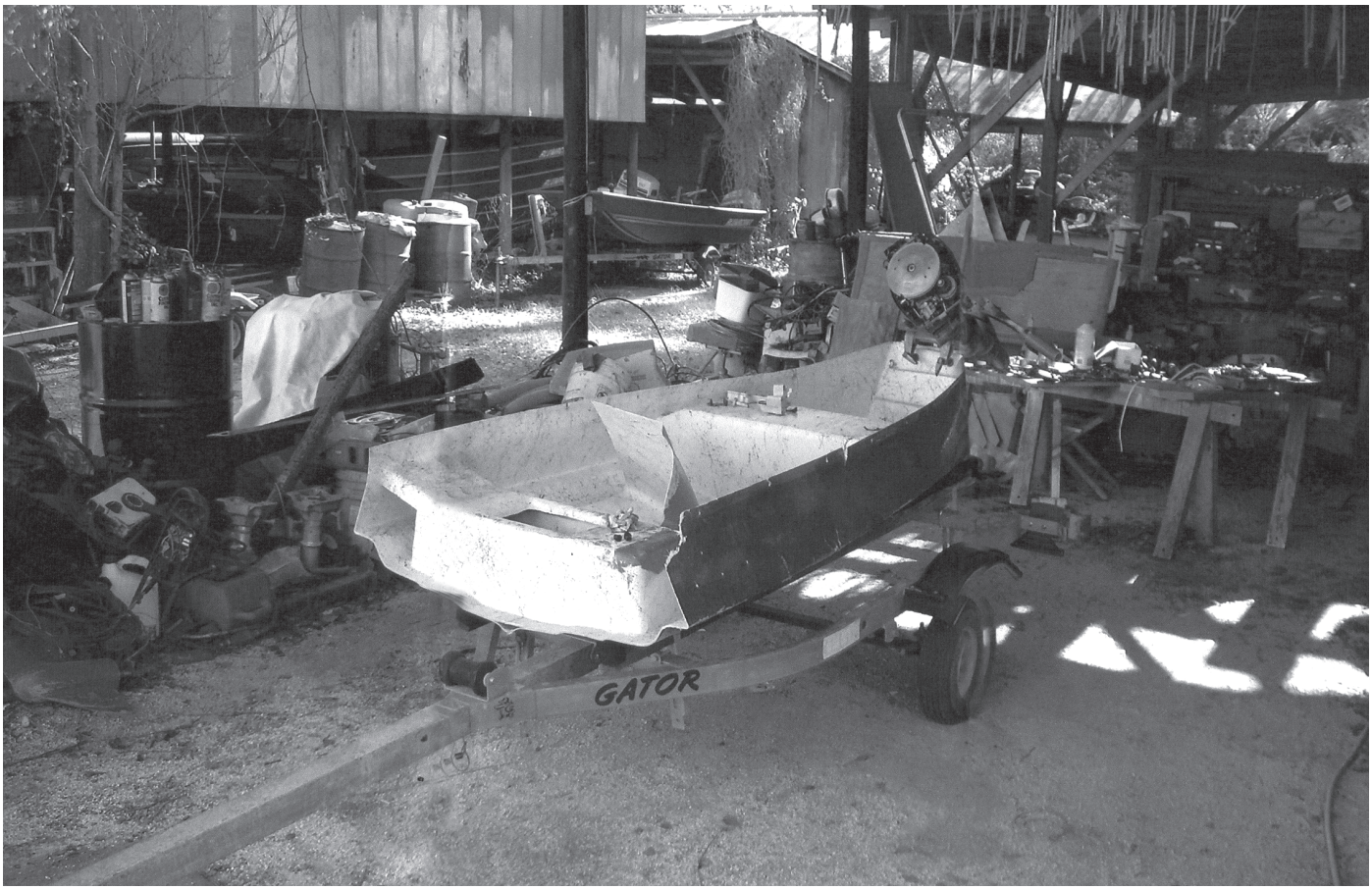
I Propose A Contest

By Robb White

I propose a contest sort of like the one on the back page of *The New Yorker* each issue where they have an inexplicable cartoon that has no caption. The readers are asked to send one in and the winner is announced in the next issue. I'll kick off with this picture.

Editor Comments: Because our production cycle for each issue (the April 15 issue goes off to the printer by the time you are reading this) your entries will not appear until the May 1 issue. We must have your entry in hand here by March 31. We'll probably run a winner and two runners-up. Prizes? I dunno yet, let see how this goes.

You are also invited to submit your own photo or original art (cartoons, drawings, not from any other publication). Depending upon response, once we get past this 45-day start-up gap, we should have a photo/cartoon each issue for you to have a go at.



Eating Ducks

By Robb White

So, one might want to know, will I eat a wild duck? Shoot yes. I love them and a bullneck is my favorite. They have very dark meat kind of like a jacksnipe and it is very gamy and flavorful… makes my wings want to whistle. I don't break the game laws, especially not on migratory birds. Those ducks belong to everybody in the country. My grandfather had an understanding with the game warden. He told him that he would not allow any game laws to be broken on our place if the warden would not come aggravating people all the time. Though we have been through dozens of game wardens (a tough and dangerous job if there ever was one) since then I have always had an agreement with them, too. They know we bait those ducks on that big pond and sometimes they slip down there just to see what it looked like back in the good old days.

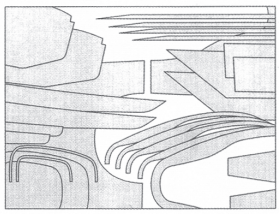
I do not shoot baited ducks or any other kind of baited animal. I think corn hunters are the sorriest kinds of "sportsmen." Well, maybe not. Those Florida road hunters who sit in the little swivel chair on top of the dog box in the pickup truck alongside the road and drink beer and talk on the CB while they wait for some poor, dog-tired deer to stagger out into the highway are the actual sorriest. I shoot my ducks at one of our other ponds or in the Black Hole (which I'll explain sometime) where the only bait is what comes naturally. I always wait until the last day of the season so, when they fly off, they won't go somewhere and get crippled. I am not greedy. I just need a little taste. A lot of times what I get is a poor cripple where some bait hunter didn't know the range of a durn shotgun.

You know the British have some unusual notions about how to eat game birds. They like them "well hung." My grandfather's people came over here after the industrial revolution starved them off their cottage looms in Liverpool and they brought their peculiar epicurean notions with them. I inherited some of them. A bullneck is a delicious bird and the wound around the shot is the most delicious part. You have to watch these durn modern iron shot, though… break a tooth. I'll eat a wood duck, too, and I have even eaten a mallard (you can buy them at the grocery store) and once, when I was a boy, a black duck (which are actually brown… taste about like a mallard) but bullnecks are my favorite waterfowl.

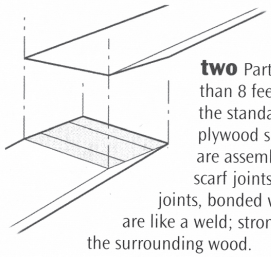
Oops, I forgot jacksnipes. That is a most exquisitely gamy and flavorful little morsel right there… worth about 30 bucks each considering how many shotgun shells it takes for me to finally hit one of the little zigzag bullets. I never got to eat any jacksnipes until after my mother died. Every time I would come in with my shotgun (my grandfather's Model 12, 16 gauge) my mother would come hobbling out (killed a mule with a motorcycle when she was 16 years old) and say, "All I need is one of those bullnecks. You can hang him and those jacksnipes out on the porch for me. They'll be ready in four or five days as warm as it is."

Assembly of a Typical CLC Kayak Kit

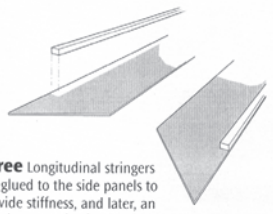
The Chesapeake Light Craft catalog which arrived in early January contained this graphic display of how one of their kits goes together. I thought it worthy of examination by anyone with stitch and glue construction in mind and CLC owner John Harris graciously agreed.



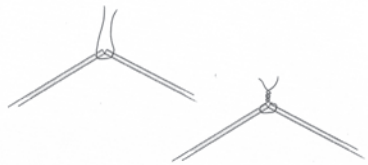
one Begin with an inventory of your computer-cut kit and group all the related parts.



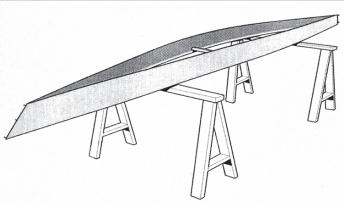
two Parts longer than 8 feet — the standard size of a plywood sheet — are assembled using scarf joints. Scarf joints, bonded with epoxy, are like a weld; stronger than the surrounding wood.



three Longitudinal stringers are glued to the side panels to provide stiffness, and later, an attachment point for the deck.

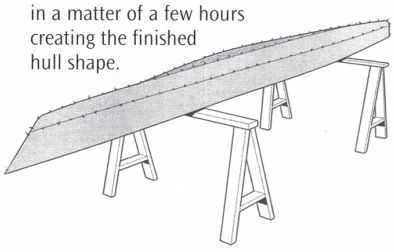


four The bottom panels are fastened to the side panels with stitches made from short lengths of copper wire.

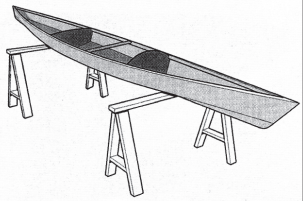


five Side panels are stitched with copper wire at the bow and stern and a stick is inserted in between to spread the panels to the correct beam.

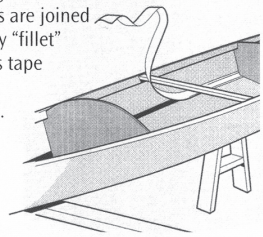
six Here, the bottom panels have been completely stitched to the side panels, in a matter of a few hours creating the finished hull shape.



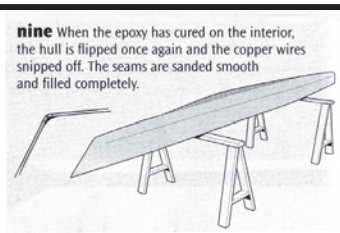
seven With the bottom stitched on, the hull is righted and bulkheads set in place. The bulkheads help stiffen the hull and create watertight compartments.



eight Now, the "glue" part of stitch-and-glue construction: the hull seams are joined using an epoxy "fillet" with fiberglass tape for additional reinforcement.



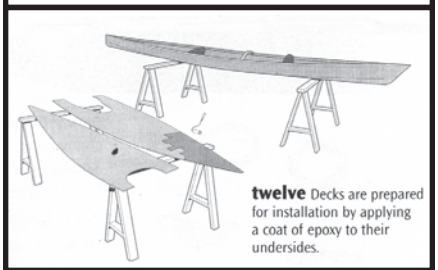
nine When the epoxy has cured on the interior, the hull is flipped once again and the copper wires snipped off. The seams are sanded smooth and filled completely.



ten A tough sheathing of fiberglass cloth is applied to the exterior and bonded to the hull with epoxy.



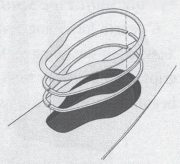
eleven The sheer clamps, (the stringers glued on back in step 3) are planed to accept the deck panels using a template provided with the kit.



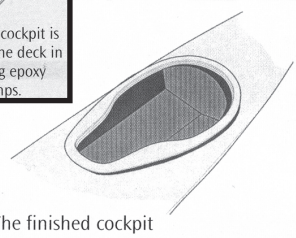
twelve Decks are prepared for installation by applying a coat of epoxy to their undersides.



thirteen The deck is installed in two operations; first the stern, then the bow. The deck is fastened down with bronze nails while the glue dries.



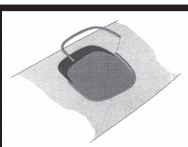
fourteen The cockpit is laminated onto the deck in three layers, using epoxy and lots of c-clamps.



fifteen The finished cockpit increases the deck's strength and creates a flange (inset) for a spray skirt.



sixteen While the cockpit is curing, the hatch covers are assembled.



seventeen Hatch openings are cut in the deck and reinforced.

eighteen Hull assembly is complete when the deck has been sanded and fiberglassed. Time to varnish! Sanding and finishing can be expected to take about half of the total time of the project.

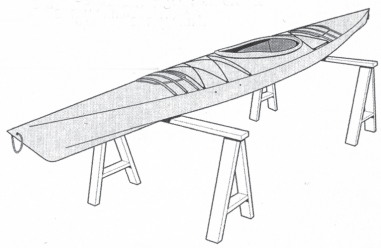




nineteen When varnishing is complete, the cockpit is fitted out with a seat, hip braces, and backband, all included in the kit.



twenty Foot braces, included in the kit, complete the fit-out.



Finished! Just add varnish....and water!

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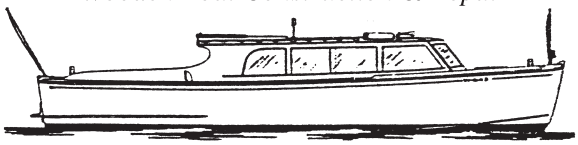
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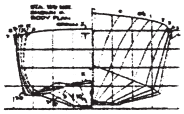
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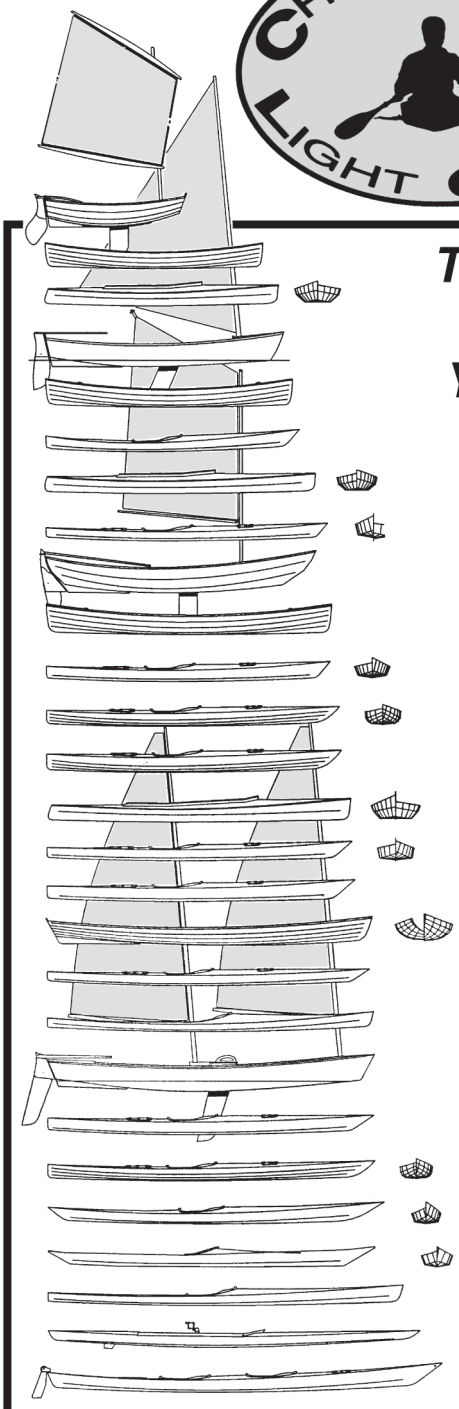
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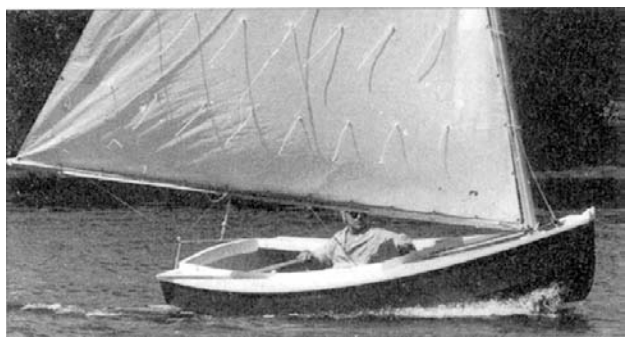
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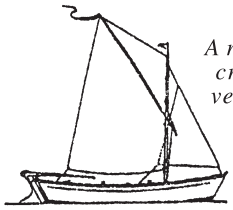
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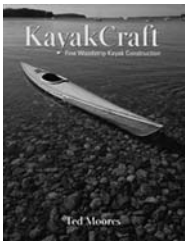
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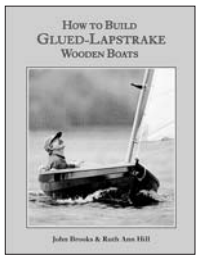
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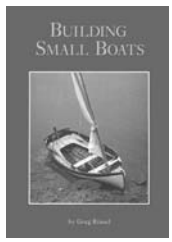
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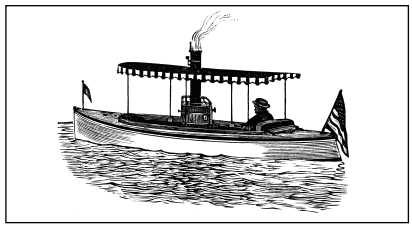
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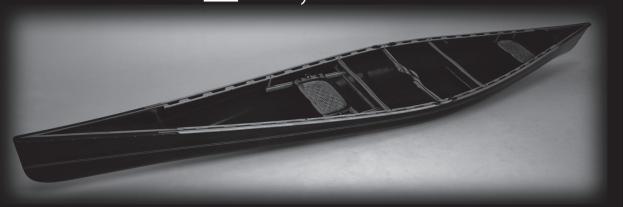
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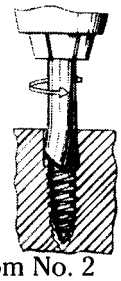
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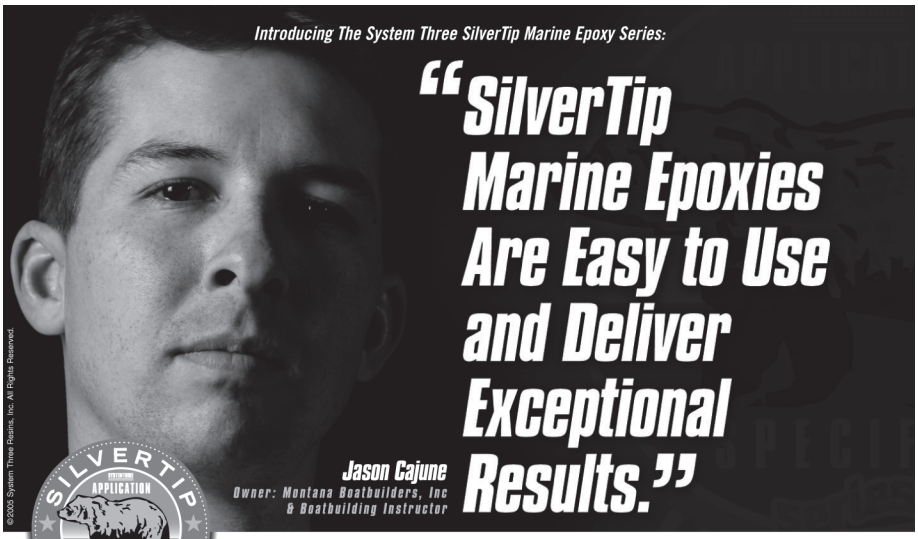
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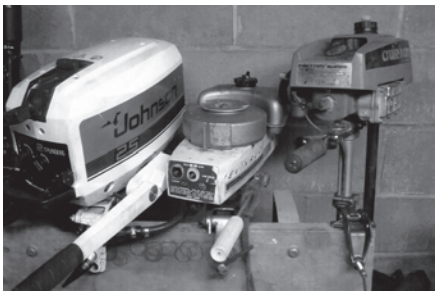
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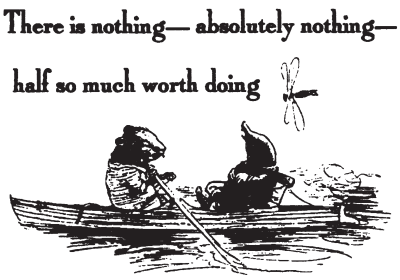
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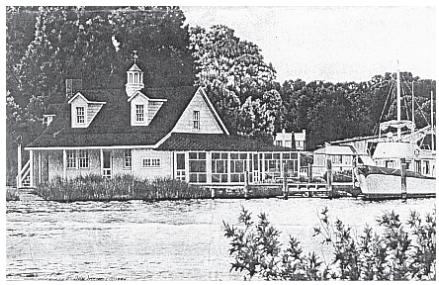
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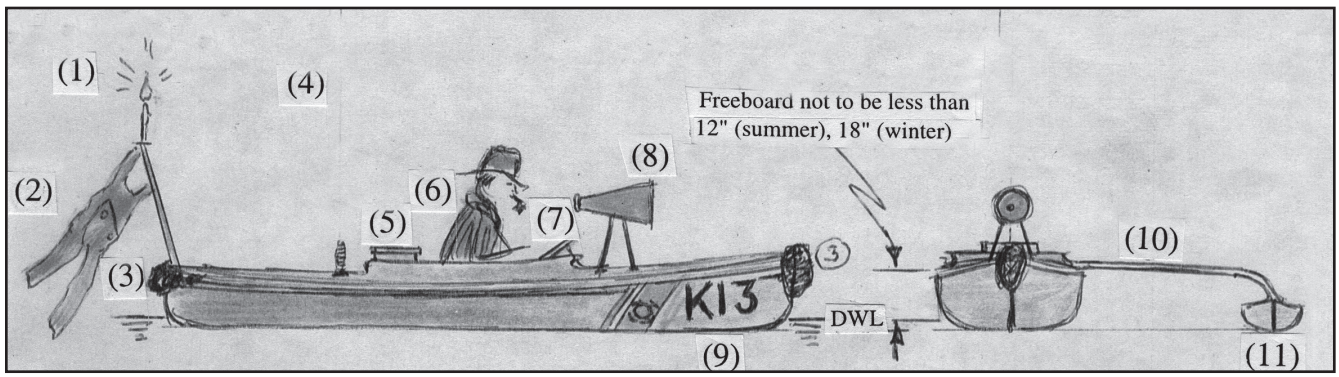
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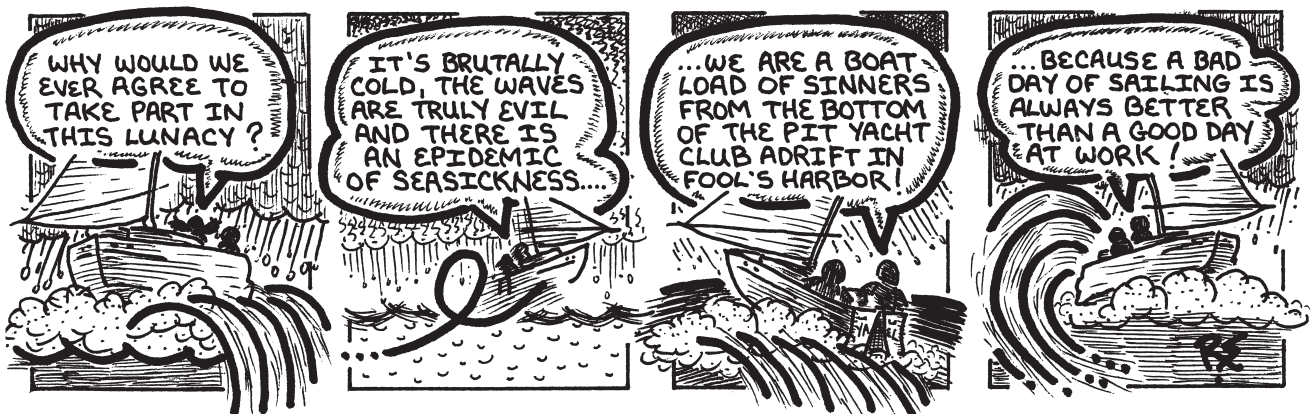
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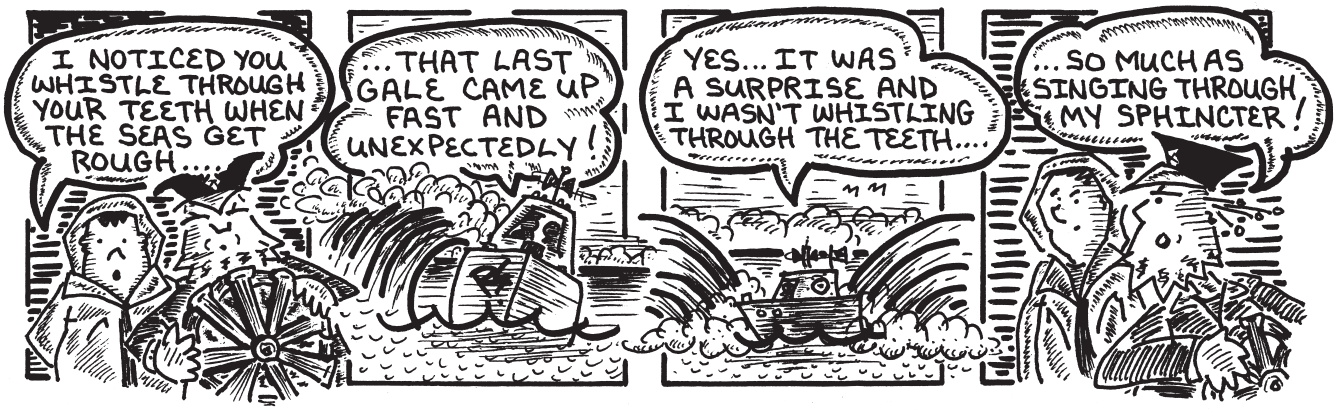
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