



messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 34 – Number 5

September 2016

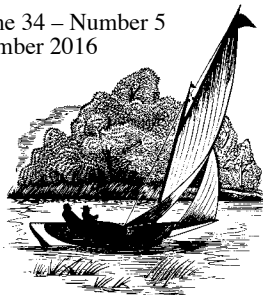
Special Features This Issue
The Saturday Night Special – Rowing the Texas 200
1916 Fay & Bowen Torpedo Stern Launch Restoration
The Development of Open Canoe Sailing Racing



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Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor

This month's cover leads off 14 pages all about taking part in the Texas 200 small boat endurance challenge. Bobby Chilik leads off on page 10 with four pages on his experience sailing the event in his homebuilt John Welsford "Saturday Night Special." Kelly Davis follows up on eight pages about successfully rowing the entire event in 2015 after, as he puts it, "failing the mental challenge in 2014." To wrap up the topic, eight time finisher Chuck Pierce presents "Ten Indications That You Should NOT do the Texas 200." After reading Bobby's and Kelly's tales you will appreciate what Chuck has to say about NOT undertaking such long and grilling multi day challenges unless you are really well prepared.

Taking part in any sort of organized event, competitive or not, that covers several days, with all the variables that can arise while so doing, is a quantum leap in tenacity of purpose and management of what is happening, from going for it in one or two day events, however difficult they may be. Despite this potentially daunting prospect there are always some of us who just have to have a go at it. I happen to be one such so I learned all about that saying, "perseverance prevails when all else fails."

No, I never undertook such adventuring in small boats, mine came at the end of 20 years of off road motorcycle competition when I undertook to travel to Germany and Spain in two successive years to take part in an annual world level International Six Days Trials, six days of about 200 miles each day keeping to a prescribed schedule nearly all off road going (24mph was the typical average speed required which indicates something of the degree of difficulty riding bikes that could easily do 60+mph). Reading the two Texas 200 stories, I was struck with the similarities of our experiences despite the radically different "vehicles."

To begin with, I had to be set up right with my equipment. In my case my bike had to go the distance (1150 miles) without major repairs, only those I could do myself with any parts I could carry. Each day my bike was impounded overnight and released the following morning 15 minutes prior to my scheduled starting times. Obviously proper preparation was of highest priority. I was fortunate in having a ride on a factory owned and prepared bike, more to do with my being a journalist who would write up and publish the experience than as a serious contender for honors. Chuck Pierce dis-

cusses this in his "Ten Indications..." piece on page 22.

It was also necessary to have the knowledge and skills derived from taking part in shorter one or two days events of similar nature, which I had acquired in some 100 or so such events over the preceding ten years. All of those many events were undertaken in a spirit of adventure, one that could be sustained over their relatively short duration.

In his report on rowing all those 200 miles of the Texas coast, Kelly Davis admits to his failure to complete the event on 2014 was due to "inadequate mental preparedness." He had been warned about this by Al Freihofer, who had reported on his rowing 450 miles down the Atlantic coast in *MAIB* a number of years ago. Kelly dropped out on day four in 2014, he had thought he was good to go but "sadly this was not the case."

My decision to undertake my two adventures in the big time came about as I knew I was at the end of my serious competition years at ages 39 and 40 and they seemed to be something that would be nice to cap, if you will, my career in my own mind, something to feel good about as my life moved on away from that game.

The mental preparedness manifested itself on the third morning of my experience in the Bavarian Alps in the 1969 German ISDT. It had rained a lot and the going on those mountain tracks underwheel was muddy, slippery and treacherous. And here I was, I hadda go out again today in yet more of this, with three more such days yet to be endured beyond. I was holding my own so there was no question about quitting, I knew I could carry on physically and my bike was holding up OK but it was not a very attractive prospect. So I endured and finished. I still remember vividly sitting down beside Jane on a hay bale after turning in my bike on the final day and saying, 'I just can't believe this is all over!'

Encouraged by this experience, and with the offer again of factory bike support, I went off to Spain in 1970, and while it was dry there on the high Spanish Estramadura outside of Madrid, a series of small mechanical troubles kept me busy fending off the option of just quitting. So I carried on.

Today, now 46 years later, I still savor those adventures which, in addition to being rewarding for their own merits, emphasized to me the importance of mental preparation for any of the subsequent challenges I have undertaken (like launching this magazine at age 53).

On the Cover...

Bobby Chilik gets it on in the Texas 200 in his own homebuilt John Welsford "Saturday Night Special" design. His report on how it all worked out begins on page 10, heading up no less than 13 more pages all about participating in this annual small boat endurance challenge.

From the Journals of Constant Waterman



By Matthew Goldman
Constantwaterman.com

By the time you read this, I'll be back on the water. Though the weld on my gooseneck slide failed in a ferocious ten-knot breeze, the welder did an admirable job and my rigging is all-a-taut-o. Before I went to the welder, I surfed the inevitable Internet for a new slide. In twenty minutes, I'd found one nearly identical to the thirty-seven year old artifact from my boat. One thing puzzled me, though. I never realized stainless steel cost five hundred dollars per pound. Nearly as much as lobster during tourist season.

Went out yesterday afternoon to ensure myself that the water was wet and the breeze as insistent as ever. Amazingly, I was not disappointed, again. Rode the tide on a close reach toward Watch Hill, where I determined to return along the outboard, southern, shore of Fishers Island. The first passage through the reef beyond the island I didn't consider, as I would need to head upwind. The second passage I all but passed, then came about and buried her nose in the breeze. I pinched her for all she was worth (the boat, Dear, the boat) and fought a losing battle against the tide.

Fortunately, the passage was a couple of hundred yards in width. I clawed my way between the two markers for fifteen minutes and made a quarter mile, but knew I wouldn't clear the rocks beyond. If I tacked I would lose everything I'd made. I tucked my tail between my legs, jibed her as tightly as I could, and was out of there in a twinkling.

I continued along the inside of the reef till I reached the lighthouse at Watch Hill Point that marks the open water. I hardened up and headed out to sea a mile, then tacked and tried again to stem the tide. Lessons in futility are abundant when you sail. The math is always apparent. Making three knots against a two-knot tide when you've twelve miles to go means that you won't be home for supper until they're setting the table for breakfast. Going the long way round about Fishers Island would add about five miles to my return.

I consulted my chart, chose an ample passage back through the reef, and fell off the wind. The breeze picked up a trifle and I breasted the ebb a bit quicker than expected. By the time I was halfway back to Noank, the tide was in its final hour and scarcely slowed my progress. MoonWind settled at fifteen degrees and four to five knots and I made the entire trip on a single tack. I lifted my collar against the wind and contemplated hot tea.

A couple of miles from West Cove, I overtook a thirty-foot sloop that berths three slip from MoonWind. The end of last summer, she blew out her only jib. Or perhaps the north wind did it. The nuances of our language can be daunting. There are times when even my wife can scarce understand me. Anyway, she (the sloop, not my wife) was heading in with only her main and making pretty fair time. When she gets her new genny, all I'll ever see of her will be her wake.

Out and back and at the pier, her skipper was learning the ropes to an avid young lady. It's never too late to learn. There are so many things about boats I find confusing. Sometimes I get the Cunningham slightly confused with the catnip, and the Pusslet needs to tauten the luff instead of lying at home on the hearth with all four paws in the air.

We all of us have some lessons to learn and, with scarcely a century's span to learn them all, it's a wonder we don't go aground much more than we do. The number of years I've sat on sandbars, waiting for some extraordinary tide to raise me above myself, has often stalled my journey. The number of years I've spent adrift could be a book by itself. And all those times I've tacked up narrow channels against the current makes me wonder whether or not a snug berth is in my forecast.

The confident and careful mariner, mind and eyes wide open, usually makes a fair passage, and generally finds a safe anchorage come the evening. Just remember to seek a lee shore and never deploy the bitter end of your rode.

Matthew Goldman, aka Constant Waterman.

Author & Illustrator. (860) 912-5886.

To view and purchase my books and cards please visit: <http://www.constantwaterman.com>



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You write to us about...

Activities & Events...

2016 New London Whaleboat Challenge

The 2016 New London Whaleboat Challenge will be held on September 10 at New London, CT, as part of the Connecticut Maritime Heritage Festival. This year's event will be a test of boat handling skill and raw speed, with a course featuring close maneuvering and straightaway legs. In addition, races are being designed for open water capable human powered craft to allow a greater opportunity for rowing and paddling enthusiasts to participate. If enough interest is expressed, a rowing/paddling tour of the Thames River will be included in this year's schedule, which will afford an opportunity to observe the sights and activities of this port city during the Festival weekend. Please let us know if you are interested in receiving more information regarding your participation in this event.

Jon Persson, Old Saybrook, CT, jonpersson7@gmail.com

Port Aransas plyWooden Boat Festival

The Third Annual Port Aransas plyWooden Boat Festival takes place on October 8-10 in the beautiful beach town of Port Aransas, TX. Bring your wooden boats to display. Attend informative programs on boat building and boating. Build a boat at the Family Boat Building. Kids can build a model boat, too. Go on a guided paddle tour of the nearby Lighthouse Trails. October in Port Aransas is a great time of year with great weather and plenty of thinks for the family to do. Check out www.portaransasplywoodenboatfestival.org for more info.

Adventures & Experiences...

Seen At St Michaels, MD

Someone said we can grow to look like our dog. Can it be possible that we can grow to look like our boat? We were returning to St Michaels with our friends in their 34' classic *Juniper*. *Juniper* was built of eastern cedar with a V-bottom, she has an auto conversion V8 with excess power but she is used at a sedate 8mph. While *Juniper* approached the gas dock to top off before being put away, a large power yacht, about a 60-footer, roared up behind us, aimed at the same gas dock.

The large yacht was Eurostyled and beige. It's owner was Eurostyled and beige. He was perched high above us on an open bridge under no canopy. The little binnacle had a joy stick, which he fiddled constantly, surging forward and back. He looked listlessly forward. He appeared not interested in the scenic harbor or in deigning to look down on us lesser mortals.

His attire was skimpy beige shorts and flipflops. I hope he used plenty of sun lotion.

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I leave it to you to judge if he grew to look like his boat. I disqualify myself from making this judgment here because:

1: I fear I will look like him in the future. I'm still losing hair and recently a prescription pill gave me a beer belly without the satisfaction of drinking the beer.

2: In 1970 I was biased by L. Francis Herreshoff's rant in *Common Sense of Yacht Design* about the newly rich yahoos coming to most harbors and waterways.

3. I'm a Depression baby who has money because I am tight. Also, I am all for "Joe Sixpack" enjoying a boat vs the 60130-footers taking marina space. BUT I will admit this man reminded me of Mr Toad in *Wind in the Willows*, who roared around in expensive motorcars, with no destination in mind.

Jim Wonnell, Milan, MI

Information of Interest...

Rocking the Boat Visits CBMM

The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum welcomed 15 students from Rocking the Boat to experience environmental and boat building career opportunities. Rocking the Boat is a program based in Bronx, NY, where students work together to build wooden boats, learn to row and sail and restore local urban waterways, revitalizing their community while creating better lives for themselves. Students explored Maryland's Eastern Shore July 11-14, which included a day at CBMM's boatyard and campus.

While at CBMM, the students took sailing tours of the Miles River on the oyster-skipjack *H.M. Krentz*, sailing the boat and dredging for oysters as they learned about the ecology of oysters and the Chesapeake Bay. They also worked on CBMM's current Apprentice for a Day project *Pintail*, a 25' draketail replicating CBMM's Hooper Island draketail *Martha*. Planking *Pintail* gave the students a chance to learn and practice the models and techniques of Chesapeake Bay boat building.

The Rocking the Boat students also had the opportunity to experience the Miles River by sailing, rowing and paddling CBMM's small craft boats, built in CBMM's boatyard.

"We are very excited to host these young folks from Rocking the Boat," said CBMM President Kristen Greenaway. "CBMM's own youth after school boat building program, Rising Tide, is loosely based on Rocking the Boat and we are very proud to be associated with such an impactful program."



John Henry Brown's Gone

We lost a good one this spring, John Henry Brown, inventor of the "John Henry" scarfing tool (<http://www.johnhenryinc.com/>). He was a good soul, builder of boats and all round tinkerer of the unusual, he would have fit in perfectly with you guys at the Tiki Hut. I know you have connections with MAIB, could you maybe give it a mention to them? He sold a butt load of those jigs to home boat builders. Thanks.

Submitted by Dave Lucas, Tiki Hut

Projects...

Geriatric Windsurfer Chaser II

I've at last begun cutting out parts for the Geriatric Windsurfer Chaser II. The first GWC was a joke. I was perfectly fit. It was a windsurfer on which I stood on the bottom instead of on the deck. Bolger's "Thomaston Galley" had just come out so GWC was a pram with a kayak snout. Not pretty, just functional to carry too much sail and help me keep up with my son on his windsurfer.

Bolger's "Thomaston Galley" weighed 130-150lbs. A severe diet dropped GWC to 40lbs hull weight, easy to wear like a hat with a painter tied to my belt leaving both hands free.

Here, four miles north of Milan, MI, the real water is 30-40 miles away, not convenient for a quick outing. Ford Lake in Ypsilanti is a wide spot in the Huron River behind a dam and is fairly decent. Other than that the rivers are more like ditches. The River Roisin is so twisty that the *Guinness Book of Records* named it the twisty-est river in the world! These rivers twist around glacial moraines left 9,000 years ago but obviously they are useable, canoeing and kayaking are big here in Michigan.

Last thing, I am now geriatric, I can no longer carry around my 73lb, 17' Grumman canoe, so 40lb hull weight is attractive for a tryout for GWC II.

Jim Wonnell, Milan, MI

Build Your Own

Kayak & Paddle at CBMM

The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum is hosting a nine-day workshop to teach the basics of building a skin-on-frame kayak and Greenland paddle from September 24 to October 2, with all participants taking home the kayak and paddle they built with the help of skilled craftspeople. Participants will work under the direction of Kiliii Yuyan of Seawolf Kayaks, with the final day of the workshop including a group paddle along the Miles River.

"At just 28 pounds, these kayaks are extremely lightweight and durable," said CBMM Boatyard Program Manager Jenn Kuhn. "The framing will be locally sourced Atlantic white cedar, with the skin a covering of ballistic nylon, originally used for military flak vests. The skins are coated in a special two-part polyurethane that is highly abrasion and UV resistant."

Noted to reduce stress on hands, elbows and shoulders without sacrificing control and power, the Greenland paddle is remarkable for its narrower and longer blade. Based on a 1000-year-old Inuit design, the paddle measures about the width of the kayaker's shoulders with a blade that is less than 4" wide that tapers to a shaft or "loom."

Kiliii Yuyan is an indigenous (Nanai) photographer, adventurer and boat builder with a passion for all things wild. Building on the knowledge and skills taught to him by both Native and revivalist builders, Kiliii designs skin-on-frame kayaks for the modern paddler. He shares the art of skin-on-frame in workshops across the globe. "Whether you're an expert craftsman or a beginner," commented Yuyan, "everyone leaves our workshops with a beautiful, durable boat and advanced woodworking techniques."

Seattle-based Seawolf Kayak teaches skin-on-frame building courses throughout the world from Addy, WA, to Helsinki, Finland, with this being the first time the course is offered in St Michaels, MD.

The program takes place in CBMM's boatshop along St Michaels' harbor from 8:30am to 5pm each day and is \$1,600 for each participant, which includes all instruction and materials needed for the skin-on-frame kayak and Greenland paddle each builder will take home. Participation is limited, with advanced registration at bit.ly/CBMMKayak. For more information, visit www.cbmm.org or www.seawolfkayak.com



This Magazine...

A Nice Balance of News and Observations

I suppose everyone has his or her own way of reading each copy of *MAIB* when it appears in the mail. For years, I read strictly back to front (dreaming of available boats) except for always first reading Mr Hicks' fine "Commentary." And I would eventually get to the global marine events. But recently I've changed my routine and go from Bob's "Commentary" directly to Doc Regan's "Over the Horizon." It was therefore amusing to read in the July issue Doc reaching out to his readers for validation. Well, here's some. I had been reading the column with interest all along, but every writer weaves his own story into the subject, albeit on a spectrum from sometimes slightly in third person all the way to first person. And so I'm finding Mr Regan's to be a nice balance of news with some common sense observations. So unusual in the press these days are facts balanced against and in conjunction with measured opinion, it's like a salve on the brain. Similar to messing in boats!

Spencer Day, Milton, MA

The Real Cost of My *MAIB* Subscription

Just for fun I considered calculating just what my subscription to *MAIB* really costs. You see, the book reviews uncover

such treasures that I have to track them down. Some of these books, if not totally obscure, are off the beaten track, often out of print, not in the average public library nor ever likely to show up on Kindle. So I have to track that treasure down and buy the books. Yes books, because within the particular book reviewed I find references to other books just as seductive and just as far or farther off the beaten track. Adding up the prices of all these books makes *MAIB* a rather expensive subscription.

But then there is also considerable cost savings. Many of the adventures related in *MAIB* occur in places I've considered for paddling or sailing. Often a story fuels my interest. Sometimes, however, it makes me realize there's a downside to that destination, that it's just a little too far (not just geographically) from what I had in mind. That long desert lake is a little more crowded with motorcraft than I'd imagined. That string of northern lakes is a bit too regulated to be the wilderness I'd hoped for.

Deflating the occasional dream destination translates into a lot of gasoline saved, not to mention time. Balancing travel costs against the cost of all the books I've ordered, thanks to *MAIB*, I realize I'm way behind on the books! So, please keep those reviews and treasures coming.

Richard Brownley, Chico, CA

Several Suggestions

Thank you for your reminder about my subscription to *MAIB*. I certainly do not want to miss your fine publication so I am enclosing my check for renewal. As usual, I am adding a few dollars to help for any incidental costs such as this reminder. I do want to say how much I enjoy reading the magazine each month and I am actually still going through the box I purchased from you when you were cleaning your shelves a few years back. Some of these stories are still interesting and allow me to learn about different aspects of boating even though I am not likely to sail to far away places such as the northern seas. As a matter of fact, I am not a sailor, my interests are mostly in building of small boats and I actually do not get out on the water much any more. But still, it is nice to dream.

I have several suggestions. You might encourage your readers to donate their copies that they are finished with or do not need to the local libraries that resell such donations to raise money. I have donated copies that I do not need to be placed on the shelves for that purpose and, checking back, have noticed that they have been purchased. This might be a way to increase awareness of the existence of your publication. In turn, it might encourage such readers to actually subscribe.

I also suspect that there are some readers like myself who have some stories or articles that they would like to submit. It would be helpful if you would describe the format to do so.

Martin Pflanz, Waco, TX

Editor Comments: Donating copies to libraries sounds good idea, can't hurt us to reach out to new people that way. We accept any and all contributions in whatever format you care to use from handwritten in pencil on lined yellow paper to printed text and actual photos (which will be returned) to emailed with text in MicrosoftWord and photos as jpegs. No limits on length, no request

that you follow some "style book." Just write about it like you'd tell it to someone, because that's what you will be doing.

Even Enjoys the Ads

I can't tell you how much I enjoy your mag, even the ads. I am wondering if I am the only reader who starts with the ads and then the stories?

Desert Danny Saam, Hot Springs, CA

More Dandy Little Issues Available

Enclosed is another check for another year of your dandy little publication. I'm not sure how long I've been subscribing, but it must be at least 30 years. Ten years ago I boxed up and sent 15 years of back issues to an interested reader who was willing to pay for the shipping. Now I'm just about ready for another clean out of the old issues that have accumulated since. Odd thing is I still get just as excited about a new issue as I did 30 years ago.

Always looking for something new that might get the juices flowing for an attempt at another build. But even if that doesn't happen there's always another good story or two.

Rich Jakowski, Putnam, CT

Another Close Call

Each month when the new issue arrives, I immediately open it to the last pages and begin skimming the classifieds while walking back from the mailbox. There's a sense of excitement, anticipation and dread as I scope out the boats for sale, fearing that I'll find something that overcomes my inhibition about acquiring a seventh boat. This month was no exception, but once again I've escaped without seriously thinking of a purchase. Thankfully the listings for July were either too expensive, too far away or they just didn't make my heart beat fast. You know, if Massachusetts wasn't 1500 miles from the Mississippi coast, I'd have been on the phone about that sweet dory in Foxboro in a heartbeat.

Thanks again, Bob, for all the fun, wisdom and glimpses beyond the horizon in each issue of *MAIB*.

Don Abrams, Ocean Springs, MS

Enjoys Boating Without a Boat

For the past ten years I have been the caregiver for my 98^{1/2}-year-old mother. Your publication has allowed me to enjoy boating without a boat. Thank you for a wonderful magazine.

John Stover, New Braunfels, TX

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The Next Generation

By Richard Honan

Great night on the water July 15 watching the next generation of sailors enjoying a night of twilight races. It was only made better by the fact that my granddaughter Emily had three first place finishes.



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Three days of sunny and clear with an afternoon breeze. Up to 50 people (we counted them) gathered at the beach buzzing about boats with nary a cell phone in sight. Cool, clear mornings for rows both up and down the River. The John Gardner Small Craft Workshop was a roaring success.

Boats? We had them. People? From Maine to Virginia. Venue? Smack dab in the middle of The Museum of America and the Sea with the WoodenBoat show going on all around. A special place and time.

Wednesday the Museum drifted in the floating docks, Thursday evening the boats started coming in and Friday participants arrived. Carl Kaufman kicked off the demonstrations Friday afternoon as he shared his Joel White Shellback dinghy, complete with custom spar cover and oar carrier. A beautiful boat, well executed. Friday evening the Delaware Chapter hosted a rousing dinner in a private room at Seaport restaurant Latitude 41. A great icebreaker for folks from far away!

First thing Saturday morning the boats gathered for the row down the river. The 22' sharpie and Mower dory lowered their masts to scoot under the bridge while other boat types from pea pods to pulling boats followed on down to the historic spit of sand off Mason's Island, substantially lessened by superstorm Sandy, to stop and gam as we have since the inception of the Workshop. This time a few intrepid souls continued on around, circumnavigating the island, returning with big grins on their faces, encrusted by a little more salt spray.



Dave Wyman and Brian Cooper gathering rowers for the downriver run.

Meanwhile, back at Australia Beach, more boats and participants kept coming in. Rod Johnstone, of J-Boat fame, shared his most recent garage build, an 18' strip plank

Australia Beach, site of the John Gardner Small Craft Workshop.



<https://www.facebook.com/www.jgtsc.org>

John Gardner Small Craft Workshop

June 24–26, 2016

By Bill Rutherford
on behalf of the John Gardner Chapter TSCA

wooden boat of modern undercarriage with a traditional balanced lug rig on modern carbon fiber spars. His design parameters included not going up on the foredeck, sitting on real seats inside the boat and keeping crew weight centered using a perimeter line steering system. Take note you senior citizens out there, and it is fast!

Next up was Don Dillon with the queen of the fleet, a 22' sharpie, traditionally rigged and built. His presentation came complete with a model, historical photographs and a detailed sequence of the build. He also had the courage to demonstrate his vertical reefing system ad hoc in front of a helpful audience with lots of comments. A striking boat under both oar and sail, participants were lining up for rides.



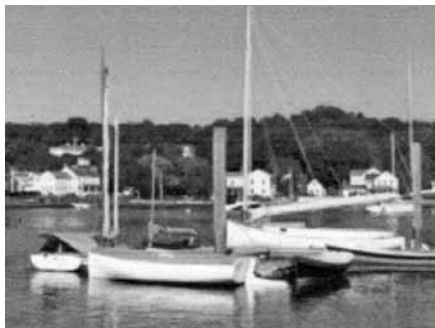
Don Dillon demonstrating a vertical reef on his sharpie.

As WoodenBoat Show people wandered through, asking questions, trying out both participant's boats and the green John Gardner Chapter dories, Brian Cooper, fresh back from leading the morning row, set up his workbench and caught their attention by carving a Greenland kayak paddle. A leader of the Connecticut Sea Kayakers (connyak.org), Brian is an active member of our local chapter as well as a builder of kayaks and paddles but lately we have been working on him to row. His hands on demo attracted interest all weekend long.

Saturday afternoon the River was a busy place as Show attendees, as well as our participants, discovered that use of the Seaport's Boathouse Livery craft was free for the weekend, courtesy of *WoodenBoat*. What a great chance to try out those boats seen only in historical plans! It made us volunteers who labored all winter with putty and paint



and repairs feel good. They, along with the catboat *Breck Marshall*, really added to the energy on the river, particularly since *Breck's* skipper, Al Burnett, sailed the whole gusty day with full sail. Later he shared that it got "too late to reef." Sound familiar?



Mystic Seaport Boathouse Livery boats immediately adjoining Australia Beach.

Demonstrations are so good at capturing people's attention. David Wyman came down all the way from Castine, Maine, to share his woodworking skills, some of which have been featured in the *Ash Breeze*, carving handmade blocks, thole pins and cleats. David's easy manner just drew people in, soon the conversation would turn to traditional boats and how enjoyable they are to build and sail.



David Wyman crafting a stropped block the traditional way in wood.

As evening time came and the closing cannon went off, Show vendors brought out their boats for an evening row or sail. A steamboat went by. The dory *Thumper* represented our traditional power boats. Participants wandered off to bunk on the *Conrad*, *Wooden Boat* hosted a dinner in honor of Chesapeake Light Craft's John Harris and the Rutherfords invited Workshop participants to their home in nearby Stonington for a BBQ augmented by whatever people happened to bring, from potato salad to guitars and banjos.

Sunday kicked off with another Brian Cooper led row, this time up the river, finding new shoals in the low morning tide but also shorebirds and early morning quiet before boat show activity started at 9am. Thad Danielson introduced his Mower dory, the racing Laser of its day in 1890. Of interest was Thad's research into the type which led to his building a boat unseen for a hundred years. Thad will have built a 12' Spurling rowboat, for which he and David Cockey took lines off a Seaport original at WoodenBoat School this summer, in both carvel and clinker in his Fundamentals of Boatbuilding class the second two weeks in August.



Thad Danielson with his fully rigged Mower dory.

After lunch George Spragg described various alternative boat building methods using samples of plank from modern strip planking all the way back to labor intensive lacing from 600BC. He then walked us across to his latest build, a front facing rowing boat based on an earlier double ended design but wider, and more stable with his personally designed and built front facing rowing system. No more cricks in his neck from twisting around for a quick look ahead.



George Spragg demonstrating different methods of planking.

Not to be missed both afternoons, Saturday and Sunday, were personally guided tours of the Seaport's Small Craft Collection by Ben Fuller, most interesting because he collected many of the craft during his tenure as Curator of Small Craft at Mystic Seaport. He can just put his hand on a boat and describe the foggy day Downeast and who was there when they went to collect it. A real highlight of the day was an impromptu demonstration by Ben rigging his *Afjordsfaering* with square sail. A flexible boat with minimal strings holding a center stepped mast, the rig went up quickly and could be dropped in a moment as the single yard hit the gunnels with a crash. That got people's attention and then everyone wanted to go for a sail. Or watch to see if it stayed upright.



Ben Fuller raising the square sail rig on the *Afjordsfaering*.

Sunday afternoon was load out time but all went home with a warm glow, some induced by sunburn, and lots of happy memories of traditional boats rowing and sailing on the shore of the Mystic River. John Gardner would have been pleased. He would have been doubly pleased listening in to the many conversations about boats, people and new ideas based on these traditional designs. That was the true value of the Workshop, the interfacing of people, boats and ideas in such a beautiful venue.

A big thank you to Mystic Seaport, *WoodenBoat*, Shannon McKenzie, Director of Waterfront Operations, Sarah Clement, our Seaport contact person who staffed our table out front and provided the tables under our tent at Australia Beach, and all the volunteers like Marty Heyman, checking people in on Friday, table staffers like Bob Lister from the Cape and Dan Nelson, beach managers like Andy Strode who spent the weekend knee deep in water and all the presenters and demonstrators who made it such a fun, informative weekend.

Come see us next year!



Dane Rochelle and David Tang arriving.

JGTSCA's *Nina* with full crew, rowing.



Messing About in Boats, September 2016 – 9

About a year ago my daughter Kristen asked if we could do the Texas200 again. I thought about it and told her that if we did, it wouldn't be in a production boat, with a cabin, that we bought. It would be in an open boat that I built myself. I also told her that this time we would have to camp in tents every night. She said, "that sounds great!" Thus began the search for a design.

The first thought in my head was a multi hull, to go fast and shallow. I wanted to skirt the windward shorelines in relatively flat water and see a little more scenery. But, I couldn't find a multi hull that I wanted to do the trip in or that I could build in time.

Eventually I saw some drawings of the Saturday Night Special, a design by John Welsford. I have had a great amount of respect for his designs for years. I loved the lines on this boat, it had some beam, it was fairly wide and flat in the back, plus it had a really sweet sheer. All that with closed front, rear and side decks for buoyancy and storage. It looked like a poor man's AWOL, a boat I have lusted over since the first time I saw it, it seemed to be the perfect boat. The clincher was in the design brief, it was capable of planing, of running in shallow water and was stable. It met all of my criteria and it was a quick build. So I got the plans from Chuck Leinweber at the Port Aransas Plywooden Boat Festival, took them home and began studying them. It seemed pretty straightforward and I agreed it looked like a quick build.



Construction started in early November. I hoped to be finished by the first of March to start sea trials and to refresh my sailing skills (I hadn't sailed in five years). March 1 came and went and I was still working. There had been some detours to take care of other things and I had to face the fact that I just couldn't do a rough finish job on a design by John, this boat looked pretty even when it was just a bunch of frames and stringers. I wanted to finish her out as nicely as I could, which is to say that if you stand at 20' away she looks pretty good.

The Saturday Night Special and the 2016 Texas200...WOW!

By Bobby Chilek



By the first of April, I was starting to get a little panicky. We still hadn't gotten our first sail in even though I had been out in the shop almost every single day since February. Of course, sometimes it was just to set something up with epoxy and then walk away until the next day. We were also getting whacked with rains quite frequently which prevented me from getting the boat outside and getting the mast and rigging on and tuned. But finally by late April we were ready for the first test sail.

We took the boat to Lake Somerville, due to the heavy rains we had been having all of the lakes in our area were inundated with water and their boat ramps were closed, except for Somerville, which only had one ramp open. To make matters worse, when we arrived on that Saturday morning we found that they were hosting a Bass Fishing Tournament! We rigged the boat while we waited in line to launch.

Once we had the boat in the water we had to walk it way down shore around some trees (that were now out in the water due to the raised lake level) and find a place that we could raise sail and sail off from. While raising the sail in a breeze on a lee shore, the yard tried to kick me in the head. Then, once the sail was up and I was trying to get a reef in, the boom swung back and forth as the winds were shifting quite a bit (I really hate lake sailing). By the time I got it ready to sail I had named the boat. It reminded me of trying to saddle up a wild horse that is kicking at me and chomping at the bit to go. I christened it *Mustang* after the wild ponies that used to wander the barrier island along the Texas Gulf.

We pushed the boat offshore and tried to sail out, only to get caught by a wind shift that pushed us right back onto shore. I think we ended pushing off about 38 times and came close to tangling the rig in trees twice before we made it out into the lake. To say we

were worn out would be an understatement (I later realized we should have just rowed the boat out into the lake and then started sailing, duh). We took off on a beat out of the cove because the first thing I want to know is if I go downwind, can I get back. The boat went to weather fine, we were a little sloppy but that is totally due to our rusty sailing skills.

Once I was convinced we could get back, we headed the boat down the channel which leads to the main basin. We relaxed for a bit while we were running and got our strength back. One thing I noticed while we were running was how the boat was rocking side to side more than would be warranted by the wave action. I realized that it was due to the boom rising and falling as the wind fluctuated. I decided to look into adding a boom vang. We spent two hours putting the boat through its paces, beating, reaching, running and were quite pleased with the performance.

On our way back to the cove, as we were beating up the channel, we performed a tack and, as the boat came around and we were not in position yet, we got hit with a wind shift and a gust that filled the sails on the new tack and heeled her WAY over! I released the mainsheet but it didn't go out due to my foot that I was standing on sideways in relation to the boat with all of my weight was on the sheet! As I watched the boat heel all the way over and put the rail in the water I was trying my best to figure out how to get my foot off the sheet.

We stayed like this for a LONG time! I finally got the sheet out from under my foot and the boat stood up. It was then that I realized she had heeled way over and then just stayed there, not going any further even though the wind was blowing hard. I am actually glad that this act of very poor seamanship happened, it demonstrated to me the amount of ultimate stability that this boat has.

Two weeks later we took the boat down to Magnolia Beach to get in some cockpit time. We sailed for about seven hours over two days and became quite comfortable in the boat. We practiced raising and lowering sail while out in the water, sailing on all points, and it was becoming a tamer little *Mustang*. The only problem was that it was not sailing to weather as good as it had the first time we took her out. We had made several changes to the rig (including adding a boom vang which did calm the rocking). I tried changing things back and just couldn't figure out what had changed. Every time I tried to work to weather, my triangles were flat and it took a lot more tacks than it should have to get where we were going.

We left for home perplexed over this new problem. I talked to John Goodman and got some advice, we laid the rigged boat over on its side and took some measurements to compare to the sail rig dimensions in John's drawing and adjusted accordingly. I then spent some time tweaking and completing other things to get the boat ready for the Texas200. Unfortunately weather didn't permit us to sail her again before the Texas200 and we had to leave for Port Isabel unsure how well she would go to weather. The boat was declared ready one week before we had to take off for the long drive south.



We arrived in Port Isabel Saturday afternoon and drove across the bridge to South Padre Island. The bay was a beautiful, tropical shade of green, a perfect day for sailing with winds just right and the surface sporting only minimal waves. We turned around on the island and went back to check in at our hotel, get the boat launched and have dinner.

The next day I spent doing the long boring day of shuffling tow vehicles back north and a long bus ride back to Port Isabel. It truly wears me out more than any of the days of sailing! Kristen, on the other hand, spent the day in our hotel room curled up with a good book (enjoying air conditioning) and ordering takeout!

Monday we got up early and hiked the two blocks to Tarpon Marina, stowed our gear and pushed off. We motored through the maze of canal homes and entered the Lower Laguna Madre. We had full sail up due to the wind forecast being 10-15 knots. I had debated, and in fact my original intent was, crossing the bay and sailing in the lee of the shoreline in flat water, but from what I could gather from the charts it seemed like there was an awful lot of very shallow water over there. But I didn't have the confidence in the boat's abilities to run shallow yet.

I also liked the fact that for most of the way up the channel the charts showed spoil islands just west of the Intercoastal which provided a nice safety net. I think that I should explain here that I am always considering what could go wrong and what will I do if it does. I seem to do this doubly when I sail with my daughter. I don't typically like sailing in big waves, especially after the experience I had in my Bobcat on San Antonio Bay nine years earlier, but if something goes wrong here we could swim to an island, so we turned north at the channel and hung with the crowd.

Sailing along in the clear green waters of the lower Laguna Madre it was easy to forget our concerns. I love the feeling of gliding across the water and the sound of nothing but the wind and waves. As the day progressed it seemed that the winds had increased beyond the original forecast and some waves began to build, but nothing too bad. The boat was doing well and handling the conditions just fine. I suggested just for safety's sake that we should reduce sail, but Kristen was opposed, she was enjoying the speed we were going. I decided to let it go for the time being.

We were sitting pretty much in the rear of the boat to keep the bow high and out of

the waves. As the waves increased with the boat overpowered, eventually we came off of one wave, drove the bow of the boat through a wave and water washed over the deck depositing about two gallons of water into the cockpit. I laughed and told Kristen that I think we should reconsider putting a reef in, her eyes were pretty wide as she agreed.

We pulled the boat off to the side of the channel and behind a small island to block the waves, tucked in a reef and bailed out the boat. As we got back underway we were coming closer to the Port Mansfield channel and the islands that had been our safety net came to an end. I was also concerned about the sail out the eastbound channel to the jetties since I had no idea how well the boat was going to go to weather.

The chart indicated that there should be enough depth to exit the northbound channel early, then take a shortcut to come out between two of the islands that border the Port Mansfield Channel heading east out to the jetties. This would reduce the distance we had to sail on a beat by a few miles. I was concerned about a possible oyster reef or two but I decided that since it would be upwind we could always head back downwind if necessary and be in deeper water. This was one of the things the boat was designed for with the rudder design that John had come up with, so I decided to try it.

We headed northeast and it was exhilarating to feel the boat pick up speed as we came onto a reach. I released the rope that was locking the rudder in the down position and lowered the centerboard just a smidgen, which had been mostly up all day. The water got deeper at first and we absolutely flew along on the reach. After a while the water color became a much lighter shade of green and I could see the bottom, even as the boat continued to skim along. I took a paddle to check the depth (it was only about a foot) and we were flying across it! The boat really was meeting the "shallow water capable" promise.

As we came upon the pass between the two islands that we were going to sail between, we did go aground and had to get out to walk the boat across an oyster reef, a few scratches to the boat's hull (ouch) but we had wading boots on so it wasn't a problem for our feet. After about 20 yards the water was deep enough to float the boat with us in it, so we climbed back in. We rounded the corner of the island and turned hard upwind into the channel. WOW, there were some big waves in that channel!

The boat was doing pretty good going upwind, but we were taking a beating from the waves and Kristen was getting soaked (I used her as a dodger at times like this, sitting behind her)! After another mile or so we took a break along an island and decided to motor the rest of the way. The boat could have sailed it, no problem, but we were tired and just took the easy way. We arrived at camp and Day One was complete!



The next morning we pushed off early again. We learned that the winds the day before had been in the 20s and the forecast for today was to be about the same. I wasn't too concerned because the boat had performed quite well in those conditions but, as I recall, the waves tended to stack up quite a bit in the northern section of the Lower Laguna Madre. If we could beat some of that it would be great. We sailed west in the Port Mansfield channel and as we came closer to the intersection with the Intercoastal, I took a shortcut again across the shallows and got ahead of some boats that had left before us as we entered the northbound channel.

As the morning wore on the waves began to increase as expected. Eventually they were pretty good sized and we were soon surfing down their backsides. Working the tiller back and forth to keep the boat headed north really became a chore in these conditions. As the waves overtook us the stern lost speed through the water, the rudder became less effective, the sail was powered up and wanting to turn into the wind and we were working hard to keep the boat pointed downwind.

After a while I asked Kristen if she wanted to take the helm. She asked, "What do I do?"

"Just keep the boat pointed that way," was my reply and pointed north. She quickly had the hang of it and I let her drive for the next hour or two until we entered the land cut. As I rested sitting in the bottom of the boat, watching Kristen handle the boat, it occurred to me just how well the boat was handling the conditions. I mean these were pretty big seas and she was just flying through them like it was no big deal.

Once we entered the land cut Kristen gave me the helm. Pretty quickly it seemed that the wind was dropping and we were losing boat speed. A couple of boats that we had caught up with in the bay were now able to stay with us. A bigger boat passed us so we quit debating and pulled over to shake out the reef in the sail. As I was untying one of the knots it dawned on me that there was a pretty good wind blowing. I stopped and considered things for a moment, it didn't make sense. I finally decided that five knots would be fast enough and that it would be better to keep the boat under control and left the reef in.

Now here is the really weird part, as soon as we pushed back out, the boat took off and we were flying! As we were going along the land cut I would occasionally tighten up to keep us to the windward side of the channel, there is nothing I hate more than running aground on a lee shore. Once, as I did this, a gust caught the boat and as I turned it back downwind she took off like a banshee! She hopped on top of the water and we were flying! As the gust died, I turned up again, increasing apparent wind and then when the gust hit, turned it back downwind.

At times the front half of the boat must have been completely out of the water because as we were flying along, spray was shooting out both sides of the boat from about halfway back. I have to say that I have never gone this fast in a monohull sailboat in my life, we were having a blast. I really didn't expect the boat to plane in Texas200 trim, what with two people, a bunch of gear, gallons of water and a full ice chest! But plane it did. As we went along, we caught several boats that had left us behind during our aborted reefing attempt, we even easily passed a Core Sound 17 which had outrun us

earlier in the morning as we had left the Port Mansfield jetties. This was probably the most fun I have had sailing in a long time. I had missed my days of sailing a catamaran, but not anymore.

I have no idea how fast we were going because I never got a good read from my cellphone GPS app. I also didn't have time to open the app I have for recording speed, which in retrospect I really wish I would have made time to do! We arrived at the infamous "Mud Hole" (also known as "Haps Cut") and Day Two was over.



We were in the last stages of the moon turning to a full moon and it was dominant in the sky as the sun set and we went to bed. Around 2am I woke up and looked up through the netting in the roof of my tent. The stars that were visible after the moon had set were amazing. Getting away from the light pollution of the cities, stars that we normally can't see were visible along with a very distinct and strong display of the Milky Way. Truly a beautiful and awe inspiring sight, worth the trip itself.

Day Three was a short day and mostly uneventful other than sailing through the Baffin Bay area was a little uncomfortable. There was still a pretty good wind blowing and it was more from the east putting the waves on our quarter. It was a pretty good workout at the helm and, as I mentioned earlier, I really don't like big waves. But my confidence in the boat at this point was pretty strong.

We arrived at camp, Bird Island, around 1pm and found that some boats had missed the camp. We looked around and admittedly were a little disappointed. The bottom out in the water was a nice, packed sand but there just wasn't much of a beach here to set up a tent due to the tides being higher than when they had scouted this area previously. I have seen way too many rattlesnakes at the coast so we didn't dare set up our tents out in the weeds. We thought about moving on down and trying to find a better campsite, but eventually we decided to stay put and sleep in the boat.

We rearranged our gear, got all the water out, wiped down the floor and let it dry in the sun. We put up an umbrella over the cockpit and enjoyed the remainder of the day. Later, as the sun was setting and we were finished with dinner, we laid out our sleeping pads on either side of the centerboard along with our sleeping bags, pillow and a sheet for each of us. I also used a throw cushion for extra head support. We lay down with our feet to the stern, with the bulkhead passing under our knees and were surprisingly quite comfortable. I awoke in the middle of the night again and covered up with the sheet because it was getting a little chilly. Later a mosquito

buzzed my head, so I just pulled the sheet over my head and went back to sleep. Overall it was actually a very comfortable sleeping spot and I will sleep there again.



Day Four we left and headed north again. Kristen and I met up with several boats at "Snoopy's," which is a popular restaurant located at the intersection of the Intercoastal and the bridge leading into Corpus Christi. After a delicious lunch and restocking of ice and water at the bait camp next door, we headed out again, eventually turning more east as we entered Corpus Christi Bay. We brought the boat onto a close reach and headed for the eastern shore and calmer water, avoiding the more boisterous middle of the bay.

All in all the bay probably wasn't that bad that day since the winds were around 15 knots. We reached the other side pretty quickly, which actually surprised Kristen and I. My battery had gone dead on my phone exceptionally early this day and I wasn't exactly sure what direction to head to get to "Stingray Hole," which is the cut that leads into the Port Aransas Ship channel. So I decided to follow Tom Pamperin. The plan was to go around Shamrock Island, hug the shore and then through "Stingray Hole" and up the Port Aransas Ship Channel.

The problem was, we got confused. I mean Tom must have gotten confused, I was only following. We entered what I think we both thought was the pass between Shamrock Island and the shore, but it turned out to be a small cove instead. Tom continued on looking for a way out while we turned around and sailed back out. When we came out we ran into John and Rosa Goodman as they came along. We sailed along for a while and John got some good video footage of our boat, which we greatly appreciated. Chuck Pierce joined us as well and Tom found another way out of the cove and back to the main bay.

The four of us sailed toward what I hoped was Stingray Hole, but as we approached the islands that separated us from that channel Chuck, who was in the lead, turned back to the west (I began to wonder if anyone had a working GPS). I would have sworn that the pass was more to the east of where we were. Eventually we came to the pass and entered the Ship Channel. Chuck pulled ashore at this point for a break, Tom continued west and I followed John.

(Link to YouTube video by John Goodman:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8wdn7zCkEU&feature=youtu.be>)

Here was a test I had been concerned about for a while. This was going to be a beat to weather, there was a lot of barge traffic and ships using this channel. I really didn't want to have to occupy the middle of the channel anymore than I had to. I was still not sure how well the boat was going to go to weather and was wondering how many tacks it would take. We tightened up as we turned into the channel and hoped for the best. The boat heeled over some in the breeze and we began our beat. After a few minutes I was pleased, we were doing pretty good and even getting some favorable wind shifts.

I had learned by this time that I could trust this boat, she will heel a certain amount and then get pretty stiff. As we got hit with gusts and shifts, I just eased the tiller over and made a little more distance to weather. We sailed up the channel with the sail cleated off the whole time. This boat really is quite stable and predictable going to weather. But eventually Chuck caught up with me. Now this really bothers me, my boat should be faster! Chuck sails a Mayfly 14 and, don't get me wrong, he is REALLY good at it. This is when I fully realized that although I have gotten the boat to go to weather, I still had sail shape issues that were costing me boat speed. Which was something I knew but this was a serious reminder of that (more on this later).

We sailed up the channel, and I made a tack when we entered the marked area of the channel. I was thinking that we could make the whole way with one tack, which would please me greatly. As I was thinking this I was admiring the Port Aransas skyline, the boats, the dark green water of the channel and just thoroughly enjoying the moment. I love this area, Port Aransas is my favorite place in Texas, a funky little beach town that has unfortunately become too popular.

I noticed as we sailed along what looked like a giant crane moving through town. This baffled me for a second and then I realized what it was, a ship coming around the corner from the channel that goes out to the Gulf. As it approached, I tacked and headed back to the channel's edge to give the boat all the room I can. The winds were getting fluky and I certainly didn't want to get caught near it with no wind. It passed without incident and we continued on to play chicken with the ferry boats that were hauling cars across the channel from the mainland to Mustang Island and Port Aransas.

We neared the Lydia Ann Channel and were thinking we were home free when I saw what looked like a miniaturized version of a cruise ship which was actually an offshore gambling boat coming down the channel from the Gulf. We were on a collision course and I eventually had to tack to give it room since he was not yielding.

The voyage down the Lydia Ann Channel and the remainder of our journey to Camp Four was thankfully uneventful. Chuck Pierce was just ahead of us the remainder of the way and I observed his sailing technique as best as I could. At one point he headed up into the wind and fiddled with his sail for about 15 seconds, then turned back on the wind, in that time he had shaken out a reef! He really is good.

That evening as Kristen and I were sitting in the openings to our tents and relaxing before turning in, I was thinking about the weather forecast for the next day, winds were predicted to be 5-10 knots. I continued thinking about various other issues con-

cerning the trip when Kristen says, "What a beautiful view we have from our rooms." I was shaken from my thoughts and looked around. She continued, "I really love all of the beautiful places we have camped this week, it is like having the best hotel rooms in the world." I was brought completely back into the moment by her words. We can get so caught up in all of the logistics, navigation, boat issues and everything else that we miss out on the real beauty of the trip. I looked around and she was right, we truly had a million dollar room.

On Day Five we broke camp, loaded up and literally drifted out onto the bay by 7:30am. The winds were almost non existent near shore. Once out on the bay some breeze filled in and we were making about 3kts. I played with the sails quite a bit trying to

Final Thoughts on the SNS

After the way the boat performed in the Texas200, I am thoroughly impressed with this design. The boat was exceptionally seaworthy in all the conditions we faced that week, it never gave us cause for concern and as the week wore on I became less concerned about what waves we might encounter in the bays. It is very stable on all points of sail, I have come to believe that it will be quite difficult to blow over. I have had it pretty far over and it just holds there, with the side decks, it is unlikely to take on water when heeled way over. She is quite capable of sailing in shallow water, this opens up so many areas that are off limits to others. It is fast, I mean FAST, very capable of planing! I look forward to getting her to do this more as I really learn this boat.



get more boat speed, it seemed that the wind, breeze or zephyrs, was coming a little more out of the east. But no matter what I did, it didn't seem right. Sometime after 11 in the morning we were coming up on Paul's Mott. Kristen and I had decided that this would be the point where we would make a decision as to whether to continue or pull out.

My calculations said it would be as late as 8:30pm when we made Camp Five. A concern was that in the middle of the day the winds would become even lighter. The forecast was for more of the same tomorrow with the direction being from the north for a while. I didn't have enough fuel to motor very far. I really didn't want to pull out, mainly because I wanted to finish the course so as not to tarnish the reputation of the design. By this time I was truly impressed with this boat as far as it being a very capable beach cruiser and fun day boat. But with no wind it would be really hot and we had no shade. I decided that no one cares about the boat's drifting abilities and so, after much debate, we turned west and headed to take out at Goose Island.

I love the way it is fully decked and the front and rear storage compartments. We had everything we needed for the week packed in there. We could have put in more but were trying to give some nod to weight control. The boat is light, maybe 250lbs? I haven't weighed it, but my son and I can lift in on and off the trailer. I also like the fact that we can sleep in the cockpit, this is very useful when we arrive at our camp and find it less hospitable than anticipated.

As far as my sail trim problems, I have resolved most of those. Turns out I changed too many things at once and have returned most of the changes back to design spec. The main problem is that I just need to learn the lug rig. Most of my sailing has been with the Marconi rig, I have some gaff experience, too, but it wasn't a huge adjustment.

I know this sail is fast because Chuck Pierce has a lug rig on his Mayfly 14. I have also seen John Goodman flying along in his Goat Island Skiff so there is nothing wrong with the lug rig, there is just a learning curve. I feel that learning the curve is well worth it because it is the easiest rig to deal with on the

water I have ever had and one of the quickest to set up when we arrive at the boat ramp. I am convinced that I could have this boat launched in 15 minutes after arriving with a little practice, this makes the boat very useable.

This is the fastest, most versatile, seaworthy, easy to use, fun sailboat I have ever had! And I got to sail the Texas200 in it, what a blast!

Saturday Night Special Specs

Length: 14'8" (may be built at 13'11" to avoid Texas registration requirements)
Beam: 5' 5"
Weight: approximately 198lbs rigged
Sail area: 103sf
Draft board up: 6"
Draft board down: 3' 1"

The intention is to produce a "performance" boat at a minimum cost in terms of both money and labour, one which will plane freely off the wind and still go "uphill" with the rest of them. She's a very quick and easy build, can be made from exterior grade fir plywood, Polytarp sail, simple rigging. Lots of fun for the cost. jwboatdesigns



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The fearless driver of the 18-wheeler I am drafting behind doesn't seem at all concerned about the construction here on I-35. Neither am I, although after a couple of energy drinks it sometimes feels like my brain is not connected to my eyes. We drive south together for hours but finally something has to give. Twenty miles south of San Antonio I pull off the road behind some construction barriers, turn off the engine and am asleep in just a couple of minutes.

I had tried to row the Texas 200 the previous year and failed, pulling out on the fourth day. When I first conceived the idea I contacted Al Freihofer, who had rowed 452 miles along the East Coast and had written about that adventure in *Messing About in Boats*. One thing we discussed at length was mental preparedness. I thought I was good to go, but sadly this was not the case.

I was well prepared with navigation planning, plenty of food and water, sun protection and safety gear but I did not push myself hard enough in training to get to the wall or the bonk. I really thought that I had this thing licked. I was good for 10-15 miles in training but this was not enough, especially given the wind and waves I would encounter.

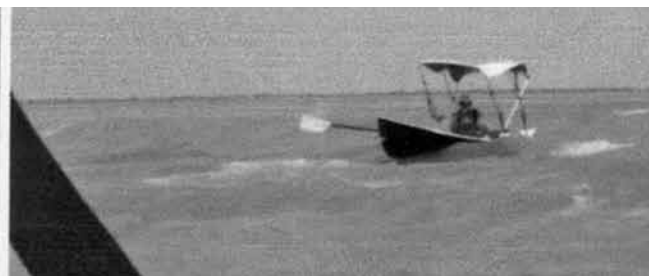
For most of the third day the wind was hard, solid and unrelenting on my stern star-



Crews "Embracing the Suck" of a hard first day.



Lunch stop Day 1



Wind and waves Day 1

Rowing the 2015 Texas 200 A Small Effort

By Kelly Davis

board quarter. The third afternoon I gave up on reaching camp and spent the night on Shamrock Island. I could not face the waves and wind in Corpus Christi Bay. Physically I was unprepared for all of the extra effort it took just to keep the skiff tracking. I estimate that I used one-third to one-half of each stroke to compensate for the wind. On the morning of the fourth day I was worn out. I looked long and hard at the charts. Do I pull out in Port Aransas or press on and face the unknown? I was tired, sore and unsure how long I could keep going. I opted for the former.

The wind was higher than I had hoped that morning as I struck camp and headed into the bay. It was overcast with low morning haze all around. Using the chart and compass I aimed dead on toward the gap between Pelican Island and the island to the west. Running downwind there were times I couldn't see over the waves. The land on the horizon disappeared completely more than once. I knew that I was coming up on an area with lots of wellheads and began to get cautious, but the wave heights were increasing and boat was starting to surf.

I will never forget the feeling when I caught THAT wave. It was like when you're body surfing and it just keeps going on and on. I stayed on that wave for probably a hundred yards. Amazed and giddy, I put the oars back in and started to pull. I scraped the sandy bottom about a foot down. I had caught the wave as it was getting shallow and the wave stayed connected, with me on it, until its energy was spent shallowing up. When I looked around at the surroundings and my

charts I was exactly where I needed to be. Cool. I asked a fisherman for directions to a marina and found it, then caught a ride from a local to Maggie Beach.

I lost at the mental game in 2014 but was committed to trying again. This time I knew what to expect. I knew what I had to push through and knew the first 100 miles of the route by sight. I would face everything and adapt. No matter how hard it seemed I knew it was a small effort compared to what Al Friehoffer had done. I spent many hours reviewing the route on Google Earth and poring over John Alesch's excellent chartaerial photos. It was much easier relating water color and land forms after having seen it from 4' above the water. Every day I visualized the trip as I went through my daily routine. I got the boat in the water on White Rock Lake (a great place to train) and rowed at every opportunity. Most of the needed gear I had from last year, although this year I added a marine radio and waterproof video camera.

On Friday morning about 10:30am I finally pulled into Port Isabel after the 12 hour drive from Mesquite. The fleet leaves on Monday but I learned last year that a row-boat needs a head start. I load the boat, put her in the water, change clothes and I'm off. The Laguna Madre is waiting.



Andy and Rick after a long rough day in their 8' long Puddle Ducks.

By the early afternoon I am in the middle of the Mother Lagoon. The waves are large and the wind is strong but the new skeg is helping tremendously with tracking. About a third of the way out the water is clearing and a round grey thing bobs up next to the stern. When I pull on the oar it disappears. This thing looks like a semi submerged bowling ball with one eye and I wonder for hours what it is. I don't figure it out until months after the trip when I run across an article (with pictures) about the Dolphin Lady of Port Isabel in *Texas Parks and Wildlife* magazine. I have never before seen a picture of the back of a dolphin's head. Mystery solved.

Winds are around 15mph but the water is clear and the waves shallow. My plan of hugging the barrier islands to stay out of the worst of the waves is working. Birds are

Here We Go Again

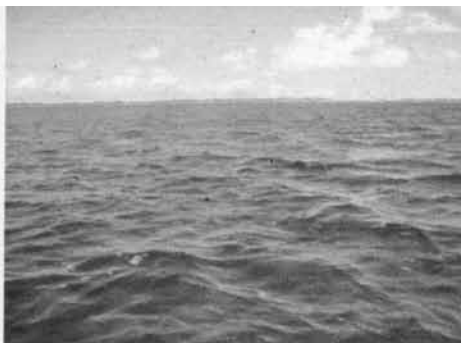
everywhere. I see a caracara, also known as the Mexican Eagle, when I stop for lunch. As the afternoon wears on the condos and other structures on South Padre Island slowly disappear behind me. After six hours of rowing I select a small sand island and row up to the beach. I set out the chair, table and Jet-boil and realize that once I stop moving I am slowly sinking into the sand. So after a quick dinner I make up the boat for sleeping. As the mosquitoes make their appearance at dusk, I lay my scrubs and shirt out on some bushes to dry and slip under the nets for the night. I am lulled into a deep and satisfying sleep by the growling, squeaking and whining sounds of the local shorebirds.



End day 1



Overnight the tide has gone out. Down here that means that the water is maybe 7" or 8" shallower than when I arrived last evening. After breakfast I load up the skiff and drag her for about 30 minutes in the sandy bottomed emerald water. Finally she is in the 8" to 10" that she needs to float with me aboard. To the north, towards Port Mansfield, I can see dozens of wind turbines. Just how far away they are becomes apparent as the morning stretches on and they do not seem to get any closer.



The water is flat and the wind is down. There is a deep silence conducive to a long conversation with God as I start to row. Contemplation of what lies ahead consumes my thoughts. The boat and I ghost for hours over clear water. As the infamous South Texas sun climbs I lather up with SPF50, then get the bimini up and search for my scrubs, which I think that I've left on the bush back at last night's camp. However (unlike some), my boat does not berate me at every misstep and I therefore have only the nagging little voice in my head to listen to. I pull a t-shirt up over each leg, tuck them into the leg elastic on my bike shorts, and pour water over them in an attempt to keep my legs covered and cool in the growing heat.

The breeze slowly builds. By the time it hits 8 knots I tilt the bimini forward as a crude sail to take advantage of it. Standing, I glide over and observe the abundant life in the water. Trout, sheepshead, crabs, mullet, and stingrays, stingrays and more stingrays. Later in the morning I pull slowly over the shallow water while watching the bottom go by and I see a stingray right over where I can drop an oar to surprise it. Before the oar hits the bottom, almost faster than I can follow, the stingray spins and I hear (and feel) the



Deeper water and wind is picking up.



Tide had gone out overnight.



Morning espresso and oatmeal breakfast.



South end of Mansfield Channel.

barb hitting the composite oar blade.

The sea gulls and terns are keeping me company, maybe coming by to check out the slow quiet white thing in the water. I let the oars drag in the water as I pulled lunch together. The tuna packets and tortillas were a welcome break from the rowing.

The water gets deeper as I approach the Mansfield Channel. The channel connects the Laguna Madre to the Gulf. As the water deepened, the size of the waves increased. The waves were coming from several directions at once, making a bumpy and unorganized ride. I went ahead and lowered the bimini as the wind had picked up and the flapping was distracting me from the strokes. The waves and chop made forward progress slow, the oars would not land together for a smooth stroke as the skiff was rolling and yawing. I watched as Fred Stone Park and the wind driven generators faded off the stern.

At about 7pm I realized I was not going to make the ICW land cut to make camp. The charts showed a crescent of beach to the west and I turned to make camp there. As I started turning, a noise off to my right startled me. A manta ray had just surfaced and was gliding by me with its wingtips sticking verti-

Clear emerald waters

Little wind and flat, hot rowing.

Bimini tilted forward to catch light breeze.





cally out of the water. It was a fine sight that I hadn't seen since my youth growing up on the Delaware Bay.

Landing on the sandy crescent I see that it is about 6' wide with sea grass growing thick shoreward. The beach is part of the King Ranch. Thoughts of rattlesnakes, nalgai and ranchers on horseback kept me from venturing into the grass far. I laid out my sleeping bag and pulled out the cooking equipment while watching a wonderful sunset to the west. Firing up the Jetboil I made dinner, dehydrated chicken and rice, not bad. There must have been a hatch of sand flies that day. They weren't biting but they were thick. I covered myself with DEET and slid under the mosquito netting as the stars were beginning to show bright. It was a solid night's sleep with the small waves lapping the beach 3' away.

The buzz of a boat in the distance woke me up. It was predawn and the sky was just beginning to change from purple to a light blue. The Milky Way was amazing and still showing bright. Lying on my side, watching the eastern sky brighten, I took stock of how I was feeling. The hands are slightly swollen with a stinging from the blisters that formed yesterday, nothing serious. Legs and back feel good. It was time to grab the breakfast of instant oatmeal and espresso. The sunrise was absolutely awesome. The rays of light radiating upward through the billowy clouds offshore energized me as I began planning the day. Fresh Gatorade was mixed up and I drug the boat out to deeper water to start the day. The campsite from last year's first stop was the minimum goal for the day. The plan is to row out to the ICW, get into the land cut and row until evening.

The shoreline to the west was coming together with Padre Island, I had reached the land cut, where the width of the water was just the width of the ICW. I heard a noise that was a bit different from the splash, clonk, clonk of the oars. It was a large snake swimming by me between the boat and the oar tip. I am not usually nervous around snakes, but this one was holding his head about 10" above the water. That was a sight to behold. The wind was a slight breeze on my stern, it was going to be a great day. The flats fishing boats would scream by me at I'm guessing 40-50mph and they would just stare at me as they went by. I started waving at as many as I could, just to see their reaction. Reactions got more interesting the further from civilization I was.

The water is not as clear as it was yesterday, a muddy color. The fishing shacks were interesting to watch as I glided by, ranging from well thought out two story affairs with AC to leaning walls barely maintaining the floors above the water. Passing campsite one from 2014, I rowed until about 4 o'clock when back spasms got the best of me. There was a cut through the spoils islands on my left with a solid sandy beach. Looking at the aerial photos, I see the Hap'g Cut is about two miles away.

Gulping some ibuprofen I began looking for some shade. I lay on my sleep pad under the empty house on the corner and napped. I guess I had been asleep 45 minutes when a flats boat came roaring out of the cut and headed north. The back was feel-

ing much better and I needed to make dinner before the evening onslaught of mosquitoes. The wind had built to a steady 15-20mph and I had to use my sleeping pad as a wind break to cook dinner. Red beans and rice was on the menu. I sat eating the meal as I got to watch another awesome sunset display. The dolphins were numerous, it must have been dinner time for them. Wind turbines slowly turned in the fading rays of sunset as the sun slid below the horizon.

The fatigue and realization of what I was attempting again hit me pretty hard. Blisters growing a bit but that is to be expected. I'll just have to tough it out until they become calluses. I keep thinking of others that had rowed through hardships and distances and what a walk in the park this must be compared to their challenges. Al Freihofer, Roz Savage and Ernest Shackleton came to mind. "What one man can do, another can do," Charles Morse (Anthony Hopkins) in the movie "The Edge." In correspondence with Mr Freihofer this last year, he reminded me the mental challenge is as strong as the physical. I succumbed to the mental stresses last year trying to muddle forward with no success. I would not let this be the reason for stopping early.

Monday morning I wake up to a light breeze with my muscles a bit tighter than yesterday. Hands still stinging, the blisters are beginning to harden. Today's goal is Padre Island Yacht Club. The club's committee has graciously hosted the Texas 200 stopover in the past years. Looking at the aerial charts



and prepping the gear, water and Gatorade, I see today will be a long day but there is a route that should keep me out of the bulk of the open water and waves. I didn't make breakfast, I thought I would get a jump on the day and eat along the way. I shoved off at 7am to a crowd of waving seagulls. It's like they all came in to say good bye and good luck. As many came to the beach and landed, thoughts of Hitchcock's Birds came to mind.

I rowed out of the land cut and into the waves and headed toward the back of North Padre Island. Wind was steady, 10-15mph I would guess. The waves weren't too big and were consistent wave trains, the skeg was working perfectly. It was another glorious day on the water. There was emerald water probably a foot deep for miles. I would row towards the shore, then tilt the bimini so I could stand and watch the water and wild-life go by. The crabs and trout were abundant with few mullets or stingrays. The thalassia or turtle grass was everywhere.

At 3pm I pulled down the bimini and dropped the anchor for lunch. I sat in a foot of clear water and made my tuna tortilla wraps. A little later I passed two guys fly fishing the flats with their boat about 50 yards away. It was a postcard setting for sure. The Bird Island Basin store had just closed as I arrived, missing an opportunity for cool fresh water. This is a windsurfer and kite surfer haven and several Windsurfers were unrigging their boards. They offered cool bottles of water that slaked the thirst that had been building. I wasn't out of water, just tired of warm water and Gatorade. After the pause that refreshes, I headed out to cover the final few inches the aerials showed remaining to reach the PIYC.

As I rowed along the eastern edge of the ICW I passed bungalows set back on spoil islands, painted as if they are in New England. I imagine the fun and excitement the children must have during the summers on these little islands. The water is very shallow to my left and the blade of that oar scrapes with every stroke while the right is at a normal depth. Shallow water forced me to adjust my hand overlaps opposite of normal as I pull through the stroke forcing the left oar's stroke to be shallower. The sun is setting and there is another colorful, spectacular sunset. The sunrises and sunsets in Dallas just don't do it for me. I reach into the dry bag and grab the bow lights to attach to the Velcro mount. It is getting dark quickly and being this close to reeds and weeds the mosquitoes begin to feast on the fresh meat that's rowed into the vicinity. DEET is a lifesaver for me on this trip.

The abundance of fauna seems to have increased as it got darker. Every swish, clonk, clonk sound from the oars were accompanied by a skittering sound of something that I've disturbed. I was getting sloppy with the strokes and worked to straighten them out, and felt a loud clonk at the blade. I was looking right at it when it happened. Whatever I hit lit up the water around the blade. Bioluminescence and a headache! The splashing of fish seemed to increase as I rowed into the night.

The lights to my left began to increase from one or two in the distance to larger numbers close by with a glow accompanying the lights. I found a row of navigation aids, now silhouettes in the glow of the onshore lights directing me into the protected channel. Following the channel slowly several buildings came into view, then many more. Condos and houses were built right on the channel. The PIYC was on the right with a



couple of empty docks.

Pulling quietly into the farthest dock, I tied off and rolled onto the creosote soaked boards. Standing and stretching back, legs and neck I see it is 10pm. Forgoing dinner, I made one walk around the PIYC to see if there were any couches or chaise lounges I could sleep on. With none found, I made my bed on the dock with little regard if it was proper to be lying out like this, on a pad covered with netting, with large sailboats berthed nearby. As I drifted off I recalled the red skimmers, egrets, herons, mullet, trout and reds I'd seen through the day.

It was a bright and sunny Tuesday morning when I woke up, missing the sunrise. I made a full breakfast on the dock and sat back reflecting on the previous day, sipping on espresso and watching the porpoise in the channel. I estimated the trip on Monday was about 40 miles. At about 8:30 the yacht club

leaders began showing up for a meeting. I was able to get a key to the showers and was able to remove four days of grime off me and rinse the salt from my clothing. I met three wonderfully accommodating gentlemen on staff, Jim, Dave and Fred. Refreshed, I organized the gear and refilled the 5gal water jug and seven 32oz Gatorade bottles.

Leaving the docks I was eagerly anticipating my next stop, Scoopy's, at the Corpus Christi Causeway. Scoopy's is an ice cream emporium serving up cold Blue Bell Ice Cream. Once inside, I am reminded of the Blue Bell recall. I had to settle for Blue Bunny, sheesh. The Coast Guard has a good presence in this area. Many boats congregate here and a slow cruise by from a gunboat with weapon mounted on the front while crew is staring at you is daunting. I guess they realized I didn't have a bale of weed on my 18' long 43" wide skiff and motored on by.



When I got to the south end of CC Bay I held my breath. This was the tough crossing last year that ate my lunch. The place where I succumbed to my doubts about being able to finish, then didn't. This year I took a deep breath, relaxed and got to rowing. I settled into a familiar stroke with good wind, low waves and pretty scenery. It was like rowing White Rock Lake in the summer breezes with better scenery. When I reached the other side of the bay I skirted around Stingray Island into the Corpus Christi Channel. Turning right, I headed towards the Gulf. About a mile further this smooth sandy beach beckoned for me to stop. Once the thought began rolling around in my head, I could find no reason not to. It was early but I was not sure how far I would have to go to find a place to camp. This would be a good place to end the day.

I nosed the skiff on the shore and set out the anchor and the full length of line. The beach was a clean, gently sloping sandy beach that crested with tufts of grass at the top. Walking to the top I saw a ridge leading off to the south to the high area of Stingray Island. I pulled out the lawn chair and cooked up dinner. The sunset kept me mellow and amused while watching the boats slide by. I'd put up the cooking gear and had laid out the pad, netting and was reclining when I heard the blast of a ship's horn. A large cargo ship was coming up the channel. The ship passed with the sun on the horizon behind it and dolphins riding the bow wave. The thought occurred to me as it passed that there should be a big wave, but there was none. As that thought was passing from the mind, the water started rising, rising up the beach with no wave, like a tidal bore.

The boat floated free of the beach and I watched a moment as the water rose. It did not stop. The water kept coming, panic gripped me as it reached close to me and again, kept coming. The water hit my sleeping pad and netting as I jumped up to stay dry. The water engulfed the area where I'd been laying and floated everything I had there. I was running grabbing everything, throwing them higher up the slope. As the water started receding, receding quickly, I realized everything in the water would be sucked into the channel. I saw the anchor line tightening on the skiff as it was being pulled out. I grabbed the rope handle on the skiff as the corkscrew anchor let loose in the soft sand upslope.

I would be up the channel without, if it was pulled from my hands. Hanging on and leaning back I stopped the movement further into the channel. I pulled the skiff way up onto the beach, above where the majority of the wave had been. Feeling safe, I set anchor again and reorganized my gear further upslope. Wringing the water from the sleeping bag and pillow, I contemplated where I



was and several scenarios of problems ahead. The mosquitoes were relentless as the adrenalin rush subsided.



Lying on my side after it had gotten dark I was surveying the lights to my east watching the ferries plod back and forth across the channel. I watched the night-time display as the stars shone and satellites passed. At about 12:30am I saw a silhouette of an animal moving down to the beach. Not sure if it was a dog or a coyote, I watched as long as I could. I awoke and looked toward the light to see if the animal could be seen. It was nose down following the flotsam line coming towards me. Those fight or flight thoughts are bouncing in my head. I waited until it was within 6' and jump up yelling, out of fear and boldness. That coyote went screaming up the slope and I last saw it as it

passed over the ridge into the darkness.

About an hour later he brought his friends back to serenade me. They were quiet the first time I asked them to shut up, politely of course, but not the next three times. As I faded back into unconsciousness I heard a blast of a ship's horn. Foggily I recalled that meant a ship was coming by, that's nice. Whoa, that means chaos! I jumped up and performed the same drill as earlier ending up hanging onto the boat as the water was trying to suck it seaward. Re-lathering up with DEET, I lay back down. This drill was performed two more times before dawn, in between coyote serenades.

Wednesday morning welcomed me with the skiff sitting 30 yards from the water. The sun was cresting the ridge to my east. I figured I would worry about it after I had a little breakfast, for today I was rowing into uncharted territory. Last year I had reached this area and turned northward to end the trip at Port Aransas. The peak of this adventure, my summit, was to be today. The Corpus Christi Channel combines with two other channels to form a busy crossroads of vessel traffic headed outbound and inbound from the Gulf. I proved I could do the first 100 miles, this is the second time I'd done it. My only option was move forward.

Standing, I leaned into the task of completing what I had dreamed of, planned for. The feeling is not unlike leaning into a strong wind blasting me, trying to push me down. Gathering my gear, I see coyote tracks all around my sleeping pad. I look up to see if they are watching and see two large hogs ambling across the playa about 50 yards away. The camera battery looks like a salt brick, so cell phone camera and video stills will have to be relied upon.

Reaching the edge of the ferry crossings, I sit and watch to see if there is a pattern I could use to time my passing through the five ferries working back and forth. Hailing them on the radio did nothing. I passed the eastern ferry docks with two pulling out and three coming in. No problem. Breathing much too fast, I had to mentally and physically slow down to stay focused. I stopped to talk with the guys fishing on the public pier. They could not believe I had put in at Port Isabel. Neither could I.

The final channel crossing laid about one hundred yards ahead. Lining up on the back end of the motel, about to cross I hear a motor revving up. I see a white 60' sportfisherman with outriggers waving, headed my way. With bow high and not on plane yet, the boat passes me and leaves behind a massive wake from where I'm sitting. Pulling hard I quickly aim the stern into the face of the wake. The St Lawrence skiff has proven itself seaworthy again. Cutting the initial wake was no problem, dropping into the trough behind that was not what I expected.

The hotel and horizons disappeared, I guess the wake was 6' high. Running through my mind in milliseconds were thoughts of how to recover all my gear when the skiff swamps. Surprisingly she rose up as the crest reached the stern like a duck on a pond. The three following wakes were no problem. Pulling hard on the oars I crossed the channel in moments. As I reached the channel marker on the north side, another large sportfisherman was headed out of Lydia Ann Channel. Not on plane yet, he turned towards the Gulf and I rode more scary wakes as he passed.

With my mountain peak climbed, I

relaxed a bit, refilled my water bottles and mixed up some Gatorade as the skiff glided past two parked barges. The sounds of the ferries and large boats faded into the distance as I was rowing through an area of flat water, not even a ripple. Duck hunting blinds dotted the water and shoreline reinforcing the complete change of scenery. The morning haze had burned off completely as I ghosted behind Mud Island headed towards Hidden Pass. As I reached the Pass I could see cattle grazing in vibrant green grass along the shore with a ranch house and windmill. The sky was bright blue with white cumulus clouds forming, with one low grey cloud sprinkling down on me.

Reaching Hidden Pass was like stepping into a new environment. The water color cleared up from the muddy complexion through the channels. The shoreline has changed from sand and mud to stark white oyster banks. This type of beach is known to shred hull bottoms, centerboards and unprotected feet. The wind freshened up and the waves grew a bit as I headed on towards Paul's Mott. There was no one particular direction the waves were coming from, a confused chop by all definitions.

Crossing Aransas Bay, I followed close to the back side of the barrier island. The shorebird rookeries were full of pelican, terns, skimmers and seagulls, all segregated into their own groups. Each group had several sentries that would come out and berate me for interrupting their peace and privacy. Except for the pelicans, they just nodded as I rowed by.

I pulled up to Paul's Mott at about 3pm. Paul's Mott is a triangle of oysters jutting into Aransas Bay, one of the stopping points for this year's 200. Getting out to stretch I understood all the warnings about the oyster shells mighty quickly. I could hear and feel the razor sharp oysters modifying the skeg's fiberglass sheathing. The terns were very upset that I had disturbed their peace and quiet as I walked along the south shore. Again, the pelicans just nodded. I rowed around to the tip where a fisherwoman was and ate my lunch and reassessed my day.

Rowing through the waves and chop would put me at the Third Chain of Islands at about 6pm and camping spots close by aren't obvious in this area. I planned on rowing towards the Third Chain and then reassessing as I approached. As the day wore on, wind held steady at about 15mph. White caps here and there accentuated the beautiful scenery of the back side of San Jose Island. The offshore platforms being built lying on their sides faded in the west. The wind and waves were wearing on me and it was decision time.

I decided to duck behind the spoil islands of the ICW and cruise along the channel to find a suitable camping area. Up close, the spoil islands are much different from the aerial photo charts. Pulling behind the first island, the land reached upward 50'-60', blocking all wind on this portion of the ICW. The brine flies and greenheads were swarming around the boat. Even rowing to the landward side of the channel didn't stop the swarms. A barge with pusher was stopped along the back side of the spoils in a staging area. The captain questioned my sanity and said he was waiting on a berth in Corpus Christi. Pushing on I kept looking for a landing area but the spoils islands had thick, non inviting brush and rambles right to the edge. Landward the riprap and warning signs about

trespassing encouraged me to continue on.

Landward the shoreline came to an end at a point of riprap with a breeze flowing across it. This opened up into what is the aptly named Sundown Bay, a small lagoon off the ICW. The spoil island was low and far enough away to allow the breeze to keep this area free of flies. The sun was approaching the horizon as I tied off to the riprap and let out all of my anchor line. The welcome breeze kept me pointed into the small bay that was calm with very green shorelines of riprap and low bushes. Checking the NOAA weather reports I could be confident the wind would continue through the night. If the wind shifted to the north, I would be dangling into the ICW and in the way of barge traffic. Directly off my stern the sunset was again glorious. Setting up the mosquito netting and sleeping pad I prepared for the night.

A blinding white light woke me up. Thoughts of train headlights and UFO abductions raced through my foggy mind. A barge passing by was checking me out. Oh no, I had drifted into the channel! Jumping up I could tell that wasn't the case and the light illuminated my position very well. The light went out as the barge continued droning toward me. Settling down, I turned my back to the barge. The captain must have not believed his eyes as he lit me up two more times as he passed. Two more barges checked me out through the night. Not a good night's sleep, but it was very comfortable.

A passing rain shower woke me up at dawn. The tarp was unfurled and pulled over me just as the rain stopped. Packing my gear best I could, I made a cup of espresso to jump start the morning. I planned on grabbing a bite to eat on the other side of Ayres Bay. Setting out in a nice breeze I rowed across the channel to follow the spoil islands to Rattlesnake Island, then turn into the bay and cross to the back side of Matagorda Island. This would put me in front of the Second Chain of Islands. The wind was dead and humidity was high as I rowed in the wind shadow. Loud grunting and a ruckus behind me made me turn and I caught a glimpse of a hog bolting into the brush. The trip waiver came to mind, "You may die."

As I rounded the channel marker at the end of Rattlesnake Island the breeze hit me. It was solidly white capping, 20mph I guessed. The sweat soaked shirt quickly cooled off as I turned into the wind. That little white mark on the aerial chart was actually an oyster reef that I hit squarely. Climbing out and pulling over through the increasing waves was awkward as I tried to remain upright on the uneven oyster covered bottom. Once in boat I realized this crossing was going to be a challenge, rowing into a quartering wind with waves.

A Coast Guard RIB with a small cabin on it was blasting by on the ICW until he saw me. Coming off plane, he turned toward me. I knew there was something that caught his eye. I wasn't wearing my life jacket. It was so quiet on the channel that I hadn't strapped it on yet. Throwing the life jacket on and grabbing my radio to show him I had a VHF, he turned back toward the ICW and continued on.

Crossing Ayres Bay the storm I had been watching caught me. Running to the shelter of the spoils islands was not an option, I wouldn't make Army Hole when the rest of the Texas 200 boats would arrive. The noise from the wind, rain and hull pounding was deafening. It was a struggle to keep the bow turned into the wind to keep from swamping.

Again the skiff reacted, as I pulled to maintain position, by floating up each wave as a bobber would on a pond. As the wind flattened the waves (this was scary, I'd never seen that before), rays of sun beamed down from heaven as if to say "you're alright and you'll be fine."

Reaching a sandy beach on the other side the skiff had about 3" of water sloshing around my feet. Breakfast oatmeal with more espresso was made and I sat back in the lawn chair and enjoyed the beauty of this area. The bright blue skies with the white cumulus cloud were the order for the day. The breeze had dropped to about 10mph and water was a little muddy along the sand and mud shore.

Rowing along the western side of Matagorda Island through very fish productive waters, the fish would bolt out of the grass reeds growing in the water. Rowing past a few fishermen with their backs toward me I enjoyed surprising them by yelling a good Aggie Howdy at them. I always got the "where did you come from" in one form or another. There were also many comments questioning mental capacity in one form or another. By noon my back was beginning to spasm. Grabbing the ibuprofen after pulling onto an oyster beach I sat back to take a nap and let the medicine kick in.

I woke about 30 minutes later with no pain and sat and watched the fishermen to my left. Another squall hit as I was beached. Unfurling the tarp I attempted to cover up but the wind would have nothing of that. Wrestling with the tarp, I watched the fishermen just keep on fishing with no regard to the rain and wind. My anxiety dropped after that. Pulling out I headed towards the First Chain of Islands and Blind Pass.

The row from Ayres Point to the First Chain showed me why the fishermen were in the area. There is a large nursery of reds and trout. The rowing was fantastic, wind was about 15-20mph, but the water was in the wind shadow and flat. The rowing plan was working, stay in the flat water up against the shore. Bird life abounded in the reeds and bushes along the edge with many red-wing blackbirds and cardinals. There was a constant series of inlets and small bays that I rowed along trying to cut across the larger gaps. This constant zigging and zagging ate up a lot of time. The pass through the First Chain of Islands, Blind Pass, was found with little problem. The narrowness of this pass surprised me, about 20'-30' wide. The shell island to the west has a white house with a water tower and all sorts of what looks like farm and oil rig equipment on it.

Pulling out of the pass I turned eastward toward Army Hole, which I estimate is ten miles away. The heat of the day and earlier struggles were wearing on me and it was time to find a spot for the evening. I found a bush that was tall enough to project shade and pulled in next to it. Placing the sleeping pad on the shell beach in the shade I sat back and watched the sun ease towards the horizon. Teriyaki chicken was on the menu for tonight. As I ate the rehydrated chicken, thinking about the texture, I began wondering if it was really chicken.

The wind stayed up as a gorgeous sunset unfolded in front of me. Rays of gold and yellow radiated upward as the sun set behind the clouds and horizon. Noises near my feet woke me up. It was just about daylight and there was a ruckus just past the bushes at my feet. There was a slight incline down to



a small pond 20 feet away that hogs were splashing in. I won't bother them and we'll all be fine was my mantra that morning. I didn't make breakfast, just organized the boat and headed about at about 7am. It was going to be an easy row of about ten miles to Army Hole this morning.

The toughest part of today's row was the anticipation. I certainly didn't want to pass Army Hole. The last fisherman I spoke to did let me know there were buildings there and I couldn't miss it. I must have looked over my shoulder a thousand times expectantly this morning. Finally saw the building structures and it seemed like they would not come near, no matter how much I rowed before looking back again. Pulling into a little lagoon just south of AH, I dawdled just looking around and getting my bearings before committing



to a landing area. I could see a windbreak had been set up at the picnic table on the point of land facing west. Dang, I'm late, I miscalculated days, I missed the group. I pulled up the boat through some mud into tall grasses just below a picnic table and shade cover.

As I was tying off I saw two people walking towards me. It was Gordo and Karen Barcomb! What a sight for sore eyes! I'd met them a year before on the 2014 TX200. This couple knows no strangers and no matter where you are, they make you feel like you're old friends or family. In a few minutes a cold Lone Star beer was in my hand. Show me your hands, they exclaimed! No biggie, the blisters were solid calluses by now. Gordo and Karen had sailed out with John and Rosa Goodman in John's colorful sailboat the evening before. I indeed had been the first TX200 boat to arrive. Not really a big claim considering I left Port Isabel couple days earlier than everyone else.

Army Hole has a docking area shaped like a U. Wind pushes you hard down one leg of the U, then you hope to burn speed and energy making the 180° into the docks. That didn't always work. Splinters and bowsprits were sacrificed. The first sailboat to arrive was a Hobie trihull kayak type rig with a single sailor, no crew. He slid in from the direction I had come, not from the NW of Army Hole as many were expected to come from. Sitting under Gordo's shade sipping cold beer we watched the other sailboats flogging dead upwind to AH.

The first three monohulls to arrive were MacGregors. As much as we had been discussing the expected first boats, a MacGregor had not been mentioned. This was certainly a testament to the fine sailors aboard as well as the usefulness of the 25 and 26 in the TX200. I was able to get a shower in the open air shower before everyone else showed up. Meeting many of the friends I'd made in the previous attempt in 2014 was a high point of the trip.



Brian Graham and his dad made me a welcome member of their campsite. I met Pehr, Matt, Chuck and Jack again from last year. I also met Chris, Leah and Molina bringing their outboard powered shanty boat on the TX200. Fiddler crabs, I had to mention this. Walking down to the riprap at end of the docks, the ground was moving, I had to stop and focus on the ground. There were thousands upon thousands of fiddlers moving and migrating about, en mass. It was an awesome sight to behold. The tales of rattlesnakes on Matagorda Island weren't lost on me. Walking through the tall grass was done slowly and gingerly. I placed my sleeping gear on top of the picnic table.

There was a lot of discussion of the route for the final push to Magnolia Beach. Everyone had their favorite route or their own reasoning for why they were going as they were. My thought was to row in a relative wind shadow until almost due north of the Matagorda Island lighthouse then turn downwind to Falwell Island, skirt the east side then slide downwind to Grass Island skirting to east before reaching it. This would put me near the opening of Saluria Bayou. Go east through bayou, turn north at the end and run downwind to Magnolia Beach was the plan.

All were up and stuffing gear in dry bags with excitement at sunrise. It was 24 miles to Magnolia (Maggie) Beach. Everybody was packing some, most cooking breakfast. A few discussions were had regarding the route for the day. Some were going to run downwind to the ICW, then eastward out through the jetties into Lavaca Bay then run downwind to Maggie Beach. Others were planning their own individual attack on Saluria Bayou.

Walking back to my picnic table where I had planned to do the espresso and oatmeal breakfast, Glenn and Brian Graham asked me over and cooked up some pancakes and coffee for me on their Coleman stove. They even threw in some bacon. It took about three sentences from Glenn before he asked me if I knew Jesus Christ. I really enjoyed spending time with them, assuring Glenn I did.

I'm a strong believer in "plan the row and row the plan." The plan I had yesterday will be a go. Rowing perpendicular to the wind isn't my favorite thing to do, especially in a technical section. But when in Rome, follow the chariots. Watching the fishermen in powerboats led me to the opening of Saluria Bayou and I was able to stay on the relatively smooth water in the bayou. Four other TX200 boats

reached the bay about the same time I did and turned north. The wind was pushing me in northward. The size of the rollers was pretty big as I approached the east end of the Port O'Connor jetties. Brian's boat sailed within shouting of distance his dad's. As I reached the end of the jetties they jibed and headed north. This last day was going to be a breeze, Maggie Beach, due north, downwind.

Or so I thought. The waves were not consistent and it was hard to gain any speed on the front slope of the waves. Waves coming across the bay seemed to be reflecting back from the shore to my left stacking up into chop. Waves turned into unorganized chop about 2'-3' high. It was a constant struggle to maintain any heading and forward progress. Forget feathering the oars, as they were in the water the other would have been biting in the water the other would have been lifted to wave in the air. No rhythm.

Definitely this was my toughest day on the water. I think I may have been defeated had this been day one or two. Barn sour now, nothing was going to stop me from getting to the finish. All the sailboats had passed me by now. Looking at the bright side, the shrimp will be ready and the beer cold. Rain clouds would form close by, dump on me, then the sun would be out again. It rained on me three times before I reached the finish.

That last turn to my right to pull up on the beach was a great feeling. A few hard pulls and I would be on the beach, 2.30pm. The landing was exactly as I had hoped it would be. A quiet landing allowed me to

stumble out of the boat with few people looking on. I got my bearings, straightened up and looked around. There were three or four people coming up saying congrats and talking about their trip. I pulled the skiff as far up onto the beach I could, not wanting to lose it now for sure. I was very tired, I couldn't believe how tired. All I could focus on was walking up to the picnic table that had the Texas 200 Finish Line banner on it. I said a few howdys and searched out Chuck Pierce and Chris Breaux for a finish line photo.

After a few plates of boiled shrimp and a few cold brews, I looked around to see who and what was where. The schooner was being folded. The Bobcat was placed neatly on its trailer. Jack gave me a ride up to the Shell station where my car and trailer were. I love it when a plan comes together. I had finished what I had set out to do, I'd reached my goal of rowing the Texas 200, something that had never been done. Others had rowed farther along the coast and across the Atlantic, but this was mine.

The time for recovery and packing for the trip home was here. I showered and planned on spending Saturday night here on the beach and then driving up to Galveston to meet Andy Green on Sunday. Andy is the gentleman who conceived the tooling and the Kevlar St Lawrence skiff that carried me this past week. He is quite the pioneer when it comes to composites and uses. I had been introduced to him by email earlier in the summer by John Mullen, who had originally introduced me to the St Lawrence skiff. But, this leads to other stories to come.



1. You Have Just Finished Building / Acquired a New Boat

You should be very familiar with any new to you vessel before you try to sail this event in it. Especially if it has a different rig than you are used to, i.e., you have sailed sloops all of your life and your new boat is a sprit rig/balanced lug/Chinese junk, etc. This is not the time to test experimental sails or foils. There are some exceptions to this item involving very experienced skippers, but if you are not familiar with the rig, how will you get the boat to go to that upwind camp or miss that reef up ahead when the channel turns into the wind? Don't damage yourself or lose your boat due to unfamiliarity with it.

2. You Don't Know How to Deal With the Sun

Wearing shorts and a t-shirt in an open cockpit boat without some type of sunshade guarantees that you will be badly sunburned by lunch time. People have dropped out of this event on the first day because they were so badly burned that they couldn't continue. Take the money you would spend on this year's trip and instead head to Academy, Cabela's or Bass Pro Shops for some non-cotton, SPF rated clothing. Long pants, long sleeve shirts. Don't forget a wide brimmed hat, neck gator and gloves. I have had my shoulders burn even through clothing down here, so get some SPF50 or higher sun screen, too.

3. You Cannot Reboard Your Boat From Deep Water by Yourself

To know if you can do this, you have to try it in benign conditions. In those conditions your reboarding method should be very easy so that when you are in 3' of chop and 20 plus knots of wind you can still pull it off. Rope ladders, with very few exceptions, will not work and should not even be considered.

10 Indications That You Should NOT Do the Texas 200 At Least Not This Year

By Chuck Pierce

This is in response to 2016's high dropout rate of over 50%. First let me say that I am not on the Board of Directors nor do I have any official capacity of any sort with this event. These observations are my opinions and mine alone, as someone who has successfully sailed this event eight times in three different boats. If you disagree you are welcome to flame me for all the good that will do. In no particular order:

Find a hard ladder that works for your boat. On some small boats ladders may not work at all. You may need to rig boarding lines or even push the rail under the water and roll in. This all takes practice and should not be learned on your first Texas 200.

4. You and Your Crew Cannot Right Your Capsized Boat Without Outside Assistance

This is something else that you cannot know unless you try it in benign conditions, preferably with the person(s) who will be crewing with you on the event. In the interests of full disclosure, I have been in this situation in the event. It was not fun. Be sure that you do not overload the boat and that the hatches in the waterproof compartments are in good condition. Anything that's in the cockpit needs to be tied in so you don't lose anything critical. Be aware as always that requiring rescue doesn't just put you in a dangerous situation, it also puts whoever is trying to help you in danger.

5. You Don't Have Options for Reducing Sail

The winds on this event can be high enough that they will bend or break masts, break shrouds and stays that are undersized or in poor condition, and rip or tear apart sails. Most of these scenarios happened again this year (2016). I know of at least three pitchpoles by catamarans on this trip over the years. This can all be avoided if the sails are reefed by an appropriate amount in a timely fashion. Practice it. You should be able to take in or let out a reef in just a couple of minutes even on a big boat. On a small boat it should take less than a minute. Look at the many pictures of reefed sails on the website and the Facebook group and note how small they can be made. Reef early and be able to reduce sail to the point that your boat is comfortable in 25 plus knot winds.

6. You Cannot Navigate With a Chart and Compass

Following someone else is not a navigation plan. What happens when you are not in sight of land or any other boats and your phone app/GPS/chartplotter quits? If you don't have charts and a compass and the ability to use them, you will not even be able to find a good drop out point, let alone finish the event.

7. You Don't Have a VHF Radio with Enough Batteries to Keep it on and Operating Every Minute That You are on the Water

The tug captains you will encounter throughout the trip will thank you if you

monitor Channel 16 so that they can let you know what they are doing and what you need to do as they pass you. This also allows you to hail other boats that are doing the event and to hear calls for assistance from those who may need it. It lets you verbally communicate with others on the trip instead of relying on hand signals that can be misunderstood. Miscommunication due to a turned off VHF radio has been responsible for several dropouts over the years.

8. You Haven't Sailed Your Boat in 20 Knot Winds

Afternoon winds in South Texas in June are typically 15-20 knots. Sometimes higher. Sometimes much higher, with gusts that can add 40% or 50% to the sustained windspeeds. In June, on most days there is a small craft advisory on the bays. Chop in the bays runs 3'-4' feet due to fetch that can be ten miles or more. When you sail in this stuff for the first time on this trip, you are jeopardizing your boat, yourself, your crew and anyone who attempts to rescue you after you have issues. This trip should not be your first experience in these conditions.

9. You Don't Know How to Sail Your Boat Upwind

The assertion that the Texas 200 is a downwind sleigh ride is simply wrong. For a large chunk of the trip you are indeed on a run or a broad reach, but there are many times when you must be able to get to windward. At the very least, a lack of windward ability will keep you from making some of the camps. You may find yourself blown onto a spoil bank or stuck in the shallow water that is ubiquitous down here. Worst case, you may find yourself unable to avoid commercial traffic or on a reef that will damage your boat and require rescue and repair before you can continue or drop out.

10. You Can't Repair Any and All Possible Failures That Occur on Your Boat

If you don't have a basic toolkit with spare parts, oriented towards the hardware on your boat, get one together. You should be prepared to fix torn sails, broken fittings, shrouds, small hull breaches, rudders, leeboards/centerboards/daggerboards and anything else that can break. You should be prepared to improvise a jury rig if the mast comes down, bends or breaks. Making sure that the boat is in good condition before the trip is a great thing, but failures can still happen and you must be ready to deal with them.

The Board of Directors has done a great job of making sure that the Texas 200 will continue for the foreseeable future. It is important to understand that inexperience or incompetence on the part of the participants may eventually bring about Coast Guard intervention and cancellation of the event for the year. This actually happened to the Everglades Challenge in 2015. An incident in which someone is seriously injured or even killed could end the event altogether.

Before entering this event you have a responsibility to look at yourself critically and dispassionately and to consider whether you, your boat and your crew (if any) are prepared for the conditions you may find yourself in on the trip. There is no shame in realizing that you are not ready. Take a year, study the accounts on the website and Facebook group, get it together and successfully do the Texas 200 next year.

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It was a pretty simple recipe. All we had to do was to mix a pinch of this:



With a portion of this:



Simmer for a few of these:



Toss in a few of these:



Surround them with a liberal amount of these:



A Recipe for Adventure

By Dan Rogers

And blend with three of these:



A very, very simple formula for FUN. A recipe for adventure actually. Only one recipe. But THIRTEEN different cooks and at least TEN different serving dishes, platters, bowls and even a demitasse or two.



The cooks and the kitchens were a pretty varied bunch. Some of those kitchens:





Oh, yeah. The cooks:



Well, anyhow, you get the idea. The First Annual Priest Lake Howl at the Moon Cruise is in the logbook. Four days of wind and calm. Four days of sailing, drifting, spits of rain, sunburn, swimming, campfires, walks in the woods, new friends, old shipmates, spectacular scenery, nonstop boat talk, solitude and laughter around the campfire.

It all started with a very old and quite distinct recollection. This actually goes back to when '57 Chevys were still rolling off the assembly line. One evening that iconic summer I was sitting around a family campfire on the beach someplace near Granite Creek Resort on the west side of Priest Lake. In those days it was an adventure just getting to the lake. The final 40 to 60 miles of road was still gravel, ruts, DUST and dirty station wagons full of kids and camping gear. A rumbling, jarring ride. Of course, I was only about ten at the time and my job was to ask "how much farther?" at regular intervals all the way north.

So there we were on the beach facing the majestic Selkirk mountain range. After a day of swimming, beachcombing and those sorts of things, we were gathered around a driftwood fire, probably roasting marshmallows. Suddenly the moon rose right behind

Chimney Rock. I can still remember being mesmerized by the level of detail on that full moon. The juxtaposition of celestial body and primordial granite obelisque, a one in a million shot. How fast he ascended and was off on his eternal night ride! Somehow I never witnessed that sequence again.

The genesis of our present day cruise was to not only see this rather unique phenomenon again myself and to share with the rest of our rather eclectic band of adventurers, but also as an excuse to put on another mess-about/cruise. I'm always happy to spread the word and share the Priest Lake Experience. And this time the word got out rather well.

We had a clutch of boats come from far and near. A one of a kind houseboat, a SCAMP, a Potter, a Paradox, a vintage Calkins cabin boat, a Mikesboat, an EZ Rider kayak, a still evolving Frankenbot and a roto-molded plastic rowboat. All come to howl at the full moon over Chimney Rock. Twelve people in all and what a delightful group!

We met for breakfast at the legendary AJ's Café in Priest River, ID, and formed an eclectic wagon train for the 40 odd miles north to what's called the Crown Jewel of Idaho lakes. Launch point was the self same Granite Creek Resort.

And as soon as all boats were in the water, weather, circumstance and whim took over the "cruise plan." Not unusual. Not a problem. So instead of maintaining a moon vigil, we all headed about ten miles to the south and anchored off the leeward side of Bartoo Island. This was July, the height of the season, but we had the place to ourselves! The wind blew pretty strong overnight. Clouds obscured the moonrise. But nobody seemed to mind. The boats were anchored off a gravel beach with stern lines attached to shore. After a long day on the road and then on the water, most everybody was already asleep by the time Ol' Luna made his appearance anyway.



By the time the last breakfast dish was stowed on day two, all hands and all vessels were underway and headed north. Destination to be determined by wind, whim and happenstance. Do you see a theme evolving?





where you are, it's already fantastic, or keep on and explore what's around the next bend in the river, behind the next point, inside the next bay? Let's just say that our little group of adventurers did both. And in our own good time we traversed the entire length and breadth of this truly magnificent body of water.



Our little family of wayfarers gathered over the next several hours at a spot where I, personally, have left footprints over my lifetime. I was delighted to share this particularly beautiful little cove, Bottle Bay. I don't think the place has changed at all in the intervening 50 years.

What was originally intended as a siesta and swim call destination quickly morphed into our overnight moorage. We tucked up tight against the lee formed by the Tango Creek and Kettle Creek alluvia. Most every conversation was, by now, ending with "I've gotta come back here again." And rightly so.

One day began to blend in with the next. We'd all settle on a departure time, each day a bit later. A bit less committed. There was still much to see and to do. Priest Lake is a big place, especially from the cockpit of a small boat travelling at one or two knots. Such is the dilemma of every group attempting to make it from end to end. Do you just stay

To do that we had to transit a two-mile-long meandering stream known as the Thurofare. It never gets more than about 15' deep and begins with a nail biting "channel" that had *Miss Kathleen's* rudder cutting a furrow in the sand and her screw digging up underwater "dust." The entire route is spectacular with a generally observed no wake zone, uncut trees extending to the horizon in all directions and water so clear that every pebble, boulder and log stands out in vivid relief just under our keels. And it was those boulders and logs that kept my attention riveted on the patch of water just ahead. This place is a long, long way from any repair shops. And we already had a couple of "ducks" in tow. Bending a prop wasn't anything that I cared to do.

The destination, and our final night out, was just about as far away from civiliza-



tion we could get with a boat. Well, with a boat big and heavy enough to live “comfortably” aboard for an extended period, that is. Upper Priest Lake has been preserved from development throughout its perimeter and for as far as the eye can penetrate in all four quadrants. And spending at least one night there, anchored out, has been on my personal bucket list for decades.

All I gotta say is that doing this once was a complete delight. But once is in no fashion, enough! I, too, absolutely “gotta come back again!” Besides, there’s still that matter of watching the moon come up behind Chimney Rock. That’s why this was only the “First Annual” Priest Lake Howl at the Moon Cruise.

As we departed Upper Priest, our little gang of adventurers left their mark upon a perfectly still surface. The sort of mark that lingers in the memory but quickly fades from view. As it should. See you next year???

Checking old stories to see what sort of lies I’ve been telling, I was reading over an installment of the series I wrote on the birthing of *Miss Kathleen*. This particular episode was dated New Year’s Day, 2016, not quite seven months ago.

“This year: I resolve to DO more boating. I resolve to stop and enjoy the company and friendship and general well being that comes from associating with like minded people engaged in a wholesome pursuit. I resolve to put the tools down more and pick up the charts and make real plans to go places and do things with this fleet of hulls that calls me “dad.”

That little paragraph was pretty much a fantasy for this Type A, serial Frankenbuilder. I’ve turned one or two new to me boats out each winter for the past half dozen years. There’s always one or two that have to come back in the shop for complete overhauls and worse, during the non building season (summer.) The chance of keeping that particular resolution was about as likely as believing those acceptance speeches on TV this national convention season. Fat chance indeed. Well, as I count on my fingers I am absolutely amazed to discover that I have, in fact, stayed on message. Wow, huh?

Most of this action has been with *Miss Kathleen*, the Frankenbot project that was not even ready for launching back on January 1. And I haven’t kept a log so numbers are only approximate, but I’d guess that she has already been launched and retrieved a hundred times. Maybe more. Most of this comes from the nature of the beast.

Staying on Message

By Dan Rogers

I never know how one of these boats is going to look, or perform, until it’s “done.” And most of ‘em never really get finished before I’m off on another completely different “brilliant scheme.” Sometimes it’s the same boat. Often I get a new idea and am off chasing that particular rainbow completely anew. So when I resolved to drop the tools and pick up the charts, not even I should have believed it. After all, ideas are only useful if you pursue ‘em.

Those hundred plus launches began about the second week of January. Back then I was having one helluva time getting the hull to leave the trailer in an orderly fashion. That and the return to the hard phase was pretty ephemeral. I had to keep putting the boat in the water, testing my latest hairball notion and hauling back out to go home and try something else. Then there were sea trials, and rudder modifications, and steering mods, and multiple engine swaps and mods, and general phooferawing around with motors.

But by February we were actually “going places” on what water that was then available and not still of the solid persuasion. Cruising season was in full swing by March here in Almostcanada. In her first five months of active service *Miss Kathleen* and I have been away from home about 35 nights already. The GPS has recorded about 300 miles travelled on the water. And my new to me truck has logged over 8,000 miles in a bit over three months, much

of it leading a trailer around. Now that’s really staying on message!

This breaks down into a number of categories. We’ve been to three group cruises so far. That would have been four but the March Drizzle Cruise got canx due to weather, of all things. We’ve been all up and down the Pend Oreille River. The GPS breadcrumb track of our local puddle, here at Diamond Lake, has just about occluded the map of the lake.

We’ve been to Priest Lake at least four times already this year, the first two with snow still on the ramp. Little Eloika Lake and big Banks Lake have floated us. Spirit Lake a couple of times. Fernan, for two overnights and one extended swimming session. We’ve been to several locations on Lake Roosevelt already but the water was still too low for us to launch. Early in this scheme of things, we made a hundred mile round trip in the snow to find a usable ramp on Lake Pend Oreille. That foray resulted in a hurried launch and scuttle back home before dark.

So many basic maintenance and initial build projects have gone undone that it’s about time to at least bend that resolution just a wee bit. She needs painting from all the dock scrapes and scratches from parking in the trees. The exterior varnish is about to implode from way more time exposed than I ever expected. And a myriad of window leaks have been temporarily neutralized by yards and yards of clear Gorilla Tape. Dozens of lesser tasks wait patiently. Prospective modifications stand by quietly.

But doggone it, we’ve been out BOATING, not building. Really staying on message.

Gray Fleet

USS *Coronado* (LCS-4) successfully tested her anti ship weaponry by shooting down a test drone with an anti ship defense system, that, evidently, is what an anti ship defense system does. The Navy, to say nothing of the taxpayers, is thrilled.

SecNavy Ray Mabus announced that the next destroyer, *Higbee* (DDG-223), would be named after Lenah Sutcliff Higbee, the first woman to be awarded the Navy Cross for her duties as a nurse and the second superintendent of the Navy Nurse Corps.

Coast Guard wants better "all government" intelligence for drug interdiction. No one talks to each other despite systemic alterations to the entire intelligence and the creation of Homeland Security post 9/11. Similar to the internecine wars among the service branches, the "spooks" have their own intramural squabbles that go back as far as forever. NSA peers down their noses at CIA that they think is merely a bunch of coffee klatch chaps who sit around and decide what is wrong with the world caring little about data to support their inclinations. CIA, in reverse, views NSA as a bunch of wire freaks and computer geeks without common sense. The FBI is ignored by everyone because they tend to be screw ups of the first order (remember that they admitted they gave back false DNA test results to "help" prosecutors. Add to this mix the sundry military intelligence and security services and the Defense Intelligence Agency and you get a bureaucracy that functions adequately, at best, and downright awful on a day to day basis. The Coast Guard has a solid and very legitimate beef.

China continues to run roughshod over her neighbors, especially the Philippines, despite rulings from the International Tribunal that is supposedly seeking peaceful solutions to disputes. They ruled that China is infringing on the territories of many other countries and China responded by ignoring everything.

Meanwhile, the US and China continue virtually on a daily basis to challenge the sea lines of the region. The Americans send ships into the area and the Chinese buzz the ships or sail on collision courses until the last moment. The clanking noise coming from Asia is all the saber rattling. Japan is the nation most worried because they know that China could blockade the islands and no one, even the United States, would go to war with China to protect Japan. Although alliance between Putin's Russia and the US to wage conflict against China is within the realm of possibilities, statistically similar to the odds of being hit by a shell fired by green men (women) from Mars.

The Chinese Navy is also feeling its oats in other arenas. After a recent RIMPAC naval exercise involving several nations, the Chinese opened their ships for tours, as did everyone else, however, they barred any Japanese officials or sailors from boarding their vessels. It is the opinion of the US Navy that China desires Asian hegemony and continues to push all others in the region to see how far they can go to establish their control. The State and Defense Departments are wondering about a parallel debate, how far will we allow the Chinese to throw their weight around? No wonder Japan is on a ship building craze going beyond their usual stance of merely self defense.

The mammals won a new court ruling that pitted whales against the US Navy. A 2012 act that allowed the Navy to experiment with sundry sound waves was overturned because it



Over the Horizon

By Stephen D.
(Doc) Regan

severely impacted feeding and mating patterns of a myriad of marine entities such as whales, dolphins, seals, sea lions and two dozen other pinnipeds. The Navy has been experimenting with mid frequency sonar that is the target of environmentalists. The court ruling only required the Navy not to use those specific frequencies when around mammals.

Mobile, Alabama's Austral USA delivered two more ships to the Gray fleet, a transport named *USNS Carson City* (EPF-7), and a Littoral Combat Ship named *Montgomery* (LCS-8). They are currently working on the *USNS Yuma* (EPF-8) and *Burlington* (EPF-10). This all part of the prepositioned supply ships around the world so the military does not have to haul all sorts of equipment and weapons to sites when conflicts break out. These ships are typically crewed by both civilian and US Navy personnel.

Merchant Fleet

The Department of Justice nailed a cargo ship *Cornelia* for illegal discharge of oily wastewater in the Great Lakes. Mineralien Schiffahrt Spedition, a German company, pled guilty and agreed to pay a \$1 million fine after it was shown that the Chief Engineer repeatedly dumped excess bilge water overboard in violation of the law. To add to the crime, he fudged the books on discharge materials. But he only did this ten times.

The Swedish Club, an organization that keeps track of maritime incidents, stated that the three biggest, most expensive problems in the merchant arena are vice, collision and grounding. Vice is the improper storage of goods when loaded. Personal claims have skyrocketed because sailors are now keenly aware of the potential for compensation. Contamination is the next listed concern.

The Congressional Research Service reported on trans Pacific trade partnerships that highlighted some debatable concerns about import/export business. The US and Japan pass \$193 billion across the ocean and Singapore and Viet Nam account for over \$45 billion annually. Observably this is big money requiring high levels of protection, diplomatic openness, communication and economic awareness.

The proponents of trans Pacific trade agreements posit that this business on great waters is a significant element of US economy that provides thousands of manufacturing jobs, transportation expenditures and brings in "outside" money to our shores.

The opponents of trans Pacific trade are quick to establish that we tend to bring in more in imports than we export to these nations. Part of this negative swing is due to big business moving offshore for cheap labor, therefore creating joblessness and a negative flow of money. Any way you look at it, trans Pacific trade amounts to huge numbers requiring continued open sea lines of communication, additional merchant ships and crew and positive diplomacy by the US.

Excelerate Energy, a US company noted for LNG solutions, has signed up with Bangladesh to open the first LNG terminal in that nation. Moheshkhali Floating LNG will provide docking and storage of LNG with Excelerate LNG designing, financing, developing, building, operating and running the whole show for the first decade. The Floating Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU) will have a storage capacity of 138,000 cubic meters and a regasification capacity of 500 million cubic feet.

Small Boats

Those of us who fell in love with the West Wight Potter and remain steadfastly loyal to our boats were saddened to hear that International Marine in San Diego has decided against a future in boat building. The owners will continue to sell sailing equipment and parts. The internet has been filled with complaints from WWP-15 and 19 owners who have failed to be able to communicate with International Marine.

Boat building has rarely been a money-making enterprise. Boatex, in Canada, built a lovely series of fiberglass dinghies for sailing or rowing. I bought a delightful 12' dinghy from Boatex to self learn sailing. Smart looking and easy to use, the Boatex was wonderful. Unfortunately, shortly after I purchased the boat the company closed. Subsequent conversations with the owner allowed that he simply could not sell enough boats annually to stay in business.

Good boats last forever. A buyer rarely buys a second one of a specific model. Bauer Boats in Florida faces parallel issues but continue to operate. This is a sad but true story about sailing. My 30-year-old boat will continue to be a pride and joy and I probably will someday sell it for about what I paid for it.

Jerry Montgomery has released his newest small sailboat, the Sage Cat. Like his other Sage craft, this little boat is designed for simplicity, endurance, and limited maintenance.

While it isn't small boat news, Island Packet and Blue Jacket yachts companies were taken over by Seaward Yachts. Like the water itself, nothing boatish remains the same.

The Coast Guard blog reiterated the need for small vessels to obey the small craft warnings and defined what such warnings indicate. In the east along the Atlantic coast down to South Carolina and in Lake Erie and Lake Ontario a warning is issued for sustained winds of 25-33 knots or waves between 5'-7'. In the central regions the wind is 22-33 knots and waves greater than 4'. Georgia to Texas and all of the Caribbean is warned when winds hit 20-33 knots with waves of 7' that will last for at least two hours. Out west 21-33 knots and 10' waves will demand a warning. Alaska needs sustained winds of 21-33 knots and anything that is deemed significant. Guam and Hawaii requirements include winds of 22-33 knots and seas greater than 10'. 20 knots and a 10' sea would find my *Genny Sea* tied up at the dock and the Old Doc sipping a beer at the marina bar.

A quick and dirty internet search for small boat news listed www.discoverboating.com. An immediate view showed the companies selling small boats and, of course, the site to seek for purchasing said small boats. Their entire list consisted of Beneteau, Catalina, Jeanneau, Leopard Catamarans and Marlow-Hunter. A Nancy's China and a Potter 15 evidently are something other than small boats.

River And Shore

Height is becoming a messy and contentious disagreement between homeowners and big business. The battle stems from houses with beautiful views of the ocean, lake or river suddenly in the shadow of 12-15 story condos. Treasure Island and St Pete Beach in Florida are having a heck of a row because the locals don't want large buildings blocking their views, but entrepreneurs continue to raise more and more buildings shoulder to shoulder with other large buildings along the Gold Coast so we snowbirds can come down for a couple of months to work on our tans in February. Towering buildings between Clearwater Beach and the northern barrier islands reminds one more of driving down 5th Avenue in Manhattan than a beach area.

The hassle isn't only on the Gulf Coast or seaside. Minnesota residents are in a duel with developers over heights of buildings along the Mississippi. Shepard Road in St Paul runs along the bluff overlooking the river and is the address for some of the state's most expensive and beautiful older houses (the real snobs live in Edina). Developers want to build a series of high rise condos along the road and the City Council would only express their discontent with the proposals, however, the Minnesota Department of Resources weighed in claiming jurisdiction over 30 regions along the river. MDNR want to enforce a rule limiting buildings to four stories.

Florida Gulf Coast beaches are smothered in algae muck several inches deep and extending out into the Gulf for a significant distance. The usual sand play spots of the Gold Coast are being ignored, causing many commercial establishments to have their business disappear. Lake Okeechobee has 85 square miles of gunk that boats cannot penetrate. ABC News said this mess is "vile smelling and guacamole thick." The Republican Florida Governor, Rick Scott, blames President Barak Obama. Seriously folks, you can't make this stuff up.

Australia announced plans to eradicate common carp from the Murray-Darling River by releasing herpes viruses that will kill the carp in seven days. The Aussies claim that it won't harm other fish or humans. "Really honey, I got herpes canoeing in Australia."

Fish made the news in the midwest. A giant bighead carp weighing 84lbs ended up being caught by biologists studying paddlefish. They kept the fish to study it. One would assume that this fish is a reason no little fish were found in the area. Meanwhile miles south near Dubuque, IA, a fisherman caught a 49", 10lb long nose gar that is 4" longer than the minimum for making the guy a "Master Angler" in Iowa.

Other Maritime News

Kon-Tiki 2 was supposed to make a round trip from South America to Easter Island and back. Unfortunately the voyage, a scholarly trip documenting climate change, marine life and water pollution, ended after 114 days at sea and covering 4,500 miles. The crew decided to quit about 900 miles from Chile worrying about safety aboard the balsa raft.

Evidently the guys who tried to sail on the North Sea and had to call for emergency assistance nine times was not quite as bad as the press wanted us to believe. True, they had to have assistance, and yes, it was nine times, however, the truth was that they got stuck in poorly charted shallow waters and

had to be pulled off sand bars several times. Equipment failures, including a dead motor, forced them to seek help when docking. Ah, too bad, we miserable klutzy mortals who try to sail thought we found ourselves a new set of Patron Saints.

The recent discussion on the difference between a boat and a ship took yet another turn, compliments of the Supreme Court. A man living aboard a floating house in California argued that his home was exempt from DNR boat regulations because he did not own a boat. The authorities confiscated the dwelling claiming it was a boat and would be treated as such. The Court ruled that a boat is a floating object that has steering and some means of propulsion and should be seen by a reasonable person as something to carry people and goods, therefore, this floating house was not a boat and not subject to boating regulations. They stated that the confiscation was illegal.

White Fleet

The *Aqua Amazon*, a small three decker cruising on the South American river, suffered an explosion of unknown origin while moving supplies. Several crew were injured and four were killed. No passengers were aboard during the incident but this is one of a series of accidents on the boat, including a fire in a cabin that killed two paid customers. Tourists were robbed during the same week on a different cruise boat.

The recent terrorist attacks in Turkey forced cruise lines to cancel their visits to Istanbul. Celebrity Cruises, Cunard, Princess Cruises, Seabourn, Uniworld, Windstar and Holland America have cancelled all Turkish stops until further notice. This puts further strain on an unstable government that thwarted a coup by the military. Obviously Turkey is a significant partner with the US due to its location near Russia and the Middle East. The tourist cancellations are yet another dent in its unsteady economy.

Not all cruise lines are raking in the money, so development of a unique voyage is essential to keeping folks clambering aboard. Fathom's 704-guest *MV Adonia* has looked to God for fiscal sustenance by becoming a floating mission to Caribbean countries carrying people, usually from a mega church, to non Christians in the Dominican Republic and sundry other islands. This specific market has proven to be successful and Fathom has completed six cruises of this type.

The Travel Channel has listed its "Best of the Bunch" river cruises, leading off with the Ante-bellum South with special destinations from South Carolina to Florida. The Mississippi River tours can be broken into two halves, South and North. The Southern cruises run from New Orleans to Nashville. Personally I believe that the northern end of the river is the most scenic, especially along the Driftless area from the Quad Cities to St Paul, MN. The TV people like the Chesapeake Bay trip around Baltimore, Annapolis, Solomons and St Michaels. The Alaskan cruise is, and has been, a long time favorite if you like wilderness, moose, bear and the occasional whale. River Cruises tend to be on smaller boats with several stops so you can enjoy the various destinations, unlike the mega cruisers that tend to be Disneyland afloat. Viking Lines is working on palatial boats on the Mississippi but are confounded by locks' size.

Critics of Carnival Cruise ships have

listed some common problems people have with their ships in general. One issue is the lack of sufficient electrical outlets in cabins. Of course, these vessels were designed before everyone had a cell phone, laptop computer, tablet, electric toothbrush, TV with 200 channels, reading lamp/light, shaver and God only knows what else.

Another complaint is about the productions or shows that are long, tedious and boring to say little about the acting and singing skills from the acting company. Too many of the cruises feature some long forgotten band or singer that hasn't been heard from since 1959. My parents took a Bahama cruise that was oriented around Paul Revere and the Raiders. They stayed for about one chorus of the first song.

Another surprisingly interesting tidbit was the chronic whine about the lack of various beers. Evidently everyone is into craft beer and Bud Light or Miller Lite is not on passengers' want lists. Leinenkugel Summer Shanty, Shock Top, Dale's Ale, Sam Adams (at least 50 varieties) or Iowa Mist is expected. Wine snobs are annoying, but beer snobs take all the joy out of sitting at a bar and exchanging small talk with total strangers looking for a topic of mutual interest. Personally I usually find some connection with complete strangers, usually someone we both know. It's a crazy but small world.

Cruise Critic, a popular internet site, has rated the following as the Best of the Best in several categories:

Best Overall: Disney Dream (large ship), Disney Wonder (mid size), Pacific Princess (small).

Best Ship Cabins: Disney Fantasy (large), Oceania Riviera (mid), Regent Seven Seas Voyager (small).

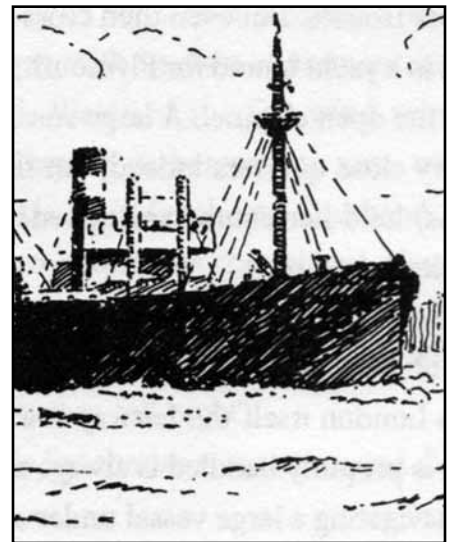
Best Dining: Holland America Nieuw Amsterdam (large), Oceania Riviera (mid), Azamara Quest (small).

Best Entertainment: Disney Dream (large), Disney Magic (mid), Pacific Princess (small).

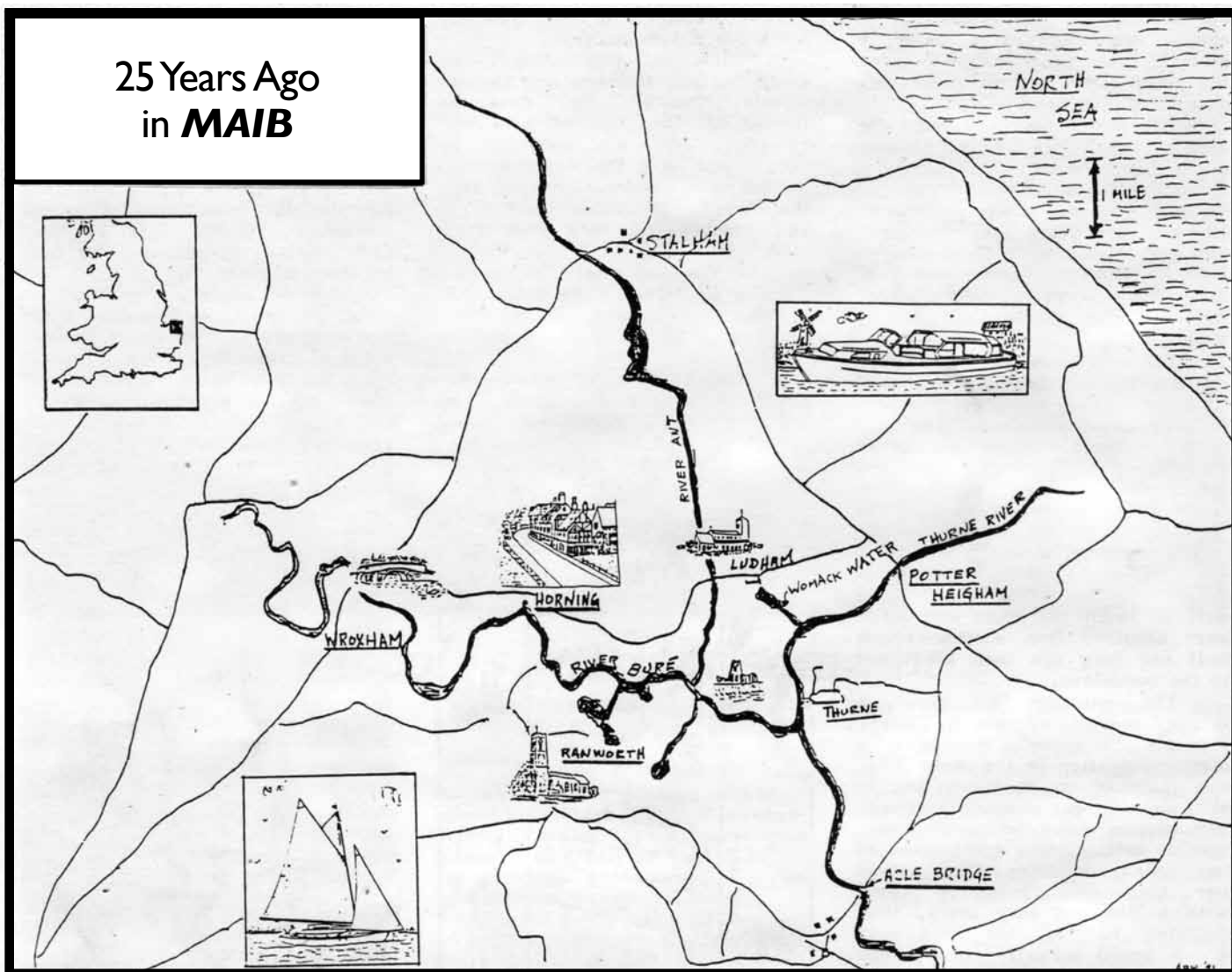
Best Fitness: Celebrity Equinox (large), Ocean Riviera (mid), Azamara Quest (small).

Best Embarkation: Disney Fantasy (large), Disney Magic (mid), Crystal Sympathy (small).

The data seem to indicate that the good folks at Disney know who to run the best cruise ships.



25 Years Ago in **MAIB**



A CRUISE ON THE NORFOLK BROADS

Some of the most fascinating accounts of "Messing About in Boats" can be found in a series of books by Arthur Ransome, an Englishman and news reporter who, in the 1930's, turned to writing books for children. His books, for the most part, are about two sets of children, none over the age of about fourteen. One set are from a city, presumably London, who vacation in the Lake District of England, learn to sail in small boats there, and have many adventures on the lakes. Members of the other group are for the most part natives of Norfolk County, specifically the village of Horning on the River Bure, a major artery of the Norfolk Broads. The Norfolk Broads consists of some 46 lakes, or broads, interconnected by rivers and short canals called dykes. Fourteen of the broads are open for public boating. The broads were formed by the mining of peat before the use of coal was begun. The rivers are narrow and the broads are small enough that even in relatively high winds the wave action is mild. In the northern part the tide is only about a foot. The Norfolk Broads is a very popular spot for English families who enjoy the water and boats. There are hundreds of boats, both sail and power, available for hire.

While the geography described in the "Lake Series" is veiled with fictional names and somewhat skewed, the settings in the

"Norfolk Broads Series" are accurate in considerable detail. Just as appealing as the text are pen and ink sketches by the author spread liberally throughout the books.

Altogether, Arthur Ransome published at least a dozen books involving these two sets of children and boats in the 1930's and early 1940's. His books were an immediate success and publication of each was eagerly awaited by children in England. However, adults have found these stories fascinating, and reprints of Arthur Ransome's books are readily available in both the U.S. and the United Kingdom. I discovered these books five or six years ago. I have visited the Lake District several times but until recently never had the opportunity to visit the Norfolk Broads.

When United Airlines announced in the middle of March their new service between Washington, DC and London Heathrow with irresistibly low round trip fares, we immediately booked space on a flight leaving Washington April 4, returning a week later.

Although it seemed early in the year to consider chartering a boat, we thought it would be worthwhile to explore the Norfolk Broads by car and identify some of the places described in Arthur Ransome's books. We packed our rainwear, sweaters, and boat shoes, and made a car reservation.

The flight to London was uneventful, and our car was ready when we arrived about nine o'clock in the morning, April 5. We drove directly to Horning, about 200 miles through a countryside of very green grass and blooming daffodils, where we were able to get a small double room at the Swan Inn, a hotel built in the 18th century on the edge of the River Bure, and cited and depicted many times in Mr. Ransome's books set in the Broads. One of the many nice things about the British Isles is the desire of the people to preserve their buildings so that the appearance of the villages and countryside have remained much the same through the years. Thus, scenes along the river in Horning were essentially as described and sketched by Mr. Ransome nearly sixty years ago.

The weather the next morning was in the low forties with the promise of going into the fifties, and after a hearty breakfast of kippers we were off to Wroxham, a town about three miles away by road where there are many hire-boat operations. We went directly to Porter and Haylett (boatbuilder and hire-fleet operator) to see if one of their handsome, smaller "Connoisseur" power cruisers was available. All of the 29-foot boats with accommodations for two were taken, but we were able to reserve for the following three days a 37-foot Deluxe 4 of the same type to be ready by 1:30 that after-

noon.

The boat was handsome, very well appointed, and appeared to be in virtually new condition. It was driven by a four cylinder British Leyland diesel engine that was mounted transversely in the aftermost stern and coupled to the propeller through a hydraulic system. Heat from the engine was stored in such a way that it could be regulated to keep the entire boat warm for hours after the engine had been turned off. This system also provided heat for the water system. The galley contained a four-burner butane stove with oven and a butane-powered refrigerator. Included also was a small color television set with a portable antenna that could be placed on deck or roof in the spot for best reception. There were two double cabins, each with a chemical toilet and shower compartment. The wheel and engine controls were in one corner of a spacious saloon covered by a rigid canopy which could be cranked toward the stern, not only to provide an open air cockpit, but to lower the profile of the boat to make it possible to pass under the low bridges found across some of the rivers in the Broads.

We returned to the Swan Hotel, checked out, went shopping at Roy's supermarket in Wroxham, and were ready to leave the dock by 2:30 after a short briefing on the operation of the boat systems. The personnel at Porter and Haylett were most obliging and efficient. When they learned that my wife was anxious to watch the Grand National Steeplechase that was scheduled to be shown on television at 3:30, they graciously suggested that they move the boat out of the shadow of the metal shed where it was to another spot where reception was better and wait until the race was over before taking us through the Wroxham Bridge and turning us loose. After the race, one of the engineers took us and the boat through the bridge just downstream that is so low that it was necessary to retract the canopy and lower the windshield in order to pass through. Once we were through our "pilot" hopped off on the port bank, and we cranked the canopy in place as we proceeded downstream. The mechanism performed as it should, and presented no problem.

We moved down the River Bure at the posted speed - five mph in the congested areas and seven mph otherwise. The trip down river to Horning took about an hour and we thought it would be nice to tie up there for the night and explore the town more thoroughly than we had been able to do the previous evening, but the staithe (the Broads word for quay) was filled, so we continued on to the Ferry Inn about a mile or so beyond where there was plenty of space along the bank (rond, in Broads language) opposite the Inn. (Here it would have been nice to have a dinghy since there is no other way to cross to the Inn except by water. On the next

trip we will hire a sailing dinghy for added enjoyment and flexibility.)

The wind increased and it began to rain soon after we were moored, but there was considerable boat traffic until darkness set in. Hire-boats are not allowed to navigate on the Broads after dark.

We had an easy supper that included tomato-and-pepper soup, double Gloucester cheese with chives and green onions, and crusty brown bread.

Any apprehensions we had about the heating and hot water systems were soon dissipated as warm air continued to pour out of the vents and hot water was available for many hours after the engine had been turned off. Warm air and hot water were available in the morning after the engine had been run for about 15 minutes.

We were up the next morning by 6:30. The temperature was near freezing but we were comfortable soon after starting the engine. It was Sunday, and my wife thought it would be nice to go to services at the historic church in the village of Ranworth on the Malthouse Broad a few miles down river.

We got under way about 8:00 to allow plenty of time to get to the church, but when we arrived at the only staithe in or near Ranworth it was overfilled, owing, no doubt, to the fact that this Sunday was the last day of the Easter school holidays and Ranworth is the site of a boating and information center. We were offered a ride to the staithe by one of the rescue boats patrolling the broad, but elected to anchor (by lowering the "mud weight" very gently as we had been instructed) a short distance away and prepare an English breakfast of lean bacon, soft-boiled eggs, and fried bread. As we were preparing breakfast an incredible amount of activity began to take place, most of it in the form of children in sailing dinghys, some being instructed, others taking advantage of the 15-20 knot breeze over a relatively calm water surface to increase their sailing skills. There were feats of skill as well as spills and near collisions that kept us entertained until nearly lunch time when most went ashore. Although the temperature was less than fifty degrees, the children seemed impervious to the wet and cold.

We weighed anchor shortly after 11:00, proceeded down an almost uninhabited stretch of the river to the mouth of the Thursday River, and up the Thurne to the village of Potter Heigham. There were lots of boats of all sizes, both power and sail on the rivers that Sunday morning. On the Thurne, several sailboats passed us on a broad reach or going down wind. We found the countryside and wildlife very interesting. Marsh and shore birds, geese, and ducks were in abundance.

At Potter Heigham the opening under the bridge across the Thurne is so small that a pilot is required, so we reversed our course, went up the River Bure to a tributary called Womack Water which leads to the village of Ludham. We arrived at the public staithe just outside of the village in the early afternoon to find plenty of space for mooring. However to accommodate the most boats, mooring was required to be stern first. There were no pilings for help, the bow being held in place with the mud anchor after the stern had been made fast. With the help of two onlookers we were able, after several tries, to moor without damage. (The hire boats we saw were equipped with sturdy "bumper" rails and lots of fenders that tend to lower the incidence of damage when mooring in tight places.)

My wife went ashore to inspect the offerings of a small riverside shop and returned with postcards and candy bars. After a large lunch of smoked pepper mackerel on a bed of lettuce garnished with red and green pepper slices, we walked between showers to the village of Ludham where we found all the shops closed. On the edge of the village is a beautiful old church, which, for the sake of conservation, has turned its surrounding graveyard into a haven for birds, butterflies, and wildflowers by selective trimming of the grasses.

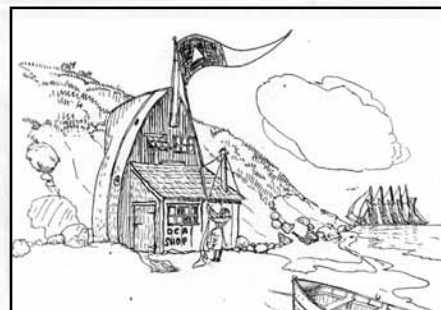
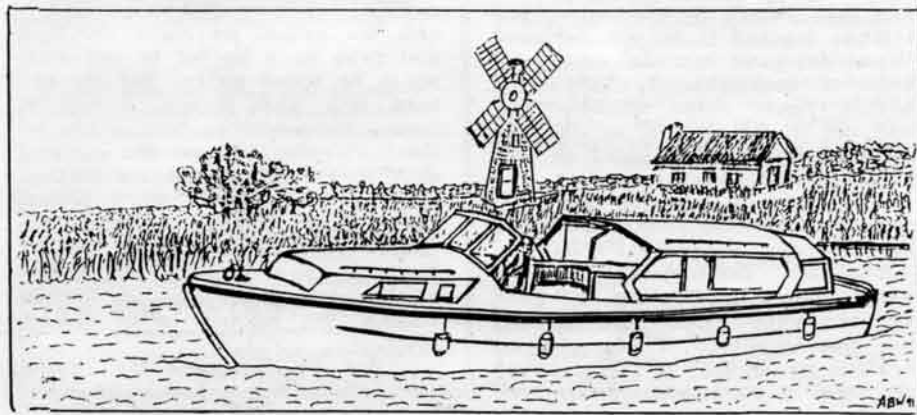
Monday, April 8 came clear and windless, with a temperature in the low 40's. After buying a few supplies in Ludham, and filling our water tank, we left the staithe about 10:00 o'clock, whereupon the wind began to rise and the sky began to cloud. We returned to the River Bure and motored downstream past the mouth of the Thurne River and down the Bure to the town of Acle, another village where several hire-boat operators are located.

We reversed our course at Acle with the idea of trying again to moor at Ranworth to look at the historic church and other sites of interest, including a conservation center. However, there was still no room at the staithe, so proceeded on to Horning where we found room at the public staithe just below the Swan Inn about 2:00 PM. This gave us plenty of time to explore Horning after a late lunch. The weather was still cloudy and breezy, but not uncomfortable.

Tuesday morning the weather was clear and cool. We left Horning about 9:00 after tidying the boat. We had some apprehensions about "shooting" the Wroxham Bridge, but we followed the detailed, written directions provided by Porter and Haylett and had no trouble. My wife took the helm while I operated the sliding canopy and folding windshield.

Thus ended a delightful three-day excursion in a most interesting part of the world. We were never bored. We read almost nothing in the books and magazines we took along — there was too much to see. We recommend the area, the activities, and Arthur Ransome's books to all who like to "mess about in boats".

by A. Bennett Wilson, Jr., Topping, VA



The Mast

I live only one and a half miles from two launching ramps, actually three ramps if I count north and south Cove Harbour. The other one is a mile and a half the other direction. Where I grew up in California they were fewer and farther away, 30 miles one way, 60 the other. Here on our Texas coast, within a 25 mile radius are at least a dozen, mostly public and free, both to launch and park. Truly a blessing living here. Which brings to mind just up the coast a bit is a small town called Blessings, lots of folks mail their Christmas cards from there. Small town with a famous hotel restaurant.

The mast, oh yes, the mast. This little incident happened a few years ago so I can let it out from under my hat. Loaded up the boat, a rebuilt 12' Lehman reconfigured as well. Got it over in Flour Bluff, quite by chance, chasing down another's boat. There it was, upside down in the weeds, holed as well. I was told to take it. I had to come back, the Sunfish was already loaded. I went back and took it.

The Lehman was gutted, nothing but an aftermarket centerboard, from the factory she had a dagger board and was cat rigged. Well, I added a short foredeck and aftdeck, both highly curved turtlebacks I found out later they were called. I added leeboards and got rid of the centerboard, changed the rig to a lug with boom roller furling, ala Matt Layden.

So I get to the ramp parking lot and start setting up. No mast? What? I lost the mast! Unhook the trailer and back down the highway, searching. Driving slow, dodging the high speed off workers, nothing. Drive it again, all the way on the shoulder. Still nothing. Panic! This is getting serious.

Back to the house and get the wife. Together we search, two eyes on the traffic, two eyes searching, still nothing. Somebody must have grabbed it. Bummer.

Discouraged and back to the parking lot, hook up the trailer and go home. Man o' man, I got the whip out and it's drawing blood, beating myself up.

Linda says, "Didn't I see you working on a mast yesterday evening?" I look up across the yard to that very spot and on the sawhorses there she is, the mast. You can't make this stuff up, you just can't. My pop would have had his camera, recording the whole thing. Pictures were the last thing on my mind.

Progress

Making some progress on the little sailboat *Summer Breeze*. Covered the aft deck yesterday, trimmed and sanded some today. A nice fellow at the office gave me the lumber for the transom, a fisherman, yeah, yeah, I know, but it was free. No strings attached, "Happy for ya to have it," he said. I said thanks.



Meanderings

By Michael Beebe

Weights a ton it seems, gonna have to sit forward on this one. The shop is my usual clutter. I was once asked how I could build anything in another garage I had at the time, believe it or not, that other garage was a thousand square feet. I'm terrible. But I'm not alone, I know I'm not. I saw a fellow just as cluttered as I in, of all places, *Fine Woodworking*, no joke.



I should have kept that article, nailed it to the wall. Reminds me of something else I had hanging on a wall once before. On one of my last jobs I had to attend a mandatory ladder safety workshop, hard to believe. They even gave me a certificate I had framed and hung on the wall. The boss regretted sending me to that workshop, I came back and red tagged every ladder. Dumpster time, that cost the city a few bucks.

When you work for decades out of the back of a pickup, the fine art of cabinet shop organization is never learned. The tool boxes were neat and orderly, everything where it belonged. The bed of the truck was another matter.

This little sailboat caught my eye some time ago. When I found out that Chuck over at Duckworks built one, and after emails with him about it, it was a go. Of course, I can't leave well enough alone, the insides are going to be what come out of my mind, something entirely different than what the designer had in his mind.

The foredeck I'm thinking is actually going to be below the gunnels about five inches or so, with a hatch, of course, allowing access below, and it'll be watertight. The anchor and rode will ride on top up forward, lashed down.

The aft compartment will have access as well. The transom has an angle to it and I kept it using it with the aft bulkhead/backrest. I've done this now three times. It sure is comfortable. I'm going to sail it wide open for a little bit, then comes the floor, side compartments, with a 30" by 6' berth area, to just fit my air mattress. The side compartments also will give wide seats in stiff winds. And unsinkable, or so they say.

I'm trying to keep the pounds off this gal, I hope to use her as a cartopper and maybe, just maybe, put wheels under her as I saw Matt Leyden do and launch at the end of the street.

I've already wandered from the plans, used epoxy and glass on the chines, beefed up the sheer, added fore and aft watertight compartments, I did use the plywood butt blocks though. Also glassed the inside of the stem, so we shall see.

If you never read an article of me sailing it, please don't ask.

The New One

I said to my wife, "Come with me tomorrow to get a boat!" She agreed. We got there, about three hours up the coast. My street navigation is not much better than on the water. Line of sight works better for me. Took a little longer than figured.

There she lay on an old trailer, a 1963 Lightning, a 19' open sailboat, no cabin. Dirty, of course. Peeling fiberglass on the inside floors. My wife thought this was a no go. The owner inherited this sailboat when he bought the house and he wasn't a sailor. The Homeowners Association wanted this thing gone years ago. The existing owner wanted it gone, my Linda wanted to be gone.

I, of course, wanted the Lightning. Asking price \$1,000. Driving there I figured on offering eight, seeing the interior, my offer dropped to six. Sold! The gentleman said, and indeed he was a gentleman. A contractor he, rebuilding the house for sale, had two workers on site as well, got them involved loading the boat. Using straps to trees, hoisting high enough to back his flat bed trailer under, he had since offered to deliver it that very same day. I'm sure he was questioning my abilities by then. Very nice guy, he was and is. I mentioned he was a gentleman, delivering no less. Him and his two workers delivered the sailboat.

She's home now, not the wife, the Lightning. Linda left for a couple of days on an adventure of her own, her and a friend. *Glass Slipper* is her name, gave her a wash, a good scrubbing. I did. The green is gone, the blue hull, though dull, looks good. The decks need more attention and the floors need some thought. The mast is shot. Sails fair. But the bones, ah, the bones! They be good.

This old girl and this old guy are going to have a whole lot of fun together. She'll float in 10" of water. Sail downwind in the same, centerboard up. The south coast of Texas doesn't see many sailboats on a regular basis. The Texas 200 blows through this area once a year. In all my mishaps I've shared them only a couple of times with others. There's plenty of open space here, little hidey holes to get off to all by ourselves. That's been my experience, I read of others doing the same here but we haven't crossed tracks yet.

This sailboat just may be the first one for me of which will have a name, she'll be keeping hers, the *Glass Slipper*.



Waiting

I have two of my boats up for sale. They're starting to draw interest. So the wait begins. A fellow nearby, across the water, on island, didn't want to leave the home nest on the weekend ferry traffic. I understand completely. Twice or more I've attempted to visit the island only to be turned away by the long line getting longer waiting to board said ferry.

He'll be here in the morning, we'll see. Two others interested in the other boat live

a bit further, but still close relatively speaking. If you've got the bug, Maine is not out of the question, hell, Canada is drivable and I've been known to do it.

I've driven coast to coast myself, oh yes!

"But, honey, it's a heck of a good deal, we can see your aunt Myrtle along the way."

"You said that last time!" comes the reply.

"But we will, I promise!" Hoping we don't.

Relatively close, these other two hopeless cases, Houston's not too far and Louisiana is just down the road a little bit. While living still in Southern California, selling yet another sailboat, the interested party lived in BC, Canada. We went back and forth, emailing and such, phone calls, he decided too far, go ahead and relist it. I did and two days later he calls my wife apologizing for seeming a madman, my wife reassured him she understood.

He'll send the money, we store the boat until his vacation, he did and we did and a couple months later he came down and went home with his new treasure. And treasures they have to be. The old saw about one man's junk is another man's treasure fits nicely among many a sailor.

So we're waiting, I was going to say the boat and I are waiting but there's three of us. The wife is eyeballing some gardening supplies. Gotta keep them all happy, the seller, the buyer and the one that matters most. We decided this morning that aluminum skiff has got to go as well. That was a freebie and that entails a phone call to see what the giver has to say. We think that is only fair, he is a good friend as well. His value as a friend far exceeds the worth of an old skiff. Misunderstandings we can do without.

This boat business as a hobby is not to be thought of as a money making venture. In

all my years of affliction I've known only one gentleman who can make any money time and again. This isn't just hearsay, I've seen him in action more than once, even asked if he'd take me on as an apprentice. I'm a lost cause, too emotionally attached, he said.

So I'm waiting, and while I'm waiting I'll always be sure to tell others of the few, the very few, I made a buck on. Truth be known, these floating casinos are just another type of one armed bandit? But they can be pretty, to be sure, and they'll take you places far more interesting than a gambling hall.

Boats

Sailboats, that is. Twice this past week, three times, if the wife of one of the observers counts separately and not as a couple. Three times it's been pointed out to me I have six boats in my yard, with one in the shed being built as the wife said, not my wife but one of the three.

I know how many boats are back there, I can count myself, although six does seem like a lot. Seven with the one in the shed. And I'm still looking. Once, coming up to a stop sign, I said to my wife, "Look! A sailboat!" Her reply, "Where?" Out across the street, behind the houses, trees, light poles, chimneys, there was just the upper portion of a raised mast. A trailer sailer! I've been at this awhile. But really, four are for sale. Do they count? I tend to think not, the wife, she tends to think so.

A friend made a comment about my Linda's gardening. It's spreading across the boatyard, he said. When I sell a boat I'd better be ready with another to replace it or I'll lose my spot. Well I sold the twin keeler and before I got another into the space there

were three raised beds planted and regularly weeded and watered. I'm losing ground.



Being relegated to the back forty as I call it, has placed upon me the necessity of more organization by default. Parked two deep, some three deep, the ready to sail all go on the front line and just last night Linda is calculating just where the keepers will go. That tells me the back forty is now the back twenty.

I don't mind, I really don't. I've been trying to get a handle on this for a few years now anyway, truth be known. With my new shed, and air conditioned mind you, compliments of a beautiful wife, I'm itching to get back into the wood carving, incised lettering and whatnots. Maybe even enter a show, but that part I kinda doubt.

Being free and independently wealthy I can do what I please as long as I keep it under the monthly Social Security payout. I wonder how long that's going to last. So sailboats and using them are going to continue, the only changes to come will be the revolving doors are to be nailed shut. The projects should be smaller, fishing to be learned, overnights on the water to increase.

Should be nice.

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Way, way back in my junior year in high school, I took a semester of World History. I loved that class! Well, not exactly from the first. In fact, I was a bit of a wisecracker in those days. Mostly I asked a lot of questions. And one of the first questions I asked during the initial session of World History was the classically sophomorical, "Why do we need to know THIS stuff?!" Fortunately for me and for society in general my teacher came fully armed with an equally classic answer, "... so you won't be condemned to repeat the mistakes of the past ..." That seemed to my (limited) way of thinking to be a plausible reason to pay attention.

For some inexplicable reason I was fascinated with the naval treaties following WWI that were in some fashion expected to prevent its sequel. Basically the idea was if England or Russia, or the US, or Germany, Japan, etc, wanted a NEW battleship, they would have to get rid of an OLD one. This may sound familiar to the married, serial boat builders amongst you. It sure sounds familiar here at the Frankenwerkes. In the '20s and '30s countries would ask each other, "sooooo, how many boats ya got now? And, just like back then, it isn't really the answer for us, the actual number of boats in question, so much as how we hide the answer from our questioners.

Well, I don't really mean HIDE hide, because counting hulls isn't all that difficult. The Real Deal question actually boils down to, "and what are ya gonna USE 'EM FOR?!" Or, the more subtle rendition of this theme, "Why does only one guy need TEN boats??" All the while knowing the true number is closer to 17 or 20 or so, most of us serial boat guys constantly forget the lessons of history, and are condemned to repeat it.

Now the slippery slope of history is crumbling beneath my very feet. One of my first Frankenbot opus has recently returned. *Old Salt* has come back to me, except it was only supposed to be temporary. I thought she was sold. Then the buyer changed his mind. Or I did. Not so sure now. I gave her away a couple of years ago as I was then experiencing that chimerical situation where I actually BELIEVED that I had too many

We Have History

By Dan Rogers

boats. The guy I gave her to really did love her. He just didn't USE her. Poor girl never got her feet wet. Not once. So now there's another boat and another trailer and another motor to do something with, and to put someplace.



Hey, check it out. Life for this little girl hasn't been all that arduous. This is where she's been hanging out the last couple years. Pretty cushy.



Part of the coming home ritual was an introduction to her younger half sister.



And I don't think they accepted the idea they were gonna have to share a "bedroom" now. Nope, I don't think they bought off on that one itty bitty bit.



It's actually worse than that. Since the "prodigal" was outside in the rain for the first time in ages, I pulled *Miss Kathleen* out of HER bedroom and gave it to the interloper. Yeah, I know, "the nerve!" But back to those lessons from history. It probably IS true that a guy can only ride around in one boat at a time. Probably. And it certainly IS true that once a boat becomes part of the fleet around here, it's just about impossible to convince myself that she really ought to be part of somebody else's fleet. Certainly.



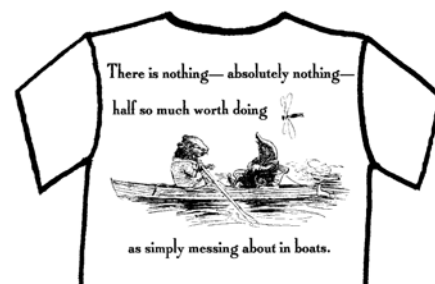
It's just, that we have a history.

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1916 Fay & Bowen Torpedo Stern Launch *Fanita Jr.*



FULL STRUCTURAL RESTORATION: 1916 FAY & BOWEN TORPEDO STERN LAUNCH

Walter Fay and Ernest Bowen started out in 1895 as a manufacturer of bicycle parts. They ultimately established the Fay & Bowen Engine Company in Geneva, New York, in 1904. First and foremost an engine company building stationary engines to power homes, farms and small industries, they began building boats as vehicles for selling their engines.

The company built about 900 boats up until its demise a few months before the stock market crash of 1929. They had a line of stock boats, from open launches to autoboots, but also built custom cruisers and other small power boats.

In 1916, John Boulton Simpson, owner of the famed Sagamore Hotel on Lake George New York, purchased this custom Fay & Bowen launch for his family. He had named his steam yacht *Fanita* after his daughter Fanny, this boat was named *Fanita Jr.* A paid skipper squired the family around Lake George. LOA: 32'6" - Beam: 5'6".

A Show Winner!

Fanita Jr. just won Best of Show in the Power Boat/Professional Restoration class at the 2016 WoodenBoat Show in Mystic Seaport.

Her torpedo stern, semi displacement hull was normally produced by Fay & Bowen as an open launch but this boat was set up as a long deck launch. As such, she is a transitional boat, between the launches of the 19th century and the auto boats that came along later. *Fanita Jr.*'s original T-head engine pushed the boat to 21mph loafing along at a redline speed of 1,000rpm.

Fanita Jr. has a heart stoppingly beautiful bow, shaped like a scimitar, which rises nice and tall and flows to her high cambered, long foredeck. Her gentle sheer sweeps wonderfully back, tapering her sides from that tall bow to her low, torpedo stern. Her form is a paean to an era when boat design was art not science and proportionality and esthetics were paramount.

When she came to Tumblehome after nearly a century of service, her extremely light construction had begun to fail and her lines were no longer so proud. Her bilges aft were buckling and her foredeck was badly sagging.



Here, she is, the day she arrived.

In the extreme turn of the bilge aft we found several layers of repairs, from bent sister frames to fitted cleats to, finally, steel sisters. We believe the steel sisters worked the best and kept the boat useable.



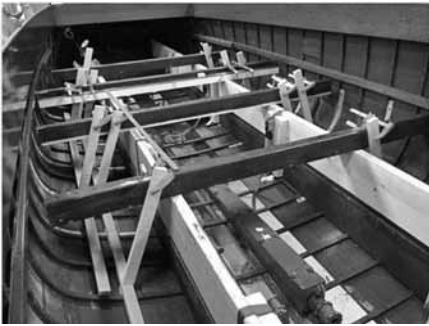
The Restoration



With the sole and other joinery out of the boat we could see the frames were all broken in a row under the bilge clamp/sole riser as well as under the stringers. The steel frames were bent but not broken and this kept the seams caulkable.



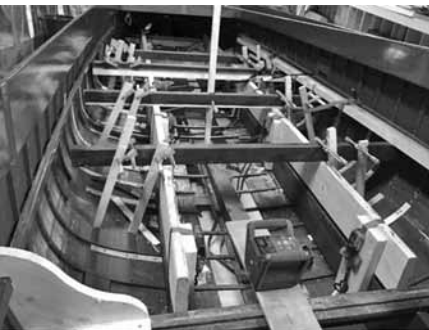
The hull was designed as round bilged boat forward, which transitioned to a chine in the last few feet of the boat. The hard edge of the chine allows the water to separate easily from the hull. But the design concept outstripped the construction methods of the day. In the background the original chine is visible. But in the foreground is an internal chine with cleats, meant to repair the row of broken frames, over bent to make that ever tightening bilge.



Our first order of business was to bring the hull back into shape. We removed all the repairs which were holding the hull out of shape and then began bracing internally.



Doublers over the stringers to make them absolutely and rigidly straight, and then a forest of clamps and shores press the hull back into shape. Much of this work was done by eye, there being no lines plan for this boat.



We used a laser to keep things symmetrical.

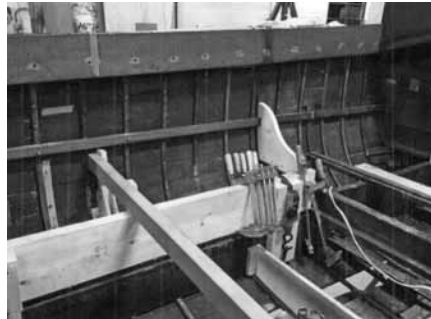
Where the bilge had been a series of knuckles from the broken frames, we slowly were able to restore the curve.



Once we had the shape where we wanted it we made a series of light molds.



We strapped the boat internally with thin strips of ash to keep the seams closed as we bent in new frames.



New frames being bent in. Ultimately all were replaced but for a half dozen near the bow and the stern. All our new frames are riveted as in the original construction.

The bend in the frames just forward of the chine is extreme. We chose to kerf some of these frames since they are beyond the allowable bend radius for their thickness.



The join of the sternpost, chine and keel was in very rough shape.



Fay & Bowen experimented with different construction methods for these joints over the years. Not all of them worked.



We developed a different system that didn't rely on fasteners in end grain and allowed for large faying surfaces. One hundred years from now we'll know the verdict on our method.

We replaced the keel with two long lengths of beautiful white oak. The forked end goes around the sternpost.

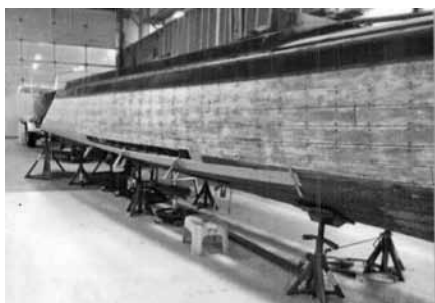




Here's the hull under the aft deck with that absolutely flat bottom, chine and shapely sawn frames in the topsides. This part of the boat does not have enough immersed volume to support itself. It needs to be a very strong structure in order to keep its shape and keep those sternpost joins watertight.



Floor timbers, clamps and new frames in the fine entry forward.



Much of the bottom planking had to be replaced. The amount of backing out required for the planks at the bilge back aft was striking.

The run has a strong hook aft. This shape is sawn into the stringers so it is absolutely intentional, strange as it looks today. But the weight forward, wave surfing attitude of the hull is consistent with this feature.



New gripe.



Before the advent of O-rings and other seals, marine engines positively poured oil into the bilges. Much of the bottom planking was so oil soaked that a heat gun placed on a plank would cause beautifully clear motor oil to flow out in a stream.

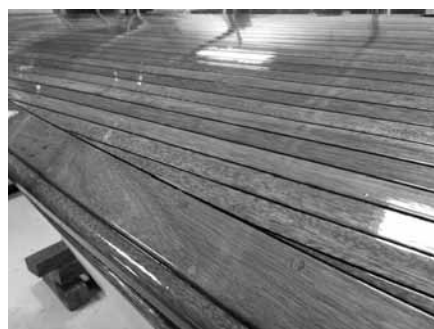


The entire hull recaulked and payed. Cotton with Sikaflex.

With the hull work complete it's time for the joinery. Here is the new sole.



An early photograph of the boat from this same perspective proved to us that the windshield had been altered. We used this info to develop replacement parts we believe closely match the original. After much research we concluded that this is the original stain color.



When varnished it looked golden.



The old photographs also showed that the deck seams were white. We were quite nervous about this, but with the varnish over the white seams they have an amber hue which is right for the era.

The original T-head engine had a different method of installation and probably was much simpler than what we faced. This 1920s L-head Fay & Bowen engine has to pass through the hatch at a very strong angle. But she lays in the boat just as the original.



This article is for any of you who're thinking of building one of these and wanted to know all about it. If you have no need for a huge 19 footer, they also have a 16 footer that's probably still really big. This is the link for the plans, \$75. It's a straightforward build except for the slanted flat front: http://www.woodenboatstore.com/product/plan_19_Garvey_BIG_BEN/powerboat_plans.

We cut the first piece for the molds on May 23. I'm helping Wally a lot on this one because I'm currently between boats and need something to keep me busy. I have a weak mind and a strong back so I'm perfect for this. And I love a new boat design to see how it comes out.



There's nothing challenging about it except for that front end. The plans could have just given the real numbers or even a full size template but no, they gave offset numbers from the baseline up and out which means nothing on a slanted plane. We used $\frac{1}{2}$ " ply for the bottom and $\frac{3}{8}$ " for the sides and three layers of $\frac{3}{4}$ " for the transom. I like really strong transoms. This is not marine plywood but we have a Pro Build here and I got four ply A/C pine wood for about \$35 a sheet and we have found no voids. This is the C side you see here.



From the Tiki Hut

By Dave Lucas

Building the 19' Big Ben Garvey

By Dave Lucas

This needs to be a strong boat so we're glassing it with 19oz, 60" wide triaxial cloth from RAKA. It's actually easy to work with and is strong in all dimensions. Bought by the yard it's about \$13 a yard but a whole 100 yard roll is \$3 a pound and the roll weighs 216 pounds, which comes to \$650, whereas 50 yards by the yard is also \$650. We put two layers on everything with two additional layers down the keel, an extra layer on the chine and three additional layers all over the front where things get rammed. We'll put a layer on the inside and a layer on the top of the floor when it goes in. It'll take 50 yards or so if you're serious about crashing into things like I am. My *Lurlyne* has this same glass schedule and I'm glad. I hit things all the time, where did that piling come from?

This one will have a cabin and we'll probably just use 10oz cloth on most of that. I really like my cabin, it's open in the back for that open, airy feel, but those who live up in the cold zones may need to make arrangements to close it off. We also ordered the 15gal kit of epoxy for \$750. I always get the non blush option so I don't have to think about washing it off. This boat is just about the same length as mine but has a lot more useful volume.

We got really good at glassing. We'd mix up about a half gallon and Wally would roll it on thick, we'd slap the cloth on top and he'd roll some more on while I pulled it out with a spreader on a handle. It takes a little while for the triax to wet out but nothing to worry about, not like trying to wet out 1708. We use micro balloons to do a little smoothing out, we're not going for a mirror finish but it's pretty good.



Rolled on a coat of primer to see how it looks, not bad. There are a couple of skegs at the back 8' feet long and about 2" high. I put them on my boat and it really holds in a tight turn.



We love the orange paint that Wally picked. This is the first coat and it'll end up a really deep orange. I took this last picture today, June 29, 2016. It must be really easy if two old farts can build this in a month. Bottom paint goes on the bottom, it'll run up forward some over of this paint. Notice the little boards running along the sides at the chine to keep us dry. When the water shoots off the bottom it hits these and is directed back down instead of flying up and getting blown back on us. They also give the boat a little extra lift when running at speed.



Here she is with her makeup on, I'm particularly proud of the color of the bottom paint. It's one of those custom paints that changes colors in different angles and light conditions. What happened is that we had enough of the water based red to do one coat but not enough for a second so I added some blue I got from Jim to make enough and this is what came out, it really does look good. The sheer line isn't cut yet, we just let the sides run wild and will cut to shape later.



Flipping is my favorite part of any project, the other guys always stand back, don't know why. We leave the molds and strong-back in for support, hook the electric winch to the frame and push the button. There's usually foam laying around so we put some on the ground for it to roll onto. The guys made fun of me last time for letting my hull just crash to the ground, so this time we had Richard holding on to slow the fall, what a bunch of woosies.



Now I know what Garvey means, Big Ass Boat in Yankee talk. This 19 footer is really a 27' long boat with the pointy end cut off. That's probably a good idea, the point of a boat is pretty useless anyway other than making it look like a boat it does nothing but get in the way. The total weight as it sits here is 420 pounds, the finished bare boat with cabin and all but without any equipment or motor will be about 1,000 pounds.



This one will have a cabin arrangement like my *Lurlyne* with more room and stability. Helen and I were standing there last night looking at it as I pointed out the features and benefits of this design and was shocked when she said that maybe I should sell *Lurlyne* and make one of these. What a slave driver, the woman is never satisfied. I do need a new project and luckily Wally is going north for a few months and said that I could work on this one while he's away. Boat building gets into your blood and you can't stop. We all know how many boats a man needs, Just One More.



We'll have the same engine that I have on *Lurlyne*, a Mercury 60 four stroke. I can do 20mph at 4500rpm with me, Helen and the dogs and it's quiet enough to talk. Red line is 6,000 but that only gains me about an extra 6mph and it's a lot noisier. I've talked with a lot of guys with fast boats and all agree that 20mph is the speed they usually run, any faster and things happen a little too fast, the bounce is a little too rough and they can't relax and have a beer. With this typical load I get 8mpg at 4,300rpm. We're expecting this or better with the Garvey. This engine new with controls and tach is about \$8,000. How's that. — Dave

Fine boatyard skiff or small harbor ferry
Construction is plywood planking
over bulkheads

Designed by Doug Hylan
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Recollections on the Development of Open Canoe Sailing Racing in the USA

Early Sheepshead Bay Days

Upon graduation from Iowa State University in July 1924, I came directly to New York City to work for the AT&T Company. By happenstance I was assigned a desk next to a slightly older engineer, Everett Smith by name, who belonged to a young people's group at the Flatbush Congregational Church and whose weekending consisted mainly of paddling canoes from one of the canoe clubs on Sheepshead Bay out to Plum Beach for swimming and picnicking. (Plum Beach was an island except at lowest tide, which largely insured its privacy for canoeists.)

Everett didn't have to do much selling and we agreed to rent a 16' Old Town canoe from another telephone engineer for the following summer for \$10. We kept it at the Sheepshead Bay Canoe Club which, along with Thall's Boathouse, was very nearly at the west end of Sheepshead Bay on Emmons Avenue, Brooklyn. This was about two blocks west of Lundy's Restaurant, famous then and still for its fish dinners. Mr Gould ran the Sheepshead Bay CC, he was very active in the Hansen Place Methodist Church and this we felt lent a special aura of respectability to his club.

At that time, besides the two clubs noted above, there were three others on the Bay, farther east, The Mic Mac, the Miramar and the Oriental Point. Altogether there were several hundred canoes at these five clubs. The great majority were canvas covered canoes, 16' to 18' long, bearing such manufacturers names as Old Town, Kennebec, White, Chestnut, etc. Of these, a hundred or more must have been rigged for sailing, nearly all with single or double lateens. There were two or three "bat wings" which permitted getting more sail area "up high" where the wind supposedly was stronger. One I especially recollect reportedly carried 160 square feet of sail. We novice paddlers looked with envy at those sailing canoes, we despaired of ever getting into one of those precarious craft, to say nothing of sailing one ourselves.

The following year (1926), Everett developed other interests (a young lady, I think), I was lucky to find a classmate, Tony Paone, who had transferred to the AT&T Co, and I introduced him to canoeing. He became equally enthusiastic and we enjoyed a partnership for many years. What's more, he thought we ought to try canoe sailing. In early spring of the following year we were down at the club and were fascinated by another member who was rigging his "lateen doubles" canoe for the first sail of the season. Since he was alone, he invited us to go along as ballast since it was a breezy day.

By Roger I. Wilkinson
September 20, 1975
Reprinted from *Canoe Sailor*

I don't recall much about our first sail except cowering in the bottom of the boat in a couple of inches of mighty cold water until the skipper announced we were coming about and be ready to get up on the "gunnel," which one he didn't tell us. All was well until we were coming past head to wind, when we found that the boom on the mainsail was too long to pass the mizzen mast. We heeled over to at least 45 degrees, shipped a lot of water and Tony and I were ready to swim for it. But our fearless skipper knew what to do, stand up in the boat and raise the main boom high enough to pass the mizzen mast. He assigned me to do that on each come about for the rest of that sail. Tony and I returned to the Club shivering and shaken, but we'd been initiated and from then on we were determined to become canoe sailors with a rig with shorter booms.

Toward Organized Racing

About 1928 numbers of us "new" sailors remarked on the chaotic state of canoe sailing racing. There was generally only one race each year conducted by Mr Gould of our Club, to which sailors from all of the clubs were invited. There were three classes; 20' canoes with double sails, 18' canoes with double sails and canoes with single sails. Within these limitations, sail areas could be anything and were. Since it was obviously impracticable to demand that everyone in each class should suddenly appear with a single required sail area, a scheme for allowing for the different areas was needed.

A couple of us from SBCC ventured to call on the sailing leaders of the other four clubs to ascertain what kind of a handicapping scheme we might get agreement on and, incidentally, whether they could be interested in supporting a series of races with each club, say, sponsoring one race to which all of the others would be invited. To put it mildly, there was not universal acceptance of this proposal, there was a long history of rivalry between some of these clubs and their owners who were not about to furnish prizes for other clubs to sail for. But enough agreement to warrant calling a meeting of club representatives to discuss the possibilities. And the more we talked, the more enthusiastic we all became.

There was no problem on fixing on three classes, roughly as designated in the all Bay race run annually by SBCC. But there was an obvious need for a realistic system of handi-

capping by sail area. And an examination of such records as could be found indicated that wind strength was another important variable in performance. After much discussion, a tentative schedule of handicaps was worked out by the Central Committee, as follows:

Wind Strength	Double Sails	Single Sails
Heavy	1/2	1/2
Medium	1	1 1/2
Light	1 1/2	2 1/2

(Figures are seconds/sq ft/mile)

It was felt that the handicaps should be inserted at the start so that a boat, once underway, knew where he stood amongst his competitors. This meant standing starts from the beach with elaborate take off schedules. This was somewhat simplified by grouping boats by 5 square feet intervals. Even then there was no inconsiderable grumbling when, for example in the "Singles" class, a canoe with 40 square feet of sail had to compete with one with 80 square feet. A special non partisan (we hoped) Wind Committee comprising one non sailing member from each club had to be set up. You can imagine the pressure brought on them by voluble sailors as to the strength of the wind at race time.

It may be of interest to note how many canoes started in the first race on July 26, 1931, under the new plan:

- 8 Class A: 20' double sails, crew of 3
- 34 Class B: 18' double sails, crew of 2
- 11 Class C: 18' single sails, crew of 1

A total of 53 sailing canoes on the starting line. Quite a sight!

An unusual point scoring system was adopted: 1st 21 points, 2nd 13 points, 3rd 8 points, 4th 5 points, 5th 3 points, 6th 2 points, 7th and later finishers 1 point. Just how we arrived at these numbers I can't recall, but it must have been debated long and loudly at the time.

Forming a Permanent Organization

At the end of the 1931 season, most sailors thought we'd had a lot of fun, that we should continue to develop the plan and that we should formalize the organization. This last was done by adopting a short set of Operating Rules and electing a set of officers for the coming year. The writer was honored by being selected as the first Commodore, Vice Commodore was Frank Moell, Rear Commodore Fred Blagbro, Treasurer Richard Romaine and Secretary Harry McArdle. A Board of Governors comprising one sailor from each Club (Mic Mac, Rob-

ert Holland; Miramar, Anthony Marra; Oriental Point, Dan Farrell; Sheephead Bay, Anthony Paone; Thalls, Louis Malek) plus the Officers made up the Executive Committee. It was agreed that the new organization should be called The Associated Canoe Clubs of Sheephead Bay.

A great many meetings of the Executive Committee were held in getting ready for the 1932 season. Dues for Sailing Members were set at \$2.50, for ordinary members, 50¢. Entry fees for classes of boats were adopted. Race Signals were agreed upon, prizes were specified. In order to work toward eliminating the Handicap System, always a controversial matter, maximum sail areas for the three classes for "new and redesigned boats" were agreed upon, as follows: Class A - 135 square feet; Class B - 105 square feet; Class C - 75 square feet.

Furthermore, "Existing boats which entered one or more series sailing races in the season of 1931 and which exceed the (above) restrictions shall be permitted to compete in all series sailing races hereafter sponsored by the Association as long as they do not alter their rigs in any essential manner. Repairs and replacements of similar parts will be permitted."

A Log Book detailing the above Rules and Regulations, sketches of eight race courses in the Rockaway Inlet area and a roster of the sailing canoes in the Bay was published. Thirteen Class A, 39 Class B and 20 Class C canoes with their skippers and crews were listed. One more item must be mentioned. A newsletter, to be called *The Dope*, was to be published giving notices of race dates and other activities, general and personal information of interest and particularly detailed results of each race. The writer was editor of *The Dope* for its first two years, when it was taken over and expanded by more talented sailors. It ran through at least Volume XI (1942) and much of the vitality of the Association can be credited to its continuous flow of timely information, program notes and personal glimpses.

A great deal of favorable publicity resulted from *Yachting* magazine carrying a feature article, "Democracy Afloat" by Francis A. Dugan, which told of "Finding pleasure and Sport in the Sailing Canoe." Illustrated with numerous action photographs, it gave our open canvas covered canoes a status as real sailboats and produced inquiries from all over the country. Frank Dugan was one of our best Class C sailors (*Albatross*), in later years he contributed much artwork to *The Dope*, giving it a professional air.

Two racing rules adopted by the ACCSB are still of interest today:

(1) "Canvas decking of any description may be used except that at least one-third of the overall length of the boat must be clear from gunwale to gunwale.

Bulkheads will not be permitted. Watertight air compartments other than those free to float shall not exceed two cubic feet in capacity."

(2) Fouling Marks: A canoe or its equipment shall not touch any of the designated marks unless wrongfully compelled to do so by another canoe. However, if a canoe does foul a mark it may reinstate itself by correctly rounding the mark a second time."

Flirtation with the American Canoe Association

Few of us knew much about the American Canoe Association, except that by hearsay "it was a pretty stuffy bunch." Nor did its existence particularly concern us in the ACCSB, since we were reasonably happy with our present and prospective operations. Occasionally the ACA was brought to our attention, such as when William "Bill" Lux, swimming instructor at the Brooklyn Central YMCA, was designated to conduct a special canoe sailing race for the new Fox Theatre as a publicity measure. Bill was a loyal advocate of the ACA and had to be respected since he was a well known decked canoe sailor. I think he must have persuaded me to call up Frank Baldwin, long time purser of the Atlantic Division of the ACA, to see if he'd like to attend one of our ACCSB regattas. He would, and did. Moreover, he brought former Commodore Walwin "Charlie" Barr with him. It would be hard to find a more pleasant and sincere pair of gentlemen charmers.

They were frankly impressed with the numbers of canoes and sailors at Sheephead Bay, more than in the whole of the ACA. However, both thought the ACA had something to offer us. Frank spoke of finding additional sailors in the New York area, such as at City Island, through the ACA route. Charlie thought that vacationing at Sugar Island in the Thousand Islands would appeal to us.

As a result, two or three of us in the summer of 1933 made out applications for membership in the ACA. Ralph Britton, ACA Commodore, invited the author to attend the Annual meeting of the ACA Executive Committee to be held on October 14, 1933, at the Buffalo Canoe Club and tell them about the Open Canvas Covered Sailing Canoe Program at Sheephead Bay. More than that, he urged us to draw up a set of Racing Regulations for our three new classes which would be suitable for the ACA to adopt. General approval was expressed and the matter turned over to the "General Sailing Committee" for action.

At the January 12, 1934, meeting of the General Sailing Committee, "Commodore Britton moved that the (Wilkinson) report be accepted and the present ACA racing rules be revised as necessary to provide for a new classification to be known as the Open Canvas Covered Sailing Canoes with the request that sail areas shall be measured according to ACA rules. Motion carried and the secretary instructed to take the necessary steps to properly revise the racing classification."

At an earlier meeting of the General Sailing Committee, Commodore Britton had announced that the Central Division had turned over to the ACA the famous Central Division Open Sailing Trophy to be used for sailing competition in the Sheephead Bay Class of Open Canoes. This was done and this beautiful Gorham made trophy was raced for in Class P for several years. (During the war years, alas, its location was lost and although numerous attempts to find it were made, it has not been recovered.) The Open Canvas Sailing Canoe Racing Regulations as adopted appear on page 38 of the ACA 1934 Year Book.

National Races Under the ACA

In 1934 a small group of us from Sheephead Bay took three Class A and three Class B canoes to Sugar Island. The *ACCSB Dope* for May 12, 1942, had announced for August 20-22, the First National Championships for the Canvas Classes would be held at Sugar under ACA auspices. (Up to this time the ACCSB had held Bay and Metropolitan Championships.) This was our first sally into the ACA community. Although too few to hold official races, reports of our reception at Sugar (in a blinding rainstorm) were so enthusiastic that a much larger group of 15 or more canoes from the Bay trekked to Sugar in 1935. We all sailed over from Clayton as a group and made a spectacular entry at Headquarters Bay at Sugar. (I can still hear the war whooping.) Those were the days of Ralph Britton's commodoreship, a great organizer as well as decked canoe sailor. (His father had been Commodore 40 years earlier and was instrumental in the acquisition of Sugar Island in 1903.)

According to *ACA Year Book* and *ACCSB Dope* sheets, National Championships for the Canvas Classes (B and C) were held, or at least scheduled for Sugar Island in 1934 to 1939. Entries were disappointingly few so the ACCSB invited all classes to Sheephead Bay for the 1940 Nationals. The response was gratifying: 18 decked canoes, 5 Class A, 18 Class B, 8 Class C and 5 Cruising Sailing canoes, the total of 54 was larger than anyone could remember. The National races for 1941 were held at City Island. (Attendance numbers are not available in the author's records.)

World War II and Mr Moses Intervene

The entry of the US in WWII was a major disturbing factor in scheduled sailing canoe racing. A few races were held in Sheephead Bay in 1941, the *Dope* publication apparently ended then.

A second, more permanent interruption then took place. The City of New York, under the driving personality of Parkways Commissioner Robert Moses, decided to dismantle most of the commercial establishments fronting on Sheephead Bay to make way for the new Belt Parkway. The Sheephead Bay Yacht Club was one of the few to survive. Numbers of us transferred there.

More of the members of Thalls, the SBCC and Mic Mac clubs simply could find no place to go and sadly gave up canoeing. Appeals to the City to build a municipal boat house on Plum Beach were politely listened to but went for naught. In the meantime, numbers of the canoe sailing leaders moved away from Brooklyn, others went into larger sailboat classes, a few transferred to the Cruising Sailing Class which was having a revival at Lake Sebago, the ACA Atlantic Division's summer camp in the Harriman State Park, near Bear Mountain, New York.

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Dixie and Dayton Carry On

Fortunately, before the light of open canvas covered canoe sailing was nearly extinguished in the New York area, the gleam was seen in two other divisions of the ACA. Nathan Mallison of the Seminole Canoe Club in Jacksonville and Donald Aughe of the Dayton Canoe Club spearheaded the building of Class C fleets in their divisions over the past 15 years or more.

In 1965 Don Aughe ventured to Jacksonville and, by winning a three race series, re-established a modern National Championship in Class C. The Mallison Perpetual Trophy already has a formidable list of Class C championships. The most recent version of these "Nationals" was held on August 16-17 this year (1975) at Round Valley Reservoir, New Jersey. Twenty-one C-boats participated, the largest number on record. Thus prospects look bright for the future.



The writer hopes that not too many inaccuracies have crept into this informal narrative, he will welcome corrections and additions. Also, he hopes that someone in the Seminole and Dayton Clubs will add their own histories to the one above.

Roger Wilkinson, One-time Class C Secretary

Who was Roger I. Wilkinson?

By Marilyn Vogel



He was a dedicated canoe sailor who admitted he was too lazy to paddle his own canoe! In the 1920s and 1930s he sailed in the A, B and C classes in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, New York. In 1939 he tried decked sailing and won the Paul Butler Trophy with an early full batten rig.

After retiring from research at Bell Telephone Laboratories, he formed the Neversink Canoe Sailing Society at his home in Rumson, New Jersey. When I met him in 1979 he was an energetic, enthusiastic supporter of canoe sailing even though he was 90 with Parkinson's disease. As an innovator he was noted for his wooden Old Town sail canoe *Yankee* with a jib and shrouds.

At his house on the Neversink River in New Jersey he sponsored canoe sailing races with his wife and neighbor George Was-

chek. The ladies sat in the shade with iced tea watching while we raced along the tidal river. After the race he had us non winners switch sail canoes and race again. As a novice canoe sailor, I was excited and felt lucky to sail his *Yankee Clipper*!

As a member of the Atlantic Division he served as Rear Commodore (1941) and Vice Commodore (1942-1943). Within the American Canoe Association he served as Associate Editor of the *Canoeist* for several years, Chairman of the ACA Archives Committee, member of the General Sailing Committee (1938-1939) and Commodore (1960, an Olympic year in Rome, and 1961). He wrote a series of articles on canoe sailing which are still useful.

Before he joined the ACA he was an organizer of the Associated Canoe Clubs of Sheepshead Bay (ACCSB) and their first Commodore (1932) as well as Commodore of the Holmdel Boating Club. ACCSB joined the American Canoe Association in 1940.

The Mystic Seaport in Mystic, Connecticut, has an ACA Collection. It is the American Canoe Association Collection, 291 Manuscripts of the Research Collection of the G.W. Blunt White Library. Most of the history is the Wilkinson Collection (1932-1983). The index is accessible online at <http://library.mysticseaport.org/manuscripts/coll/coll291.cfm>.

The National Sailing Committee series are boxes 19 through 21 and boxes 25-26. The Associated Canoe Clubs of Sheepshead Bay (ACCSB) has its own series in box 28, folders 1-3. In Box 26 he left a slideshow with commentary, articles, a black and white film on canoe sailing. Wilkinson also left Sugar Island Photographs (photocopies) from 1934-1956, undated.

Wilkinson was a regular at Sugar Island and highly regarded. He had a great campsite now known as Wilkinson Point!





A Hawaiian sail canoe is sailing around the world, over 50,000 nautical miles! *Hokule'a* and sister catamaran sail canoe *Hikianalia* of the Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS) started from Hawaii in 2014. They are two traditionally designed voyaging canoes, replicas of the canoes that brought the first Hawaiians to their island home. *Hokule'a* and sister canoe *Hikianalia* are 62'x20' double-hulled canoes.

Wayfinding

This voyage, which spans five years, will be done almost entirely using traditional Polynesian navigation methods, called wayfinding. Navigators carefully study and revere nature for direction. Wayfinding involves the use of only one's natural surroundings, stars, clouds, waves and wind for direction. Needless to say a voyage like this has never been undertaken before. Sailing across the Pacific Ocean they were amid whales, dolphins, storms and calm winds.

I was excited because I had lived in Micronesia and even sailed on a native outrigger once. The *Hokule'a* website said they would be in New York City at the North Cove. I researched where on the island of Manhattan the North Cove could be found, next to the World Trade Center, and navigating there plus parking, aha, the Path train from Newark to the WTC. So, on World Ocean Day Chuck and I drove to New Jersey and picked up friends Carol and Sherrie on a nice sunny day.

We got to the World Trade Center's back door, the North Cove, to find that the *Hokule'a* had left at 8am! They were bound

Hawaiian Voyagers

By Marilyn Vogel
Reprinted from *The Mainsheet*
Newsletter of the Delaware River
Chapter TSCA

for Newport, New Jersey, across the Hudson. We went back on the Path and luckily the Newport Marina on the Hudson River was next to the Path station with a beautiful garden plaza. It was now pouring rain and windy. Chuck saw a catamaran *Wayfinder* but no one was there, and no *Hokule'a*.

Brilliantly, Sherrie suggested lunch at the marina restaurant facing the Hudson! There was a beautiful old, huge wooden yacht, too. We were happy just to get out of the rain and dry off. Just as lunch was served the *Hokule'a* arrived, under tow. We watched them turn 180°, steering with a paddle, about six people holding it. It turned out they had been giving a talk at the United Nations for World Ocean Day. Since they had arrived in New York City they had much fog and rain, even for their Opening Day ceremonies! Next they will sail on to Block Island, Mystic Seaport, Massachusetts, and Maine.

Mission of *Hokule'a*

The *Hokule'a* is on an educational and marine conservation mission. They have evening talks, a wonderful website which provides their daily schedule, educational information for schools, slide shows, videos, all thanks to their sister modern canoe. Their voyage aims to encourage the global com-

munity to live sustainably by drawing upon the wisdom and teachings of ancient Polynesian culture. The focus of their Worldwide Voyage is to care for Island Earth. We are all responsible for the future health of our Island Earth and the health of our people, lands and oceans. "Since she was first built and launched in the 1970s, *Hokule'a* continues to bring people together from all walks of life.

Visit to Tangier Island, Chesapeake Bay

President of the Polynesian Voyaging Society, Nainoa Thompson, said, "We found Tangier as part of the research but initially it came out of the research as this enormous environmental challenge."

James Eskridge, mayor of Tangier Island, said, "For some areas around Tangier we were losing 25' to 30' of shoreline each year."

Thompson said, "These people would be the first refugees of climate change and the consequences of sea level rising and that's how we initially saw why we would come, to capture that story of a drowning community."

When reflecting on *Hokule'a*'s Worldwide Voyage, George Cannon, a waterman from Tangier Island, said, "They are traveling all over the world to let people know about their heritage. And we're losing our heritage and we're going to lose it and we know this."

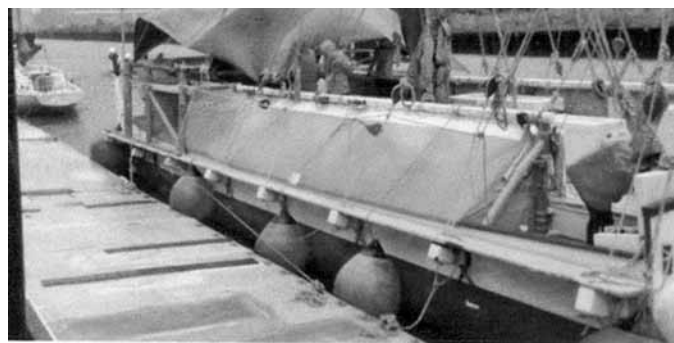
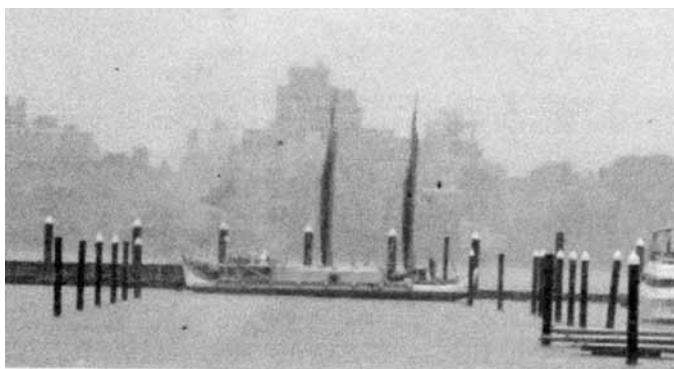
On June 16, 2016, Nainoa Thompson received the National Geographic Society's oldest and most prestigious honor, the Hubbard Medal, for their outstanding contributions to scientific research, exploration and conservation.

Charles Nainoa Thompson, president of the Polynesian Voyaging Society, is an expert in the ancient Pacific Island tradition of wayfinding, a non instrument method of navigating on long ocean voyages using the stars, swells and natural elements as guides. The first native Hawaiian to practice wayfinding since the 14th century, he studied under Micronesian master navigator Pius Mau Pailug of Satawal, Yap. In the 1970s Thompson was part of an important movement among young Hawaiians committed to restoring cultural pride. He has since dedicated his life to teaching wayfinding to future generations, developing a method that combines the tenets of ancient Pacific navigation with modern science, fostering a renewed interest in Hawaiian heritage.

To learn more and track their voyage, use their great website <http://www.hokulea.com/> Hawaii's Polynesian Voyaging Society.

Book: *We the Navigators*, by David Lewis, published by the University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1984 second edition, <http://www.uhpress.hawaii.edu/p-329978-0824815820.asi>x

New York Times, March 20, 2016, two articles, online, "Secrets of the Wave Pilots" and print, "Sixth Sense."



Twelve-foot Cabin Cruiser BARBEL

A New Design by Maurice Redman (1963)

Reprinted from *Dinghy Cruising*, Journal of the Dinghy Cruising Association UK

This article is repeated from DCA Bulletin N° 21, Winter 1963, as a tribute to Maurice Redman. MR's membership of the DCA dated from the early years of the Association before member numbers were allocated. He was elected Technical Adviser as soon as the post had been created and he is included in the earliest membership list I can find, in Bulletin N° 11, Spring 1961, six years after the DCA had started. Unfortunately this list is arranged alphabetically, not chronologically, so I have no way of discovering his place in the order of admissions, but he is in a distinguished company that includes Eric Coleman, John Deacon, Allan Earl, Peter Glover, Brian Naylor and a young fellow called DR Martin, who was at the time a cadet in HMS *Conway*, Plas Newydd, Anglesey, which pleases me. There are 56 members on the list and another 21 have been added in no particular order below it, presumably because they joined when the Editor – who was now Mrs Joan Abrams not Miss Joan Bentley as she was named at the start – was putting her typescript in order ready to run it off on a spirit duplicator and post it to members. In those days they had an Hon. Sec. too: MJ Clarke, who is noted as the artist who designed the DCA logo on the front cover. From the start this included the three elements of: N to E compass quadrant; the newly created DCA burgee on a staff, caught by the breeze; and the little man wearing a bobble hat and smock, sailing a clinker-built, spoon-bowed gaffer, who lives on today in the car and boat stickers still sold through the Shop. Maurice wrote only three pieces for the bulletin, the other two being *Maintenance of Boats*, 1959, N° 8, and *The River Crouch*, 1960, N° 10). The first title suggests that he was established as Technical Adviser by then and so had probably joined during the DCA's first year or so. As we know, he died suddenly in 1973.

WITH THE GREAT INCREASE we have seen in boating during the past ten years it is becoming very obvious that craft will have to be smaller as our already overcrowded mooring or launching spaces are filled up. In fact one harbour authority has recently asked intending purchasers of yachts to consult them before buying because of lack of space in their harbour. It is also evident that because of this pressure mooring charges will increase as demand exceeds supply. Sailors who keep their boats in popular centres close to large areas of population are the worst affected by this. In view of this situation I have designed what can be called the minimum size in cruising dinghies for a crew of two persons, maybe three over a weekend. Having had considerable experience of the essential requirements of small boat cruising, this design is an accumulation of many of my ideas, with previous types welded into a new construction employing modern methods and materials.

This boat is designed to appeal to those who cannot afford a larger boat, those who are not endowed with great physical strength or the ability to handle larger craft and lastly that section having no permanent moorings and in consequence trail their boats home or on holiday. I felt that a boat was needed which was easy to handle, able to be rigged and packed away quickly after use, of little draught to make use of smaller rivers, easy and economical to maintain, safe and seaworthy, completely decked for warmth and dryness, equipped with a table for meals, and not least, some toilet facilities which are private. Also there must be locker space for cooking gear, food, water, bedding, clothes, sails and

rope. This all adds up to a formidable list for two people but I have tried to get it all into a hull only 12ft overall.

From a constructional aspect the amateur has been considered but on the other hand I have not sacrificed the lines on the altar of easy building. It is essential that a boat should look well on the water and that the sections are shapely; therefore the hull is round bilge, in preference to hard chine, multichine or any other mixture. Hull form is such as to give good performance to windward and at the same time to prevent the spray from coming aboard. The beam is generous, the bilge keels are ballasted to give selfrighting qualities, fore and aft buoyancy spaces give safety in case of collision and also dry stowage. Rainwater cannot get below because of decking and a self draining cockpit; a great boon if the boat is kept on a mooring.

The rig is a Bermudian sloop, the sail sets on tracks both on boom and mast, which makes it possible to thread all the slides on the mast track before hoisting, a feat impossible with a luff groove. An overlapping genoa sail provides good speed in light to moderate winds. As an auxiliary the smallest outboard could be used or a sculling oar over the transom. For those who have to negotiate bridges on rivers the mast is in a tabernacle which could enable the single hander to lower it from the cockpit. When on the trailer the tabernacle cheeks hold the mast steady with the addition of a boom crutch aft; the overhang would be two feet at each end of the hull. The boom and sculling oar both stow below when not in use. No sail covers are needed.

Starting from aft, there is a four-foot self-draining cockpit with seating on the side decks. Protection from spray is afforded by the cabin bulkhead and side

coamings. The compass can be installed on the bulkhead to one side (a Sestrel Junior would be suitable as it seems to remain steady under combined violent heeling and pitching). Under the side decks are two watertight compartments for light stowage. A short bridgedeck leads below through a hinged hatch. On either hand are seat bunks extended under the deck for two feet, this space is used to stow blankets etc. leaving the seats free in the daytime. There is a door opening in the forward bulkhead which is closed by upending the cabin table for privacy in the forward compartment. Under the bridge deck is the stove, beneath is a drawer for plates, cups, cutlery and other oddments. Food storage is in two drawers on the forward bulkhead.

Tinned foods and bottles are kept below the cabin seats to keep the weight low, water and fuel cans are stowed in the forward compartment on the lowest shelf. The bucket toilet is housed in a plywood box with lid. When not in use it is hidden away in the chain locker where it is ventilated by the chainpipe. The forehatch is arranged to open back on to the tabernacle, the ground tackle, main and foresail setting can all be handled in safety by the crew standing on the floor, supported on all sides by the hatch sides.

Construction has been planned to allow as much prefabrication as possible. Only five frames or bulkheads have to be made; each of these is an integral part of the boat, cabin, cockpit or buoyancy. The stem, bilgekeels, bunk seats, floors and cabin sides are all made separately, to be assembled when the boat is set up on the stocks.

Fairing up, fixing the hog, gunwales and bilgestringers have only to be done before the clinker ply planking is glued and pinned. Bilgekeels are added before turning over to complete the deck and cabin. The boat is almost complete except for a few cabin details and installing the various fittings. These are standard types to fit the solid spruce mast and boom. It is possible that all materials, wood, fastenings, paint and fittings would be about £80, sails and cordage £20. Labour approximately 200 hours. To maintain this boat in good order would need an average expenditure of around £15 annually.

Trials

Barbel was launched in the middle of September. Since that time every available opportunity has been used to try out the boat, to find faults and to satisfy myself that the design fulfilled the purpose for which it was conceived.

The first tack away from the shore in a new boat is vital; you take the tiller and heave in the sheets. You wonder if it will sail. As I was breaking into a new design of bilge keels I naturally felt some misgivings. I need not have worried at all for it went off on its own in a very definite manner. There seemed to be the slightest amount of pressure on the rudder, enough to allow the boat to come slowly head to wind if the tiller was abandoned. The rudder blade pressure is adjustable to a small degree by the inclination of the blade; fully down (vertical) no helm is needed on a close-hauled course.

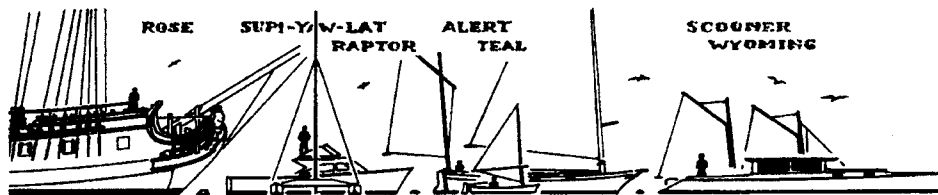
With full sail and a breeze of 10 m.p.h close hauled, the heel is about 3° - 5°. It would seem that the mainsail

needs no reefing up to 25/30 m.p.h. winds. After that you can change to a smaller foresail. It is uncanny the way it goes to windward on such a small draught (1 foot), equally well as its centreboard sister of the same dimensions. Running or reaching it is always under control. The indications are that top speed should be about 6 knots in moderate conditions. It is necessary to sail the boat with the transom just awash; in these conditions there is a clean wake. An artificial heel of 20° when sailing proved that the hull is nicely balanced fore and aft. The physical effort required to manoeuvre, pull in sheets, etc. is less than that necessary to sail a Heron.

The fore hatch is invaluable. You can stand firmly wedged in and hoist the sails, pull up the anchor or let go the mooring buoy with full control. It is possible to walk around the side deck by leaning inwards; it will heel but not tip you in. An interesting test of stability was made by hanging weights on the mast head and careening the boat. To maintain a heel of 90 (i.e. mast horizontal), 60 lbs was required. On release the boat flew back instantly to a level keel. During this test the water only came over the side decking 9". This fact does give one a certain confidence. Although the bunk seats are 6 foot long, they are only 1ft 8 ins wide and therefore cannot be called luxurious for sleeping but they serve well for seating. A single-hander could sleep on the cabin floor. The toilet bucket is always a problem and to use it in the forward space is an achievement; it is however portable and with a mixed crew it would be possible to use it in the main cabin, or in certain conditions, the cockpit space.

If one accepts limitations imposed by size then this dinghy could give much pleasure in cruising. I look forward to some happy times in 1964, as rain or bad weather do not matter quite so much. *Maurice Redman*





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A few notes up front. No, this revisit of the PB&F column of *MAIB* Vol 14, Number 22 of April 1, 1997, is not a lame attempt to bulk up the column count on the cheap, or so I'd claim. Actually, this last month had brought some serious distractions that ate too much time and energy to leave much for another fresh study and associated commentary for this design column.

So, then this is a filler piece? Not really, I'd claim. Here is why. By mid 2016 we are living with go fine to go manically fast battery powered production automobiles, even see a few high strung hot house bred efforts at manned electric flight with folks in daily life using all sorts of battery powered gadgets to just get out of bed. Much of this rapid growth of increasingly potent and reliable cordless electric devices is due to advancing battery technology offering greater power storage per weight and bulk footprint. However, this typically comes at substantial additional cost per energy unit over the older, low performance, bulky options such as very portable 100/60 year old alkaline AAA through D+ cells, or the heavier motorbike to 18-wheeler correct 100+ year old lead acid technology.

Looking back at *Lily's* design process, electrical layout and eventual routine use offers insights that still hold true for the most part. Basics still are that we need to put in a bit more juice than we expect to use per charge. Our driveway or float better be wired to flow that amount of juice routinely if we want to go all day, then we'll need all day battery capacity, perpetual motion thinking still won't apply. Relative reliability aboard a boat matters and cost still matters since exotic exercises are fine to brag about but likely won't address the expectations of hassle free boating without a trust fund, grand insurance schemes and paranoia leaving her tied up and plugged in but without an unpredictable Moldavian Ridgeback to protect her.

Since weight savings are not essential in this sub 16' four adult capacity 1,500lb boat, modern batteries would per weight today offer immediately substantial range extension over the lead acid baseline layout used here

Phil Bolger & Friends on Design

Design Column #503 in *MAIB* Four Seat Electric Launch *Lily* Design #627

4.7m/15'4" x 1.4m/4'5" x 1,500lbs max
1.1hp x 40nm@3kts range

for #627. But we already succeeded in 1995 at giving this "day boat" a full day's worth of range already with 40+nm at sight-seeing, bird watching, trolling fishing correct speed.

Today then, some 20 years later, modern likely pricier battery technology would offer more maximum speed up to a maximum of around 5kts on this heavy displacement hull geometry while retaining the full day utility of her. And there sure is nothing wrong with gaining speed and likely a bit of extra range, if the extra investment is deemed desirable, that is.

A final thought is that, because of my recent time constraints, I have not surveyed the current market offerings on advanced battery technology and thus cost to power ratio related to possibly more exotic charging technology, salt water reliability, etc, in order to plausibly spec out a 2016 drive train. In my relative ignorance I may not know that for reasonable money a substantially modernized *Lily* drive train might offer indeed those valuable improvements in her utility, perhaps even weekend range, possibly suggesting an altogether different design/conceptual approach. Feel free to enlighten me with numbers, parts references, plausible budget etc, for *Lily* 2016! For purposes of this *MAIB* issue though, here the barely edited text as it was published back in April of 1997:

Overall Layout and Hull Shape

The conventional drive electric launches discussed in the last issue didn't arouse much enthusiasm. All that could be said for them was that they worked after a fashion. Commercially available electric boats tend to

have these configurations and, like our earlier efforts, require custom electrical systems which are man hour intensive, usually hard on the pocketbook and sometimes still raise questions about their performance claims.

What was called for from our perspective was a design for a home buildable boat of simple and stout construction, carrying four adults for a day, not just a shortish afternoon, driven by an electrical system that was completely off the shelf and could be assembled to turnkey level in a garage without serious engineering credentials. Under the off the shelf premise, the use of mass produced trolling motors looked more promising except that all the arrangements we saw or, at first thought of, were uncomfortable makeshifts, some of them also involved modifying the motors which voided their warranty, if nothing worse. So we tried out some possibilities in an equally makeshift fiberglass sailboat hull and the performance of the rig was encouraging enough to keep us working on the project. The ability of the big slow turning propeller to drive the little boat against a stiff breeze and chop was reassuring.

We eventually decided that the only way to make the boat comfortable without modifying the motor was the side by side seating with the motor control head lying under the forearms between. The weight of two people in that position had to be countered by locating the batteries well forward and shifting them fore and aft to compensate for varying passenger loads. After a while the ergonomic and functional requirements all fell together, combining comfortable seating for four people and controllable trim of the boat, isolation and protection of the batteries with watertight integrity to make certain that the boat couldn't be sunk or catastrophically swamped. The foot well can flood but drains to the motor well before the water level reaches a danger point.

The remaining need was to shape a plywood boat 15' x 4' wide on the bottom in such a way that she could carry four people and a serious amount of battery capacity for a grand total of up to 1,500lbs. But this wasn't hard since we didn't have power enough to



drive the little boat beyond her hull speed, say 4 knots at most. We could simply give her a deep enough belly to get all the displacement we needed while carrying the ends of the boat high for good reserve buoyancy and minimum spray making. We were used to this from experience with ballasted sailing sharpies and overloaded yacht tenders. The bottom profile rocker always looks exaggerated while the boat is under construction bottom-up, but it disappears when the boat is afloat and only the good handling and lack of fuss at the forefoot is noticed.

The raked and curved transom caused considerable in-house argument. Functionally it should have been upright and flat, or at least not raked so much, giving her more bottom area and a cleaner departure. We finally decided that a small loss of efficiency was justified by the shipshape style. When we were redrawing the plans after finishing the test program on the prototype *Lily*, we found that we could stretch the stern out longer by several inches without any construction penalty. There's a minute improvement in performance and a worthwhile improvement in looks.

The simplified shape and prefabricated and prefinished construction that allowed Dave Montgomery to build her for us in around 120 hours certainly did not do *Lily's* looks or behavior much harm. She's an enchanting boat, silent (of course), handy to wriggle into any kind of tight place in creeks and marinas, dry and buoyant in rough water.

We extended the test program beyond what was really necessary because we were having so much fun with her. Among other things we produced in-house a leisurely 86-minute videotape, "Life With *Lily*," showing in several episodes what she can do in all sorts of circumstances, including some runs in strong winds and rough water. This tape is better than anything that would have been done with a professional team in that we had the boat ready to go at a moment's notice for months and could instantly take any chances that offered of tide, weather and season.

What is, of course, the most important and interesting aspect of designing a viable electric launch for the home builder is the issue of choosing and configuring the propulsion hardware. Here is our reasoning.

The Why's of *Lily's* Electrical System

We are not electrical engineers and discussing the electric propulsion system that has made *Lily* a viable day boat will no doubt give some people cause for thinking about improvements. Indeed there are probably several ways to do it right, we can think of a number of improvements right away but most would amount to significant additions of money, time and complexity beyond what seems absolutely necessary. The system described here worked fine first time out. Testing it along different distances several times a week during *Lily's* first season, it has not given us trouble over several hundred miles of quieter and rougher water. Developing it under the strict premise of using only off the shelf hardware, designing, building and using *Lily's* system offered a number of basic insights on the problems and rewards of going electric.

Defining the Project

Right from the start we tried to design the system conservatively in its capacities and use of marine grade hardware throughout. The batteries are deep cycle quality. The propulsion is saltwater capable. The wiring

is of generous gauge to keep the potential for electrical losses to a minimum. All connectors, terminals switches, fuses and circuit breakers are designed for boat use, as are the battery monitor and the log meter. Only the old AM/FM stereo cassette is a stock mail-order "cheapo" unit that has already survived ten years in a leaky car. All wiring is secured with stock nylon loops and stainless steel screws, radiused carefully around corners and edges, and additional chafe protection added where the cable's own protective sleeve would not suffice.

But *Lily's* propulsion system had to be simple as well, without custom built electronics, soldering irons or professional training required for the successful assembly of it. Its components had to be both affordable, off the shelf items and still offer all day cruising capability, having spent a quiet day of exploring or fishing, one is not supposed to have to worry about making it back.

At first glance it seems reasonably uncomplicated to put together the electrics to power a small boat like *Lily*, people try it all the time using rowboats, canoes or small sailboats as a base. Most of these boats work, after a fashion, a few of them well. Many of these efforts though don't seem to achieve enough utility for their owners, resulting in frequent frustration about their range, charging hassles, etc, and finally yet another bad rap on electric boats. The owners either learn to live with their setup's particulars or they do not.

Indeed, it is somewhat of a design challenge to get the right combination of boat capacity to carry four adults to their favorite bird watching haunts, or two big folks with lots of tackle boxes, or two parents and three kids for exploration of the wilderness nearby, safety for small and large passengers from a deep cockpit, unsinkability and strict separation of batteries from passengers, protection of vulnerable electrical components in console above maximum cockpit water level so that a cloudburst or an uncovered cockpit on the trailer won't zap precious hardware, endurance enough for all day duty, affordability without payment plans, reasonably good looks, off the shelf hardware and just plain ready and easy utility at day or night, rain or shine, all to come together in a one butt joint plywood trailer boat for the home builder.

Lily's genesis demonstrates why a casual approach towards such a project might not produce an able electric day boat that requires little attention, but offers serious utility.

Basic Realities to Contend With

Lily's case offers some insights of the problems that need to be solved:

1. *Lily* has certain limitations of maximum battery weight, width and height, the latter two factors stemming from a need to keep foam buoyancy volume at an adequate size, her comfortable limo style ergonomics intact and maintain proper trim while strictly separating the batteries from the passenger compartment.

2. Affordable batteries come only in certain standard sizes and capacities.

3. Batteries are physically limited from putting out more than a certain percentage of their rated capacity per hour. We understand that a 50ah battery cannot give us 50amps for one hour but may heroically try to stand up to this strain for perhaps 15 minutes before it goes flat on us. Then we have to wait for it to recover and we get our next installment

of around 50amps, for how long, all depends. We gather that this kick butt approach to battery treatment is bound to shorten its life tremendously. Of importance here seems to be the rule of thumb that if we ask the battery for more than it can give us at a time, it can't give us its total rated capacity and we might end up hurting it if we attempt this repeatedly.

Indeed, the more modest our demands on them per hour, the more willing and able they will be to give us the full 100% of capacity in one continuous steady flow. Our crude understanding of what is referred to as "Peukert's Coefficient" is that, practically speaking, drawing more amps per hour than just around 10% of the total battery capacity won't get us as close to utilizing 100% of the rated capacity per charge as we might prefer. With anything battery powered we don't want to knowingly cut range/hours of operation by designing into the system the need to strain batteries beyond their most efficient rate of discharge, if we want more juice faster, make the batteries bigger!

4. After repeated consultations with various "ought to knows," we were assured that drawing the batteries down to 25% charge was the lowest limit of reasonably responsible battery management under the expectation of a decent battery lifespan, 75% of total capacity would be all that is available with a straight face!

5. Batteries age, requiring over sizing of the system to extend its utility into their golden years.

6. The motor's advertised maximum consumption is 45a at 24v, quite thirsty as measured per pounds of thrust output of 65lbs on the prop. Since it was designed to lug along at trolling speed planing bass boat hulls with 150hp outboards on their vertical transoms, one plausible expectation was that in *Lily* it might consume less power while going faster. But with an off the shelf selection of just one very torquey propeller (11"x4"), there was no ready matching of prop to boat shape possible, perhaps the manufacturer will see the light and offer a few more inches of available pitch for easier driven shapes. Tests with a weaker 12v unit (42lbs) on an existing hull, confirmed the need for this larger unit.

Looking at all sorts of combinations of widely available and thus affordable batteries, the main challenge was to find the best balance between these six issues.

Finding a Viable Battery Configuration for the Task

Connecting batteries one behind the other, i.e., "in series," is common practice, as in your flashlight, linking #1 positive to #2 negative and so on. That is how some larger electric boats reach, for instance, 72vdc or 120vdc for a delivery of significant power. But this higher voltage typically requires an inboard engine configuration with shafting, stuffing box, rudder assembly and linkage etc, which may well dictate an inefficient interior layout. And this means additional expensive hardware, time consuming installation and maintenance, putting a hole or two into the boat which also carries with it corrosion/electrolysis concerns, all in all too much aggravation we thought desirable in a home buildable pleasure boat.

In a boat of *Lily's* size and capability, using the trolling motor is simply a more sensible choice since it can thrust 360° for unrivaled maneuverability and safety, elim-

inating shafting holes, the rudder and its linkage. Mounted in *Lily's* motor well with its stock motor bracket, it can be raised vertically out of the water to allow easy beaching, avoidance of corrosion, fouling and propeller blade hazards for swimmers. It can readily be taken in one hand to a dealer for repair or exchange under stock warranty. It just plain avoids much grief during construction and subsequent use.

But there is a payoff. We need to feed it 24vdc current because that is the way the manufacturer makes it, no ifs, ands or buts, it's off the shelf! As it turns out, this requires some moderately serious thinking about configuring *Lily's* batteries arrangement for maximum endurance. Putting, for instance, two 12v batteries in series sounds fine.

One obvious option were two 8-D deep cycle batteries in series as they would fit nicely in *Lily's* space and weigh only about 270lbs. But their rated and predictable real world capacity, offering around 220ah at 24v, would not be adequate with a maximum draw of 45a. Not only does it violate dramatically the 10% load to battery capacity rule of thumb, but being able to count on just 75% of that 220ah, 165ah, as a maximum usable capacity, we would have yet another under performing boat not worth investing in, we certainly cannot relax when we have to worry about making it back. Finally, we were told just about all 8-D deep cycle batteries in the market are just medium duty batteries and quite a few of those so labeled are structurally not even deep cycle units.

Another option were four of those heavy duty 6v golf cart batteries in series, well known for their longevity, about twice that of 8-Ds or 24s and 27s, combined weighing in at an acceptable 250lbs. But the standard ones, very affordable, offer just 217ah, again not enough. Even if we accept an additional 50% in price for their higher performance siblings, those will still just offer only 244ah. Furthermore, all of them are really too tall to make them fit *Lily's* battery space and still allow trim cranking them fore and aft. Thus, the third option of doubling their number for greater ah capacity combined 24v with super longevity was none, not to mention the then unmanageable increase in weight to 500lbs.

Trying to set up the batteries in series would have been easy and neat, but apparently would be impossible for *Lily* if she was to have adequate range to warrant her existence.

For the necessary battery capacity we would have to accept some complications. The most power that would fit into the available space and not be too heavy would come from a cluster of six category 27, 12v 117ah batteries with a total weight of around 330lbs pounds net. Pairing the six batteries in series resulted in three pairs of 12v batteries with 24v and 117ah each. Connecting these three pairs in parallel, the stamina of the battery cluster would grow to 350ah at 24v, much closer to the range goal than any other possible within *Lily's* constraints. Even though these were also just medium duty deep cycle units, and under the 25% rule offered still only about 260amps of supply, we had to go with this option and hope for those gains in the motor's efficiency in *Lily*.

Unfortunately, connecting batteries in parallel, that is, side by side, such as linking #1 positive terminal to #2 positive terminal and #1 negative to #2 negative, carries problems of its own at 12v or 24v. There is high probability that a slightly weaker battery (from production tol-

erances or uneven wear) will attract the charge of the stronger battery, a process that is inherently uncontrollable. In the worst case scenario, very strong currents can flow, damaging wiring from welding strength heat if not destroying a lot of hardware altogether and most assuredly screwing up *Lily's* battery budget for the proposed outing.

To the help come diodes, gate keepers, allowing current to go through them only in one direction. They come in a number of arrangements. One type accepts just one source of input which is then split up into several outputs isolated from each other by those gate keepers. The other type, of greater interest to us, accepts several sources of input which are then combined by this one way valve into one output, always without interaction with each other.

The unit in *Lily* is the latter type rated at a solid 130amps of draw through it, well above that motor's needs and able to eventually accept an even larger one should they become available. With the three pairs of battery banks as input going into the diode, it combines their power, which then emerges as significant output that would run the 24v motor for quite some time. Each battery is strained at a minimum while the diode allows peaceful coexistence between rivaling batteries that would otherwise be eager to talk to each other.

But there is an inherent drawback! The dead giveaway is the heat sink dwarfing the actual diode, and they do get quite warm. As a matter of apparently insurmountable inefficiencies of a regular diode's circuitry, this unit drops the voltage about 0.75v right off the bat. Its manufacturer confirmed a loss of 1watt per amp drawn through the diode, amounting to 40watts at peak draw on that motor, or a touch under 5% of the motor's consumption, relatively small, but in an electric vehicle any loss is painful. Unavoidable though as it is, it is the only designed in inefficiency of *Lily's* circuitry we had to knowingly accept and it is at the least harmful location with that loss of .75v not mattering an awful lot in a 24v power supply.

Easy and Fast On Board Charging

An important issue in that context of delivering larger DC charging currents, be it on the float or on the trailer in the driveway, is the delivery of 110vac to make it all happen. For us, design philosophically, the off the shelf principle had to apply to that aspect as well. In fact, the moment one thinks of tap into the grid power supply, the meaning of off the shelf hits home with unforgiving logic in more ways than first expected, whether design philosophically agreeable or not! It is actually the most serious obstacle to overcome for electric boats, especially those with cruising aspirations and, of course, electric cars.

How do we get enough current to recharge quickly with a nationwide infrastructure of readily accessible 110vac wiring that is typically not able to handle such serious demands? In boats more speed or range are perfectly doable, readily configured with massive battery banks even for multi day range cruising, except that even the rarer 50 a/110vac marina outlets would not suffice for overnight charging of such boats. They would be stuck on the hook literally for days with the per foot fee meter ticking away merrily and precious cruising days dwindling. The electric bill itself would be rather insignificant in that context.

Some people seriously advocate cheating that fact by proposing charge as you go concoctions with de facto diesel electric systems, featuring impressive hardware along with spectacular displays of technical inefficiencies, added costs and grief potential. Once the day range has been depleted, so they argue, you just run a diesel engine to charge batteries that feed an electric drive-by definition more or less at the same time.

This is, of course, a remarkable bit of tortured logic, what is good for silent service may not have much point in a pleasure boat! To the rescue are offered glossy statements with pronounced whiffs of perpetual motion rhetoric, eager to distract from the indefensible as more than fun experiments with predictably limited utility. All this is, of course, prone to give electric boats one more bad rap.

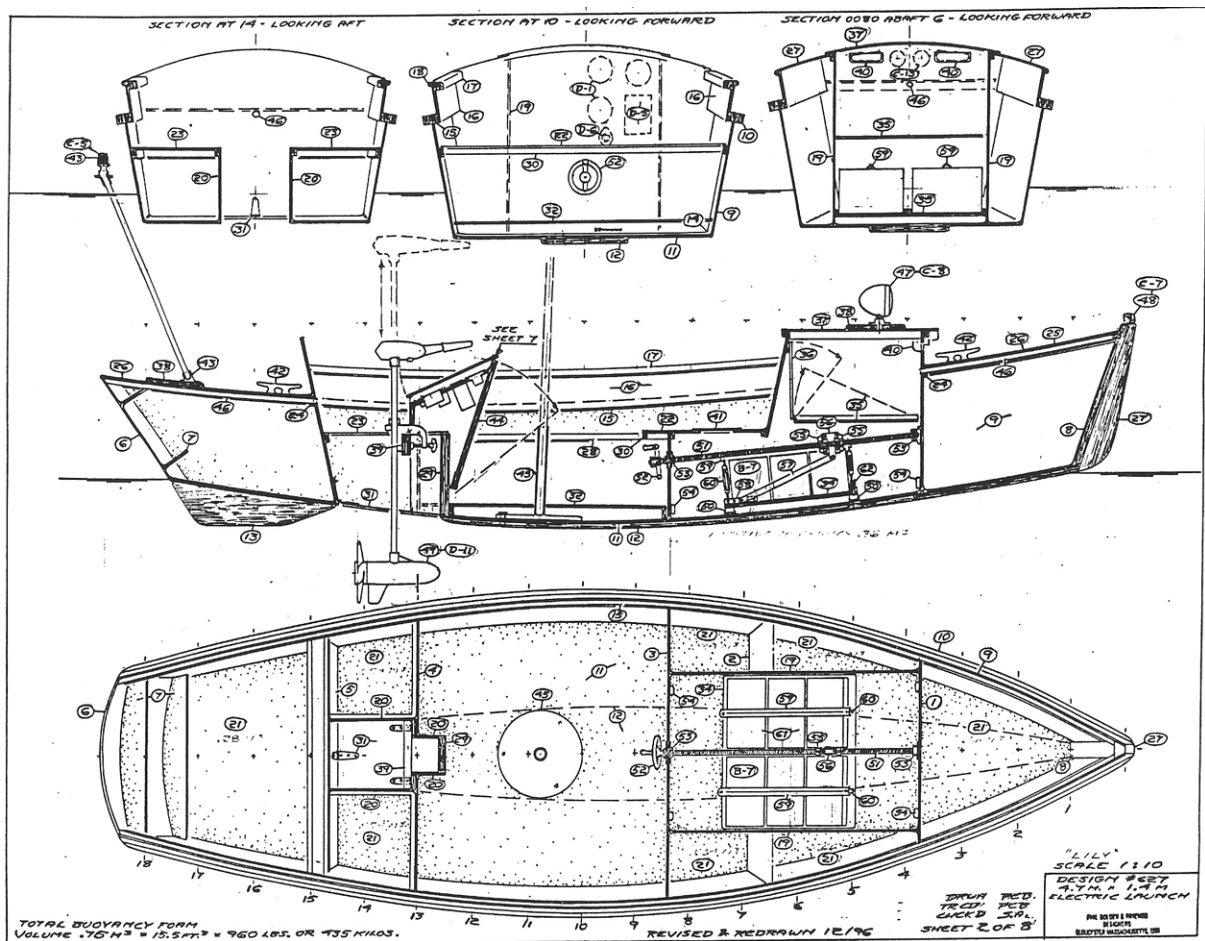
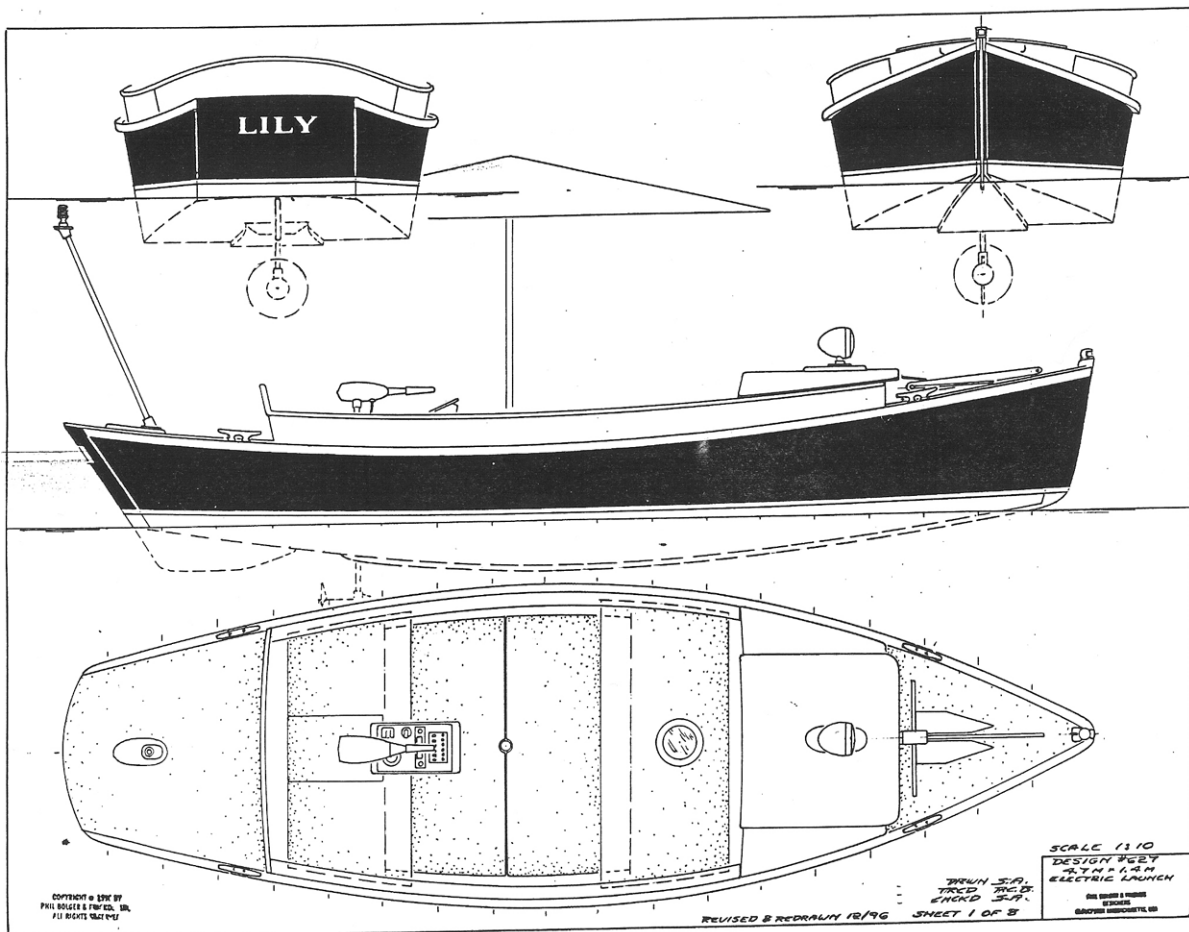
In the unforgiving context of actual AC accessibility, it seems technically and politically imperative to propose electric propulsion only for purposes in which that technology can successfully perform. If cost and realistic utility are of relevance, there may well be a distinct maximum size of pleasure boats within the range of which electric propulsion is viable and, depending on projected use, may even be superior.

The rigid off the shelf/tap into the grid limitations of accessible ac current applies to all electric vehicles of any utility. Thus, without an additional wiring project on the float or in our driveway, *Lily* can only count on a maximum of 15a of 110vac!

Since for utility of an electric vehicle nothing beats a quick charge, the more amps we could feed *Lily* per hour, the better. A 1/1 ratio of running time vs charging time would be fine, 1.5/1 great and 2/1 awesome. A 1/1 ratio for her would require something like at least 60a charge current to return the maximum necessary 525a. But the utility of an electric vehicle also mandates onboard charging facilities and further issues arose. We had problems finding 60a chargers that would be smart in their charging regime. Either explosion proof to work right above the batteries in their compartment or waterproof for cockpit mounting, affordable, offer some status indication at a glance and not blow the fuse of the 15a outlet.

In fact, no individual unit, cheap or high priced, came close to filling that wish list. And what was more alarming, reading the specs of 1996 charging technology, we got the impression that getting a 12v 160a charge through a regular 110vac wall outlet might not be possible at all! Whatever the reasons for it, even very advanced four stage chargers needed already 12a ac to deliver just 40a dc to the batteries, incidentally requiring a fan to just keep cool, others were even less efficient.

But that wish list was neither unreasonable nor impossible to fill as it turned out. Remember the point earlier about the losses inherent in diodes? Had we found the single charger that fit requirements, its output for the 12v batteries would have been immediately reduced by .75v, as it would have had to have been distributed via two diodes into the six separate batteries. At 12v this would have resulted in chronically undercharged batteries, a serious no no that should be avoided by design in anything powered by batteries! Rather, it was exactly the specter of this diode specific loss which had argued against the single charger idea all along. Now that it was not available anyway, the solution to our problems was found in an unexpected corner, off



the shelf and superior in both performance and cost to any other solution we had entertained.

Lily has six separate 12vdc/10a water and explosion proof chargers in her cockpit, each hardwired to feed just one individual battery. This sounds quite wild, it even did to us. But consider the following. With the chargers delivering 12v, the batteries are temporarily separated for that process from their twin in each 24v bank via three gas tight switches right above them in her battery/storage compartment. As a group they can feed 60a to the hungry batteries!

Even with the infrequent maximum 525 duty, *Lily's* batteries should be back up next morning without our watching over the process as the units' manufacturer claims an automatic three stage/smart charging process. And finally, rather important indeed, they each draw just 20a at 110vac, resulting in a perfectly acceptable 12a draw on that 15a rated outlet! So we get 6a @ 12vdc without any ac problems.

The chargers are placed outside under the after seat in the cockpit rather than inside the battery compartment, for four reasons:

1: They generate some heat when they work hard.

2: Their indicator lights should be visible at a glance for convenience sake either at a float or on a trailer for us to see how long the process took or if one of the batteries is a straggler, potentially showing problems of premature aging.

3: It seems sensible, recommended in the manual as well, not to expose their plastic housing to the acrid, corrosive fumes generated by the batteries when charging.

4: And in this location they do not take up valuable volume inside the battery/storage compartment.

The good thing is that they all fit in that space as if they were designed for *Lily* and they look rather nice at night when, at a glance into the cockpit, their red and then green diodes give us peace of mind that the batteries are being fed a "wholesome" diet for the next outing.

Lily's Actual Performance

Everything was in place, complete and functional, including the log meter and the battery monitor. To put *Lily* into action then, and ever since, we had to unplug her 110vac connection, close the 24vdc circuit breaker, switch the three master switches to "BOTH" and check on the monitor for system voltage, lower the motor, see whether the prop turns upon twist of the power control handle, slide both bottom and top filler panels of the motor well into place, cast off, twist on the power with the motor's control grip and steer away.

Lily demonstrated that we had spent our efforts well. Her maximum speed indicated by her log was 3.8 knots through the water, perfectly adequate and faster than rowing or paddling for any distance, although it was somewhat less than fondly hoped. It indicated that *Lily* could use more than the 4" pitch on that stock propeller. But judging by her wave pattern she would probably begin to lose efficiency beyond an additional .5 knot anyway. We've found that leaving the throttle at full bore and moving along for longer stretches at 3.8 predictable knots seems quite adequate for our purposes. Reliability at that constant full speed or any other has not been an issue so far, beyond minor attention to the batteries' water levels every once in a while, there are no tune ups, winterizing, multiple mechanical devices to maintain or replace.

Her consumption at that speed is only around 34a/hr, as indicated by the battery monitor, a most welcome confirmation of our more optimistic expectations! The motor is thus drawing just above 800w or about 1.1hp. Going continuously at 3.8 knots her range is close to eight hours to the 25% charge margin, i.e., around 29 miles, good enough for a day! This monitor also keeps automatic track of how much of our battery capacity we have used up, giving us an instant indication how much should be left in those batteries, presenting ample warning by measuring battery-voltage.

Extrapolating for an emergency scenario at that speed, it would probably be around ten hours and around 38 miles to 0% charge, but was never tried in the interest of not "whacking" those batteries as that will dramatically shorten battery life!

At 3.0 knot speed she consumes only 18a, or about 430w, thanks to the off the shelf motor's built in advanced speed control circuitry. With that low draw she runs up to about 14 hours with a range of around 43 miles, enough for full day and a good part of the night. Thus to 0% charge she would probably go near nine hours and around 55-7 miles, but that was never tried either!

From the 25% charge level it takes up to ten hours at 60a charging to recover completely. Looking strictly at her ratio of continuous run time to charging time, the ratio of 0.8/1 at top speed of 3.8 knots looks rather undesirable for reasonably carefree use of her as a day boat. But the practical probability of frequently running the batteries down to 25% in one continuous stretch is actually quite low.

The 1.4/1 ratio at 3 knots indicates actual use patterns much more realistically. Indeed, since sightseeing, fishing, exploring and bird watching do typically not mean "barreling along at full bore" continuously, we have got-

ten awesomely near 2/1! And daily utility of *Lily* does not require much thought beyond the reflex of just plugging her in. Even during a full day of frequent ins and outs, charging *Lily* in between, even for an hour, will help stretch her day well into the night. We usually are ready to get home earlier than the fuel gauge would admonish us to.

One memorable exception to this was the time we had rigged *Lily's* parasol with 110v Christmas lights fed by a thirsty inverter and, on the water since noon already, we showed her off at the local Parade of Lights well into the night. But since most of our runs don't draw her down that much though, coming in before dinner she might show green lights well before bedtime. It is so easy to just plug her in!

If we don't run down the batteries to 25% every time we use her and keep their water levels topped off, the manufacturer claims a life expectancy of over 300 cycles. This means many thousands of hassle free miles in a comfortable boat, enough for many seasons in *Lily* before a new set is necessary. By then, new battery technology might enhance her utility further.

All this makes the electrical system's up front hardware cost of just under \$2,000 in 1995 much more palatable. Without winterizing, tune ups or repair costs of combustion motors, a mid term perspective makes her projected annual costs comparable, if not better, especially doing without continuous exposure to the noise, vibration, stink, gas can lugging, oil measuring and fuel spilling. We won't ever hesitate to follow the spur of the moment to go for a smooth ride, listening to our bow wave during the magic of sunset, or sliding into that quiet marsh to see whether the coots have hatched yet, or stealthily cruising the river at midnight past the peace of sleeping houses, hoping to get the most out of that meteor shower away from the lights.

As to her fuel expenses in all of this, in the mid '90s a day's run that requires a full recharge from 25% to 100% cost us around \$1.20 to \$1.40.

Lily's plans remain \$100 to build one boat, sent rolled in a tube, priority mail. They feature eight construction and electrical layout sheets and an extensive key with all (1995) electrical part numbers and sources listed. The 86-minute VHS video "Life With *Lily*" remains available for \$35. I am looking into putting the master on DVD format.

Epilog: Some 21 years after her launch, *Lily* is alive and well, sitting well covered on her trailer, awaiting some cosmetic refreshing and is ready to receive a new set of batteries when she is to hit the water again.



When I wrote about moving an unfinished boat from a mezzanine to ground level, I neglected to note the size of the vessel. The boat is almost 21' long (20'9") with a waterline length of 19'6". It has a beam of 7'3", which is why turning it over with an 8' vertical clearance had been a challenge earlier. And it has a draft 1'6" with about 2' from the waterline to the gunnels. It was not a small boat.

Our first "big" boat was a US Navy whaleboat that had been converted into a sloop. It had a Sitka spruce mast and boom set up as a Star rig. There was a cylinder full of lead attached outside to the bottom of the keel to help stabilize it when the sails were up. The boat did not go very well to weather and had a bit of leeway when reaching, but it was a very comfortable sailboat for beginners to experience the joy of short cruising while staying dry.

The boat also introduced us to the myriad of items that need work and the reason why it is nice to have the boat on a trailer so it can be taken home for repairs and other work. An hour's drive down to the coast to spend the day working on the boat and the drive back to Tallahassee was not our idea of a good time. One of the nice parts about having the boat on the St Marks River was that we could go for a sail down the river to the Gulf of Mexico and then sail back to where the boat was berthed. The best part of this approach was that we could go on a river sail when the wind and seas were up in the Gulf and have a good afternoon.

I found it interesting that the lifting rings were still attached to the keel for picking the boat up to be placed on a cradle onboard a ship. When the boat was surveyed prior to purchase, I asked the surveyor about using the rings. He did not have much faith in their usability given the age and condition of the hull. He also noted that a lot of boats have a bow eye that is not in much better condition.

After we sold the whaleboat we got a powerboat that we kept on a trailer. The first item I checked on the new boat was the condition of the bow eye. I found that, like the cleats on the boat, there was no backing plate (just washers next to the fiberglass). One of my first projects was to install thicker and bigger backing plates for the bow eye and cleats. Since all the items had been installed with bolts "just long enough" for the washers and nuts, that meant new bolts all around, including the bow eye bolts that had to be replaced as they, too, were "just long enough" for the original fitting.

I have always found nautical terms to be interesting, both in what is being described and where the word came from. For instance, in nautical terms a "pilot" is a person who safely steers a vessel using expert local knowledge to guide a ship entering or leaving confined waters. A "pilot" can also be a person who controls an aircraft. According to dictionaries that trace the origin of a word, the word we use today comes from French *pilote* which came from medieval Latin *pilotus*, which goes back to a Greek word meaning oar. Since early ships were steered with a "steer board" until the development of a central rudder at the stern, the history of the word makes sense.

Although not a nautical term, your boat may be an antique. If so, the boat might be exempt from a full (or any) vessel registration fee, depending on your state. Florida Statutes, Chapter 328.72, defines an antique vessel as "(a) A vessel that is at least 30 years



old, used only for recreational purposes and powered by the vessel's original type power plant may be registered as an antique vessel. When applying for registration as an antique vessel, the owner of such a vessel shall submit certification, as prescribed by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles or from a marine surveyor that the vessel meets the requirements of this paragraph."

Our Sisu 26 met all the requirements for antique registration, including the original power plant. I am not sure that a sailboat that met the age requirements but had been converted from a sloop to a cutter (or vice versa) would qualify.

Most marine engines are fairly self contained and what gets to the engine stays in the engine. However, most boats also have external lines for oil and/or fuel filters that need to be checked for leaks (a good reason for a drip pan under the engine) from time to time. A small but continuous oil leak on a return line to the filter is an insidious problem. In some cases, the leak allows air into the hose and the problem becomes evident. In other cases, the only way to know is that the reservoir level drops or oil appears on the engine (or in the drip pan). With a return line leak the pressure gauge shows all is well even as the amount of oil available decreases. The operator only realizes something is wrong when the pressure goes to zero and the engine stops, because few people open the engine hatch every so often when underway to check on things.

I know about the return oil leak problem because it happened with an engine in an airplane that I was flying. Two things were in my favor. First, I was practicing "touch and go" landings at an airport (runway handy). Second, I landed the plane, taxied to the ramp and discovered the leak on the post flight walkaround. There was oil dripping from the engine. The mechanics dug into the engine and found that the oil return hose had a crack at the connection to the oil reservoir. The pressure to the engine was fine but the amount of oil available was slowly decreasing. If this had been a cross country flight I might have had

to make an emergency landing (not fun). It might be a good idea to check your engine's oil status before you start up after an afternoon of fishing to see if there is still oil available if you do not have a drip pan under the engine to check.

Going aground is never fun but it can be more interesting if your boat touches bottom while you are anchored in a raft up. In this case, four sailboats were rafted up and all ended up aground as the tide went out. Two of the boats were pulled off easily but two of them were on "solid" with the tide still going out. The two boats were moved to deep water by "laying them over" using the spinnaker blocks at the tops of the masts and a power boat making the "pull." Even if you never plan to fly a spinnaker on your monohull sailboat, the spinnaker rig allows for a side pull that is not suitable with the main or jib halyard. Main and jib halyards are designed for a downward pull, not a side pull, and you may damage the sheaves or other parts of the arrangement with a side pull. Since the spinnaker block at the top of the mast is mounted with a swivel to allow for the spinnaker to be flown from either side of the mast, the rig is better suited for the strain when sliding the boat off the bottom sideways.





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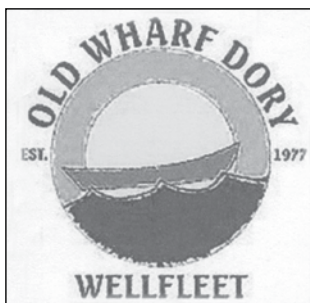
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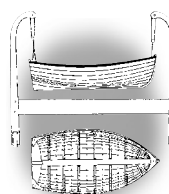
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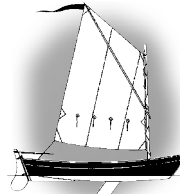
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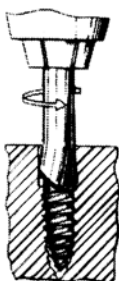
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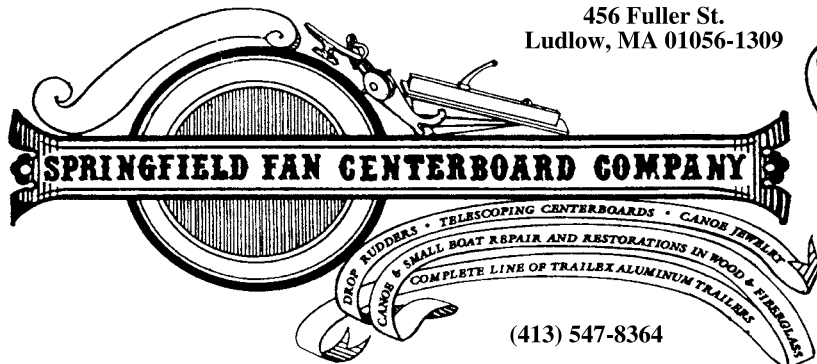
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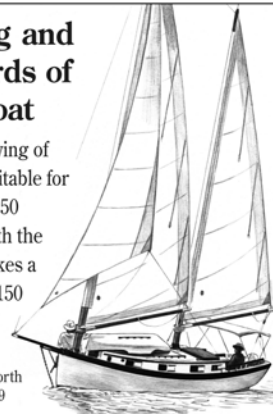
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This issue is #676, uninterrupted since May of 1983. We've been around for 33 years and plan to be around for many more.

**Thank you,
Bob Hicks, Editor/Publisher**

Shiver Me Timbers *By: Robert L. Summers*

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