



messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 34 – Number 10

February 2017

Special Features This Issue
Selections from the *Shallow Water Sailor*
Evolution of a Messabout – Ipswich River as a Mirror
Boomerangs, Leaky Tikis and Old Flat Bottomed Skiffs
Getting to Know the Henry Ashley – Canoe Life



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Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor

There was a boat launching near us on New Year's Day over in Essex, not a normal time of year for such, so I rode over on my recumbent trike (12 miles each way) to have a look. It was 38° and sunny and the exercise kept me warm. The boat was a shantyboat built by a local young man right on the old town owned (seldom ever used) ramp on the water's edge of the Essex Shipbuilding Museum yard. Like many launched boats it was still a work in progress, the barge type hull obviously watertight, the shanty it supported roofed and sided but with windows, doors and interior yet to be installed.

Ah yes, shantyboats. They turn up periodically on our pages. 20. Right now, regular contributor Dan Rogers is chronicling his converting of a semi derelict '60s era fiberglass inboard runabout into a sort of bunkhouse for his impending 2017 adventure cruises up there in Almostcanada. He intends to tow it along on each cruise as a floating shelter for those participating whose boats might not have shelter from inclement weather. It appears that it will provide bunks, a galley and a head. So it sounds pretty much like a shantyboat to me.

Somewhere in between them there is a dividing line between houseboats and shantyboats, based pretty much on the degree of cost and complexity. There are many sites on the internet that deal with shantyboats and one of them sums them up as follows:

"A shantyboat is a small crude houseboat (also called a flatboat, broadhorn, barge, scow or ark). There is a long forgotten history in America of people living in homemade shantyboats, a reasonable and cost free solution for displaced people in rural areas and workers in urban areas."

Back in 1944-51 Harlan Hubbard and his wife drifted downstream on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers in their homebuilt shantyboat and his resulting book, *Shantyboat, a River Way of Life* (The University of Kentucky Press, 1977) reviewed by me in the July 1, 1991 issue, extolled what they felt was an idyllic existence. It has ever since been the "bible" for those who yearn for the simple life afloat.

Well, back to Essex and what is to become of this shantyboat? It certainly meets the "small crude" aspect of the definition I

quoted. Not a permanent home certainly, nor likely to be a traveler either. The builder (who had no boat building experience) is a native of Essex and owns a tiny lot of land adjacent to a long established summer colony of cottages out on the shoreline of tidal Essex Bay. He stated that he'll never be able to afford to build himself a cottage (nor own it afterwards given the real estate taxes levied on waterfront land) on that lot (it does not front on the water) but he can moor his shantyboat just offshore and thus enjoy his summers (and he even contemplates winters, too, there's a woodstove already installed) at the minimal cost of the mooring permit.

There's a sort of shantyboat community not too far from Essex in a sheltered cove off the western shore of nearby Newburyport's Plum Island (an eight mile long barrier beach shielding Plum Island Sound from the open ocean, now a National Wildlife Refuge), so our new shantyboater has a nearby example of how it is done. When the feds took over most of Plum Island for a National Wildlife Reservation (it's on a major north/south seasonal migratory flyway) a number of small summer cottages were located at its southern tip, which later became a state reservation. The owners were allowed to use them until they died or sold them, at which time they reverted to the state. Some of the long established families built shantyboats and obtained moorings offshore of their former summer cottages and now each year the shantyboat fleet returns for another low cost summer of seaside living.

A sort of "virtual reality" shantyboat came to my attention a few years ago when Pike Messenger from time to time wrote in his weekly "Water Closet" newsletter for the Middleton Stream Team about a floating cabin moored on a remote part of our nearby Ipswich River. I became quite enamored of his evocations of time spent aboard, even in winter with the snow falling, the wind howling and the wood stove muttering inside. It sounded so appealing I had to ask him just where was it so I could drop in on him. No luck, for it was all a figment of his imagination!

I was really disappointed, there is just something so appealing about the simplicity of shantyboating...

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On the Cover...

We seldom have anything on our pages about fishing from small boats as I view this activity as more about the fishing than about the boats. However, this month when long time reader and occasional contributor Bob McCauley sent along another of his tales of the pleasures of paddling with his son Mike in their homebuilt take apart kayaks on the Des Plaines River outside of Chicago, Mike was so obviously delighted at catching what Bob thinks is the first bass (3lbs) caught on that long polluted stream in ages that I had to run the photo up on the cover this issue. Bob credits the EPA for that stream now running clear with fish returning, his report is on page 19.



From the Journals of Constant Waterman

By Matthew Goldman
Constantwaterman.com

It was near freezing this morning but threatened a balmy 50° by afternoon, not bad for February 1. I believe global warming was designed with us boaters in mind, we not only get more days to play in our temperate zone but shall soon have a new coastline to explore with more and expanded tidal marshes. All the rivers will be backed up by the rising sea and will spread out. All the little, previously un-navigable streams will become deep and wide. The sale of canoes and kayaks will multiply enormously, especially as many of the roads will be under water and people will be forced to paddle to work.

So I took advantage of this balmy winter day to explore a reach of the Pachaug River with which I wasn't familiar. Having been corrupted by sailboats the past ten or fifteen years, I hadn't done much exploring of our local streams. My bright yellow kayak, *Goldfinch*, lay in my yard and whimpered. "Today, Lass," I whispered, and slid her into the back of my old Ford van. I tugged on my wetsuit and booties, donned my floppy sailing hat, kissed my cat and petted my wife farewell. "If I'm not back by Thursday," I told her, "send the other kayak out to find us."

I grabbed my camera, gloves and water bottle, jumped in the van, and galumphed on over to the landing in nearby Voluntown, Connecticut. As expected, there was still a bit of ice verging the river. I bumped *Goldfinch* across it and slid into the water. Ah, Freedom! For some reason there weren't any other paddlers on the river this sunny morning. Between two dams, I had about four miles of quiet water. Beachdale Pond, downstream, lay mostly iced in, so I couldn't go messing about in the shallows. The muskrats were busily sleeping the winter away; the kingfisher was still away on vacation. The pines greenly adorned the hill; the little grey alders clung tightly to their cones; the cattails, flag, and phragmites whispered palely with the breeze.

I paddled down to the dam, parked between the yellow stripes, and got out to look around. This dam backs up about fifty acres of placid pond. Below the dam a 30' wide, shallow rapids looked not the least inviting. There seemed more stones than water, and no one had cut away the fallen trees. I paddled back to the landing and proceeded upstream. The Pachaug here in its upper reach is seldom more than 50' broad, and sometimes half of that. A few summer cottages hunker along one brief stretch of bank, just above high water. Most of the land about the river is part of Pachaug State Forest, and remains delightfully wild. "Pachaug," in Native American denotes, "bend in the river." There proved no shortage of bends. The current was scarcely discernable, but we haven't had much precipitation lately.

Boaters had sawed or hacked off limbs that leaned across the stream, but there wasn't much leeway for sneaking by at the narrowest portions of the river. This is mostly a swampy stretch without any rocks except, of course, one 5' water smoothed boulder just in front of the cabin with the blue canoe. On this particular day this rock's broad mossy crown lay only 2" below the surface, and the current scarcely produced a revealing ripple. *Goldfinch* decided she needed a rest and climbed atop this boulder. We each admired the view for a minute and then I pushed off the bottom and got us afloat.

The water ran silkily, the sun shone brightly, the adverbs remained eminently employed. I found reflections galore and photographed the best after allowing my tiny wake to subside. I may begin a new career in photography one day soon, as my urges to illustrate in black and white leave something to be desired. Someday I may publish a book entitled *Reflections* to glorify the sun and water and trees and small stone bridges.

Aside from a few mallards, I saw nothing that moved, not even the Pachaug. I picked my way upstream another mile or so until I met a twin maple that lay athwart the river. Even with my wetsuit it didn't seem worthwhile to slosh about waist deep in the frigid water. Besides, it was half past lunch. I turned *Goldfinch* around and tapped the 'home' key. And here I am.

Matthew Goldman aka Constant Waterman
Author and Illustrator
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To view and purchase my books and cards please visit
<http://www.constantwaterman.com>



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-Bob

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You write to us about...

Activities & Events...

Free Admission

The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum is offering free admission Monday through Friday this February, with the program offered through the generous support of Free in February sponsors Shore United Bank and Awful Arthur's of St Michaels, Maryland. During February, free admission covers access to CBMM's numerous indoor and outdoor spaces, including the 1879 Hooper Strait Lighthouse, a working boatyard and numerous permanent and changing exhibitions focused on the traditions, environment and history of the entire Chesapeake Bay region.

Progress on the log hull restoration of the 1889 bugeye *Edna E. Lockwood* is now underway and in full public view in CBMM's boatyard and continues through 2018. Our shipwrights and apprentices are now shaping the pine. We also have a great number of exhibitions for all ages to enjoy and this time of year offers clear, underwater views of oyster beds, and abundant waterfowl and wildlife along our living shoreline and quiet waterfront.

A special feature is the American Society of Marine Artists' Contemporary American Marine Art exhibit which runs through March 31, 2017.

Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, St Michaels, MD, www.cbmm.org



Rag Tag Messabout

This spring, a rag tag group of small boat builders and users will have an informal 4 – *Messing About in Boats*, December 2016

messabout and you are invited! We will be at Sadler's Creek State Park near Anderson, South Carolina, beginning on April 22. Camping is available, most of us will be in Loop #3. Some of us will anchor out. Some will drop in for the day. More details are available on the Facebook group Southern Appalachian Messabout, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/401422193348393/?ref=bookmarks>

Chick Ludwig, Hendersonville, NC

Adventures & Experiences...

High School Kids Adventures

Sid Whelan's trip recent report of paddling the West Branch of the Penobscot was enjoyable and reminded me of my own trips past Chesuncook. With a good friend MB, we paddled up Moosehead and portaged to Northeast Carry and then down the West Branch in August 1970. We had many adventures. I had the pleasure of meeting the proprietor of The Chesuncook House, Mr Bert McBurnie, who had brought his Parisian wife back to the wilds of the north woods. We met on a still hot August day paddling back from Gero Island where we'd explored what little was left of the number camp farm there. Mr McBurnie was transporting something in his skiff. He surprised us by stopping mid lake and talking with us about the usual topics and getting to know us, two high school kids from Boston in a Grumman canoe. I don't know what he made of us but he was a gentleman to chat with us. We were in search of Thoreau's woods and we found a Maine original. So much has changed in the north woods but the trees will return to claim all.

John Callahan, Dunstable, MA

Information of Interest...

Brand New Acadia

Here is a photo of a brand new, never been used Acadia Twin that I found. Acadia states that while the originals were built in 1909 and a few small changes have been made over the years, they are still the same simple, rugged, dependable engines.

Steven Marsh, Elyria, OH



Beauty Was Important

The actual boat which served as a model for this painting was white and there was only

one. Still, I saw this image as a painting the moment I began sketching it. Someone once said that the smaller the boat, the brighter the colors you can paint it. I think they are right. This rowboat, its design obviously taken from the original Whitehall shape with wine-glass stern and graceful sheer line, belongs to the Center for the Wooden Boats in Seattle. I admire its shape each time I see it. To row a boat like this is to immediately take you back a century, to a time when beauty of shape was part of the overall function of the thing. Unlike most boats today, if it didn't look graceful and elegant, it wasn't serving the purpose of form and function. Beauty was important.

Larry Elfert, Port Townsend, WA
Paintings of Classic Wooden Boats
www.larryelfert.com



Information Wanted...

The November issue was another in a long line of excellent editions. But I have this nagging curiosity, as follows. Since first hearing about it early this year I have been intrigued by the *Draken Harald Harfagre/ Draken Expedition America*. While it was not easy early on to follow the boat, the website reporting got better over time and the video footage was spectacular. The article in the November 2016 issue of *MAIB* was good but still left me wanting some more and left some questions unanswered.

For one, the author was not identified or given any credit. And then there is the matter of the pilotage requirement by the US Coast Guard on the Great Lakes. I'm not even sure where to start. What kind of vessel is it for Coast Guard purposes? It would appear to be right at the length limit of 35m to come up against the regulations (35m which is just under 115' feet) for commercial vessels. What do other historic ships do in those waters? For example, the others participating in the Tall Ships Challenge 2016? Are Canadian vessels exempt? And the boats from other nations, do they come here with exemptions or the funding in place for pilotage? Was the Draken crew

poorly advised or did they ignore reality and/or offend the regulators?

It seems so unfortunate that the efforts of so many people in Norway and here in the States, Norwegians by heritage and Norwegians in spirit by connection to this fantastic undertaking and adventure, were disappointed by the decision to turn back before reaching Duluth after all their work and daring. At the very least, I hope that the crews of the *Draken* and the *Hokulea*, berthed for the winter in Mystic, Connecticut, and Charleston, South Carolina, respectively, have an opportunity to feast, sing, and dance together.

J. Gotjen, Chocorua, NH

Editor Comments: This article was from the expedition website. I thought the issue of the cost of a Great Lakes passage was of some interest.

Opinions...

A Statement of the Free

Building your own sailboat is an individual declaration of independence. You are free from the uncertainty over being able to do it now that she is built. You are free from standing on the shore now that you are afloat. You are free from oar or motor power the moment the breeze first fills the sail. It is akin to soaring, no engine roar, no sweating at the oars like a galley slave. Only the wind tugging at the sheet while the boat responds with the sound of lapping waves under the bow. To have the privilege of building your own sailboat is a statement of the free.

John Wilson, Charlotte, MI

More of Tom's Stories?

Congratulations on your perseverance with *MAIB*. I was an avid reader in the '80s but then moved out here to Puget Sound and lost track. But now I am back on track. My best memories from those former days were the articles by Tom McGrath on his sailing adventures in *The Damn Foole*. Any chance of you reprinting some of them? I cut out most of the articles but don't know if I have all of them. A small book came out but it had

only a few of the stories. I would like to compile all of them in some format or another.

Tom Hruby, Lacey, WA

Editor Comments: We have no current plans for reprinting Tom's unique adventures afloat. See the following letter for more on this.

Tom and Robb Were the Best

No offense to you fellows writing now, but Tom McGrath and Robb White will go down in the annals of *MAIB* as the two greatest nautical tale spinners Skipper Hicks ever published. Thanks to Bob and Tim Weaver for bringing them back occasionally.

Look for Tom's books *The Townie* and *Flight of the Damn Fool* for more. The same for *How to Build a Tin Canoe* and *Flotsam and Jetsam* by Robb. They still turn up on Amazon.com

Irwin Schuster Tampa, FL

This Magazine...

A Little Crazy!

I want to express my appreciation for recently publishing the story about our group, The East End Classic Boat Society. It is really nice that you helped to spread the word about what we are really up to. No other group that I know of knocks themselves out building a boat and then gives it away in December and then starts all over again to do the same. Others build boats and use them. We spent very little time with our creations in the water. Sometimes I think we are a little crazy!

Raymond Hartjen, East Hampton, NY

An Outstanding Job

I read in your 700th issue your musings about the not so rosy future of printed magazines in general and your publication in particular. Yes, there are things coming at us, like old age, that we can do little, or actually nothing, about. And yes, digital technology is the wave of the future. I haven't read all 700 issues of your magazine, though I have read most of them, and I conclude that you and your wife have done an outstanding job

over the years. You have attracted and kept a rather sophisticated, when it comes to boating issues, audience, the limitation to black and white illustrations notwithstanding. So you should be very proud of your achievements as, I am sure, are most of your readers

Nobody knows for sure what the future holds, but when the last reader of the last issue puts it away after having read it for the umpteenth time, he will long remember you and your magazine and he will be grateful to you.

Otto Suchsland, Sarasota, FL

Andrew Wyeth Resemblance

The photo at the top of page 15 in the December issue heading, "Where Oars Meet the Sea" struck me with its resemblance to the paintings of Andrew Wyeth. Beautiful!

Rich Ramsey, Ft Wayne, IN



Where Have Subscribers Gone?

On the question of where your subscribers have gone, I can report sadly that a neighbor recently succumbed to cancer. He read the magazine but never chimed in. I have his collection of charts and cruising guides now. I don't know if he ever got to the places he read about and I don't suppose that I will either, not rowing anyway. But I look at them and wonder.

Kinley Gregg, York, ME

A Bit More Pleasant

On the occasion of receipt of *MAIB* #700 I want to thank you for your service to us small boat nuts. The past 30 years were made a bit more pleasant by your dedication to publishing this "cover to cover" magazine. The anticipation of receiving the next issue has always been exceeded by opening it upon its arrival.

Bob Shipman, Hunt, TX

Dan's Adventure Cruise #2

April 21-23, 2017 (Earth Day Weekend)

The second cruise of the season will be a definite change of pace. In honor of Earth Day, or at least of memories of Earth Days past, this event is called "Birkenstocks and Barstools." More on that in a bit.

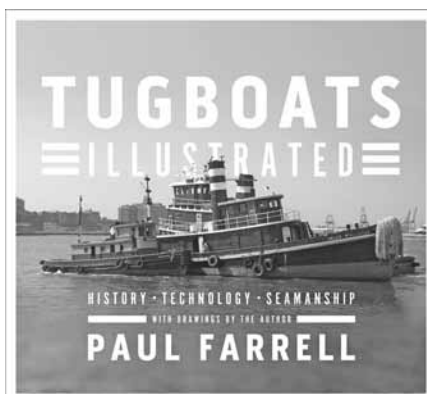
This event will be anything BUT rustic. We will be based out of The Coeur d'Alene Resort. That's in downtown Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, on Lake Coeur d'Alene, of course. While we will be able to stay aboard our boats while moored at this fabulous complex, that's where the "roughing it" ends. It's really hard to say where to start. Restaurants. Art studios. Funky book shops. Shopping. Did I mention shopping?

The sailing will depend upon whim and weather. This lake is over 20 miles from top to bottom and that doesn't count all the arms and bays. A big place. There will be plenty of opportunity to set a course for a "destination." It will also be perfectly OK to just stay pierside and ponder whether to order the shrimp or the scampi. Maybe both? Better put this one on the spring must do list. Birkenstocks and barstools.



Tugboats Illustrated History-Technology- Seamanship

Author: Paul Farrell
Publisher: W.W. Norton & Company
Date: 2016 – Price: \$50.
ISBN # 9780393069310
Reviewed by C. Henry Depew



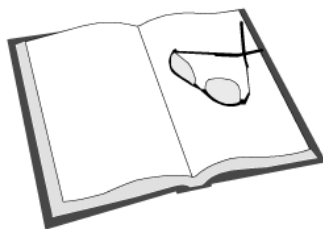
A tugboat can be defined as a huge engine surrounded by a boat. This book is about the evolution of the tugboat from a single paddlewheel, steam powered contraption in the early 1800s to the Z drives with Kort

Funny how one day I am barely aware, or unaware, of a term or idea and the next I can't stop running into references and examples of it. *Canoe Yawl* has become that for me. None of my nautical encyclopedias or general boating reference books seem to have an entry for canoe yawl, but I had come across the term from time to time. Back in the Victorian and Edwardian beginnings of pleasure sailing, the canoe yawl as a type figured heavily in the development of small pleasure sailing craft, both dayboats and small, economical cruisers.

My latest box of goodies from Lodestar Books included the just published *The Canoe Yawl*. (Lodestar Books self describes as a publisher of "New and Neglected Nautical Writing" and so they are. A hefty percentage of my reading in recent months has been from their collection of reissued classics and soon to be classics.) And yes, I now "see" or at least see references to canoe yawls everywhere. The heyday of canoe yawls ended with WWI, but examples and new interpretations of the idea have persisted to this day.

The Canoe Yawl Association (CYA) website, www.canoeyawl.org, uses a broad definition for the boat, centered on 1) a slim, easily driven decked hull with a stem at each end and 2) a yawl rig. Even those minimal requirements can get pushed a bit. 3'6" beam seems to be the consensus cutoff between sailing canoe and canoe yawl and too much keel (most boats seem to favor centerboards of some sort) moves the boat into a canoe yacht category.

That said, *Small Craft Advisor* magazine recently reviewed a canoe yawl designed by William Garden with a modest production run by an Oregon builder. Other modern designers have put their own spin on the canoe yawl, including Phil Bolger and Iain Oughtred. Chesapeake Light Craft (CLC) has a set of plans for a canoe yawl, but not



Book Reviews

nozzles and cycloidal propellers we see today. There is also more than one type of tugboat, going from the small ones used to move floating logs to those designed to tow barges/ships across the ocean. I found the chain steamer tugs used in the rivers of Europe to be one of the more interesting types.

Although all aspects of tugboats use are covered by the author, one of the overriding considerations has been the power plant. Although it took up a lot of space and needed a specialist to operate correctly, steam engines were preferred by some even after Diesels came on the scene. The Diesel engine took up less room but it was noisy, vibrated and could only be started with compressed air (starting air). Since there was no reverse gear, the diesel engine had to be stopped and then restarted in reverse (more starting air) and one could run out of starting air if there

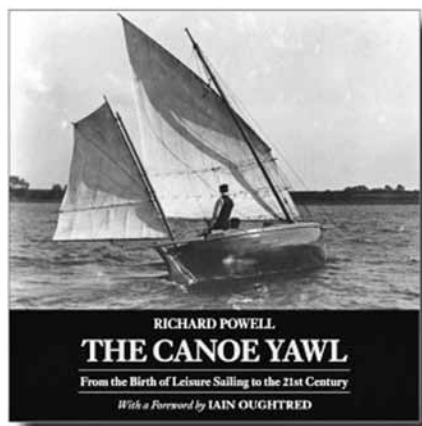
was much forward/reverse action. Steam engines did not have the start/stop problem as the steam generation was separate from the engine. Once more robust transmissions were developed so the captain had both forward and reverse (as well as neutral) without stopping the Diesel, the conversion to Diesel engines was completed.

The book is divided into 13 chapters. The first chapter is a general introduction to tugboats. Each chapter thereafter focuses on an aspect of the boat and its use. Chapters 2 and 3 present the history and development of the tugboat. Chapter 4 follows the development of various types of propellers and rudder systems used to propel and control the vessel. Chapter 5 discusses how tugboats do their job. Chapters 6, 7 and 9 describe tractor tugs, the shape and size of different tugs for the jobs they are supposed to do and modern tug design to meet the new requirements. The people who operate tugs are described in Chapter 8. The multitude of types of tugs, the environment they operate in and how they operate are well described in chapters 10, 11, and 12. Rescue and salvage work by tugs is covered in the last chapter.

Every aspect of a tugboat is so well described and illustrated that a glossary is not needed, but I would have liked an index. The book is well written, extremely well illustrated with drawings and photographs and nicely organized. It would make a great gift to a nautical friend or a ready reference on your bookshelf.

The Canoe Yawl From the Birth of Leisure Sailing to the 21st Century

By Richard Powell
Lodestar Books, London, 2016
Reviewed by John Nystrom



a kit like their other designs. The Wooden Boat Store offers plans for both classic and contemporary canoe yawls and *WoodenBoat* magazine has featured several canoe yawls over the years.

Author Richard Powell does a very much better and more detailed job of tracing the history of canoe yawls than is usually done in books of this type. This is due to the fact that the history of the type is much better documented than that of other boats, and that the author is technical director of the Albert Strange Association.

Iain Oughtred wrote the foreword to the book, and asks the question, "Now, what is so good about the Canoe Yawls?" His long

answer opens with "a welcome and necessary relief from modern production boats" (though there have been recent production fiberglass boats like the Ted Brewer designed Rob Roy 23), and after noting the advantages of these craft, closes with, "These boats have a comfortable and reassuring quality which we, those of us who find the style appealing, find pleasant to live with, eminently able, safe and practical in use and good to look at."

To trace the history of the canoe yawl, the author first covers some of the pioneers of Victorian pleasure sailing and cruising and the subject of work boat conversions in the late 19th century. Both personalities and their craft are detailed and though the author's text and great contemporary quotes make for a well told story, I found the illustrations to be incredible. Throughout the text at least 40 different boats are represented in lines drawings, two and three view plans and sail plans. Most of those by the author are colored in chalk in a way that enhances understanding, rather than being a distraction, like it can sometimes be. This might just be my own peculiarity, but I had training in drafting and cartography back in the days when we did it by hand, with pencil and paper rather than a computer screen. I still consider this to be an advantage instead of a handicap.

The author traces the rise, golden age and decline of the canoe yawl in the next three chapters before devoting two chapters in just 16 pages to what I would call some boating evangelism on behalf of the canoe yawl. The chapter entitled "Some Design Basics" opens with, "I hope to convey here something of the art and science of yacht design which underpins my belief that the canoe yawl is the ideal small cruising boat." This doesn't mean Powell turns into the annoying, uninvited guest on the doorstep.

"The first part of this book is a narrative of the origins and development of the canoe

yawl in all its variants, reflected against the background of other types of recreational craft. The last few chapters are more difficult to write as any appreciation of the type will inevitably include my opinions, personal prejudices and, on some occasions, intense dislike. Be reassured, however, that any dislike of mine is only directed at conformity, uniformity, restriction of choice, and spurious regulation." (p106)

After this brief, but well argued sermon of sorts, the book closes with a review of classic canoe yawls that have survived and been restored and discussion of where the canoe yawl stands today and in the future as a viable recreational craft. The author is modestly optimistic as to the possibilities opened up by modern wood composite construction techniques and CNC kit production.

This book will go on my shelf right beside Ruell Parker's *The Sharpie Book*, I hope that, like Parker's book and Phil Bolger's writing and design work on sharpies, it leads to a renewal of interest in the canoe yawl. The down side of my enjoyment of this book is that I'm now compelled to get hold of Lodestar's reissue of John Leather's book on designer and artist Albert Strange. What a fate.

About Lodestar Books

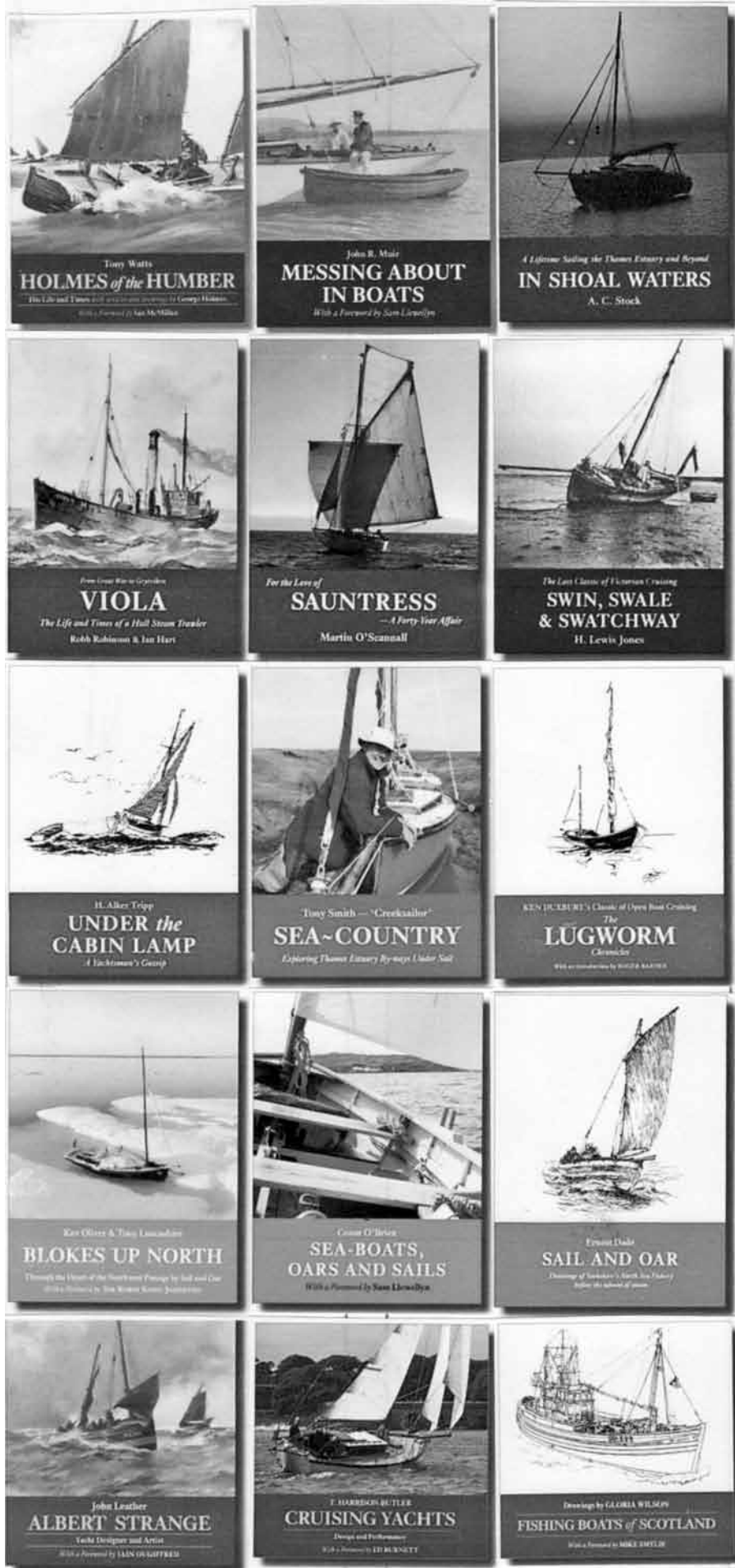
By Richard Wynne, Publisher

When Lodestar Books began with *Holmes of the Humber* I could not have foreseen the chord we would strike around the globe with lovers of traditional sail and traditional values in book production. We followed that success with Francis B. Cooke's monumental *Cruising Hints*, and today with our modest but growing list of titles we have appreciative, indeed loyal readers throughout the world.

By selling direct to you we can overcome the barrier of high short run unit costs and ask a trade like retail price whilst giving an attention to detail sometimes found lacking in commercial book production, this way we can bring neglected but worthwhile titles to a new audience and publish specialized new books which might not attract the interest of the mainstream trade publisher. Not that we are at all averse to a runaway best-seller, you understand.

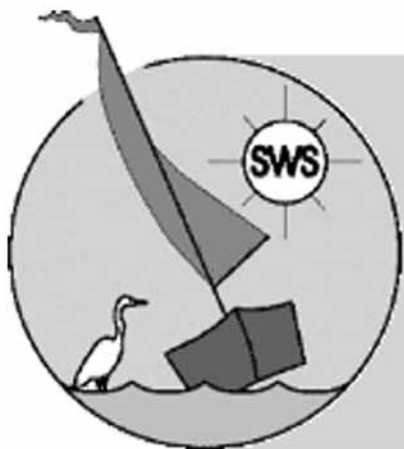
We started out by focusing mainly on writers long departed but often still in copyright. More than one descendant family has been pleased to be the recipient of unanticipated royalties or to nominate a good cause to receive them. Although most out of print books are so for a very good reason, there remains a seam of historical titles worthy of our attention and of your time in reading them. But Lodestar is also working with living writers and new titles.

If you think you may have a Lodestar book in you, or can suggest a past author we should consider, we would like to hear from you. To our many readers around the world, thank you for supporting us and spreading the word, and if you are new to Lodestar Books here's a display of some current titles on offer: www.lodestarbooks.com.



My family and I have been fortunate to attend classes at WoodenBoat School in Brooklin, Maine, a couple times over the last few years. It has become a favorite place for all of us. Our youngest daughter, Emma, graduated from college this year and was looking for way to spend some quality time with Dad as she heads out into the working world. At her suggestion she and I signed up for the lottery to participate in one of the two Alumni Work Weeks at the school in late May. For free room and board, we get to help the school get its boats and facilities ready for the season. One friend who had done this told my daughter that she'd likely be the youngest person there by several decades and it would be akin to her visiting another planet. He also said we'd have a great time. He was right on all counts.

Going to WoodenBoat School, whether for a class or Alumni Week, is like going to a different planet. It's a planet where everything is good and chill, where everybody smiles all the time and where everybody gets what they want. Seriously. If you've been there you know and if you haven't you really should. You will also learn about wood boats but, of course, the whole thing is not really about the boats.



Who are the Shallow Water Sailors?

The SWSers are trailer sailors who enjoy sailing on water so thin it can be termed a "heavy dew." *Shallow Water Sailor* actually refers to the group's newsletter started in 1986 by a band of Dovekie owners. The Dovekie is a sharpie sailboat designed by Phil Bolger in a "strenuous attempt to produce a popular family recreational boat that would function without an engine." What resulted was a boat with a 4" draft that in windless conditions can be propelled by 10' oars at about 2kts. Its owners discovered that the boat has many other virtues that class it in the truly trailerable, messabout sailboat category.

Today, though the majority of the SWS membership are Dovekie owners, a good percentage own other trailerable boats such as Shearwaters, Bay Hens, Peep Hens, Sea Pearls, Martha Janes, Seaward Foxs as well as MacGregors. What SWSers have in common is the urge to experience the numerous bodies of water that provide pleasant and challenging sailing experiences that are within a day or two drive from home.

For more information go to:

www.shallowwatersailor.us/

Selections from the *Shallow Water Sailor*

WoodenBoat School Alumni Work Week

By Brian Forsyth

Reprinted from the *Shallow Water Sailor*

Like all WoodenBoat School classes, Alumni Weeks begin with Sunday evening dinner, a wonderful seafood chowder with big chunks of lobster and other sea critters and fresh biscuits. Then Rich Hilsinger, the school's director and CHO (Chief Happiness Officer, my title for him) says a few words of welcome and relates "the plan," the rough who, what, where, when for tomorrow morning. It is not obvious but if you watch how things unfold during the week, Rich and his staff have carefully assessed their work lists and figured out who will be on which teams.

When applying for Alumni Week we all filled out a skills questionnaire and many of the people there are "repeat offenders," known quantities and typically very skilled. But it's a fact that no plan survives first contact with the enemy. Rich and the staff are almost unnaturally attuned to whether folks are having a good time or not. So adjustments get made with a "Hey, we need you to help over here with..." and it's all good.

There were thirty-some alumni there during our week, which was the second of the two work weeks. The school's first classes would begin the following week so a good part of the school's fleet of beautiful wooden boats needed to have any work completed and to be launched into the mooring field. Emma and I were put on a team with three other guys who were a lot like me (50-something, addicted to boats), Jim, Jim and Lloyd. We were given seven boats to work on, most of which we completely repainted over the five day work week, along with some minor repairs.



Herreshoff 12.5 transom art.



At the school, boat name boards are removed and stored in the boathouse in the off season.

Most of us had a fair bit of experience doing wood boat prep and finish work so we were pretty much left alone to work. I learned

a lot though, both from putting in solid days of sanding, priming, painting and varnishing as well as occasional expert tips from Greg Bauer, the school's Waterfront Manager responsible for all the boats. As you'd expect we used good quality stuff, Interlux, Pettit, West System and Kirby's enamel paints. Of course, it was a priceless opportunity working alongside my daughter. She held her own both working on the boats and entertaining the curmudgeons. The rest of the alumni worked on other groups of boats, set moorings, rigged and launched boats or worked on assorted carpentry projects in the shop buildings and dormitories.



Emma, Jim and Jim working on the Caledonia Yawl. In front are some of "our" other boats.



One of "our" boats rigged and ready to launch, catboat Shenaniganz.

Dinners, like all the meals, are excellent, hearty and filled with camaraderie and good humor. Several of the alumni could probably make a living doing stand up. Rich also arranges some evening entertainment during the alumni weeks, similar to the activities offered during the school's boat building classes.

One evening we visited Eric Dow's shop where he has built 50+ Joel White Haven 12.5s and assorted other works of art. Many of the boats he's built were stored in his barn, waiting for their owners to put them in the water for the short Maine sailing season.

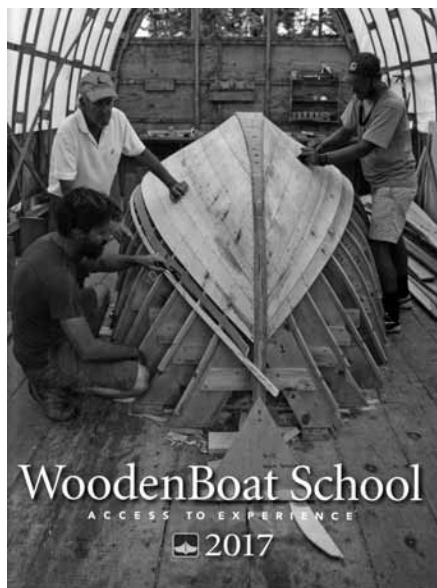
On another evening we visited the Brooklin Boatyard where we were blown away by several custom sailboats under construction. One of these was over 70' long and was essentially all carbon fiber with thin wood veneers inside and out. All of it was vacuum bagged and their infusion system was hooked up to a 250gal tank of epoxy resin. No stirring epoxy with popsicle sticks in Solo cups for these guys! On the other evenings Dale from New Brunswick and I played a little guitar together, rediscovering the Ozark Mountain Daredevils.

There were a few other "special events" throughout the week, including a wonderful happy hour at the Farmhouse and the traditional WoodenBoat School Friday night lob-

ster and mussel feast with all the trimmings. Saturday morning came too soon and with it the long drive back to Maryland. Emma was a little bummed as she knew that with her current career plans it might be a while before she'll be back at WoodenBoat School, but she certainly intends to and hope I will be there with her. Thank you, WoodenBoat School for the opportunity to "work for food." Best job I ever had.



Emma says, we'll be back! Sunset at Naskeag Point, Brooklin, Maine.



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Cliffs City Cruise

By Jerry Culik
Reprinted from *Shallow Water Sailor*

Since the springtime Don Kerr and I talked about launching an overnight cruise from the county ramp at Cliffs City, Maryland, on the Chester River. In late June we did a brief "reconnaissance" day sail to check it out in Don's Melonseed but the hot, humid weather all summer put the kibosh on any

thoughts of the overnighter. Finally, after a cold front passed on Sunday, September 11, the forecast was for a couple of nice days before the humidity returned and I headed down to Chestertown with my West Wight Potter 15, *Blue Knot*, in tow.

Since my last sail, which was on some very shallow parts of the Sassafras River, I made some changes and additions and I was eager to finally do some testing. If the wind was light, I had a new yuloh for propulsion and I was hoping it would work better than wagging my rudder. If the wind was higher I had made some changes in the downhauls and outhauls to make them easier to adjust. And if it really got breezy I had some new additions to the jib sheet leads and I needed a lot more practice heaving to and reefing. And finally, inspired by John Zohlen's dodger that he built from fiberglass driveway marker stakes and clear plastic, I had assembled my own version of a homemade dodger bimini to test out on the water.

Cliffs City Point is south of Chestertown, by green buoy "19". The Chester River is narrower here, but still plenty wide. Comegys Bight, west of "21", is just upriver and Emory Hollow is directly across, both nice places to day sail. The Corsica River is about a mile due south and Langford Creek is a couple of miles down river, "just around the bend." The west shore around Cliffs Point has some nice looking houses and a few piers, all well out of the channel.

The east shore is pretty undeveloped, Queen Anne County's "reservation only" Conquest Park comprises much of the eastern bank along the Hollow and there are sandy beaches that alternate with reeds and blinds. Seeing picnic tables suggests that's the park and it looks like a good spot to take a break from sailing. At the west end of the park (Upper Spaniards Point) there is a big fish trap that juts well out from the shore. At night it is lit with dim flashing yellow "road blinkers." I don't sail in the dark but it's nice to know that it's (kind of) lit if you realize what it is before you hit it.

There is plenty of water on this part of the river, I never touched bottom anywhere, even at low tide. There was very little boat traffic, a few fishermen, a couple of watermen checking crab traps, but the highlight was a skipjack and buyboat that were obviously out for an educational day on the river, and they spent the afternoon meandering around Comegys Bight and Emory Hollow.

OK, back to sailing. Winds Monday afternoon were very light and coming down the river from the northeast. It was a real drifter, I could have easily carried my bigger genny but it was back in the car. I had a leisurely tour of the east bank, tacking up to "21" where the river starts to narrow. I was able to try out the yuloh while exploring the shoreline near Conquest Park and the above noted fish trap (yikes!!). I sailed downwind (what there was of it) to the RG buoy at the intersection of the Corsica, and at 6pm I fired up the little Evinrude and motored north back to Cliffs Point.

Since the breeze was very light, I decided to anchor for the night on the north side of the fishing pier at the ramp which would be temptingly close to my car (should I decide to bail out). Even at low tide there was enough water in the little cove to anchor without fear of grounding *Blue Knot*. The bottom was quite firm and I could have easily walked 20' to the little bit of beach there.

I enjoyed a nice dinner with adult beverages and bright stars, even though the almost full moon had already risen. A couple spent the evening fishing from the pier, and when they left it was really quiet. Life was good.

As soon as I turned in, though, the wind shifted, now from the south, and increased in strength. The quiet little anchorage was now getting a bit bumpy. Still I was very comfortable, cocooned inside *Blue Knot* and knowing that if my Bruce anchor slipped I would end up on the beach where the Potter, with its twin skegs and keel, is very happy to be beached!

I woke up around 4:30am. *Blue Knot* was still bouncing around, the winds had clocked a little further south and moderated a bit. The moon had set and the stars were brighter than ever before. Worth waking up for. I did some reading and eventually dozed off until my cell phone alarm woke me up, dang, I should have turned it off. When there was some daylight I ate my breakfast, then cleaned up the boat and got underway around 8:15am. After slowly motoring east a bit I got the sails up and headed north on an easy broad reach.

Looking back, I saw that I was slowly being overtaken by a bluewater cruiser with sail up but under power heading to Chestertown. I easily beat him to the "19" buoy, rounded the mark and headed east down to the Corsica, hugging the east bank and now wary of the fish trap that I had to work to avoid the day before. The moderate winds increased as the river widened up around Spaniards Point. Watermen were out tending their trot lines down near the Rock Hall channel and I stayed up north, turned to port and hardened up, aiming for the red "2" on the Corsica. Rounding the buoy, I headed back toward Rock Hall on a close reach. The tree line to the south of "2" moderated the breeze, a welcome break, then I was back out into the middle, broad reaching across the river and headed for the green "3" buoy.

Hey, there are whitecaps building and more chop. Maybe it was getting close to a point where a reef would be appropriate. However, I found that I could play my traveler and easily control the heeling. It became a bit of a game, wind eases, open the traveler and power up, wind builds, crank in the traveler and flatten the leech. Sweet! Just like the "big boats."

I headed up Langford Creek far enough to get a nice downwind angle reaching back up the river to the Cliffs City ramp. At the ramp I had hoped to park the boat on the beach (like Don and I had done with his Melonseed) so that I could tend to some trailer issues before I retrieved. However, when I got to the ramp I now understood why it appeared to be so unused. The south wind turned the ramp area into a pretty rough chop and now the bulkhead protecting the ramp seemed much too low. There was very little beach to park the boat on while I did my troubleshooting, the winds overnight had bottled up the high tide.

The Potter took a few hard licks that afternoon, it wasn't the prettiest loading but we got it done. And thanks to all wheel drive I easily got up the sandbank of a ramp, parked *Blue Knot* under the shade to load up and took a timeout to survey for any damage to boat and trailer. Besides the nasty chop, the other bad thing about the southerly exposure was lots of sand on the ramp. Once I got *Blue Knot* loaded up I headed off to Rock Hall. I had a late lunch at the city "beach"

Messing About in Boats, December 2016 – 9

while talking with a gent from Glen Burnie who was day tripping with his wife, and then headed home.

Here's my wrap up of the Cliffs City ramp. On the good side, plenty of parking, plenty of room to rig and even some shade trees on the south and west sides, nice looking houses nearby, I felt very secure. Good spot to anchor for the night IF the wind is not from the south or east, good fishing, based on all the folks we've seen there, good access to the beaches of Conquest Park and to the Corsica River, nice sailing if there's too much wind and chop further south with lots of "bug out" spots along the shores, very quiet at night and nice porta potties.

What's bad. If the breeze is up and from the south, go to Long Cove on Langford Creek! Sand dunes on the ramp, bring a shovel if you don't have all wheel drive. And it's a very shallow ramp, if I had used the tilting feature on my trailer it would have been a LOT easier to launch and retrieve (lesson learned the hard way). Finally, it's too far from Rock Hall (that is, Ford's Restaurant) to make a breakfast or dinner run worth it.

And now what I learned this trip. Yulohs are great when there's not much wind and I don't want to risk shearing a pin on my motor in the shallow water (been there, done that) and learning to scull is easy. The traveler and outhaul are now my best friends when the wind pipes up. My homemade dodger bimini is too small to provide much shade but the concept worked and I'll build a bigger version for the next cruise. I always "felt" slow, I have much too much weight on *Blue Knot*, I've got to get rid of all the spare water bottles that I'm hauling around as ballast (and probably the solar water heater, too). And lastly, 10' of chain and 15' of anchor line is definitely overkill when the water is only 2' deep (and I love that 2kg Bruce anchor!).

I'll go back to Cliffs City with my little Potter, but I'm going to watch the wind forecast very carefully the next time I do!

Chartering a Small Cruiser

in Poland's Pojezierze Mazurskie

By John Gardner

Reprinted from the *Shallow Water Sailor*

The Masurian Lake District of Poland has a large set of good sized lakes, many connected by canals. The overall navigable length of the system north to south is approximately 80km. Sailing here looked to my wife Lynne and I to be a very good way to both go sailing in a new environment and to experience Poland. The US Army put me through an intensive Polish language course 40-some years ago. Ever since I had wanted to visit Poland and Lynne was willing to take a flier.

It turns out there is a robust charter industry in the Masurian Lake District. Using my limited Polish and Google Translate, I researched charter companies. I needed to search using Polish terms in order to get the local websites. We chose Jazezarter charter company and a Tez 678 sailboat, a 23' cabin sloop. It had a porta potty, minimal galley and sloop rig with roller furling. The most unique aspect of the boat was a mast raising and lowering system that allowed the raising

and lowering of the mast from the cockpit in just a very few minutes (after a practice or two). This allowed the boat to transit from lake to lake.



Our boat with the six part mast raising system. The stainless A frame is permanent and lowers to the deck.

The most amazing aspect of the experience was the price. For a full week the bill was about \$300. We were just ahead of high season, late June 2015. The quoted price in September 2016 was \$120 (fall season) but that seems low. It may be in Euros. Either way a fall charter would be very inexpensive. There are hundreds of charter companies but we wanted the smallest boat that would work for the two of us. This one worked out fine.

When we arrived the owner wanted to see our boating license. It took some explaining that there is no such thing required in the US. If you go you should consider getting something like a Coast Guard course certificate or a state license of some sort. Note, have the company send taxi instructions in Polish for the trip from the train station to the charter base. We had real trouble getting out to the suburb where the company was located. We used translation software on our tablet and it eventually worked out. Otherwise the process was quite simple. Instructions regarding the boat were reasonable in spite of my limited Polish and the owner's limited English skills. Other charter companies have better English websites but the more they market to international visitors, the more expensive they are.

The boat did not come with a chart but the owner lent us his old, worn chart. He seemed surprised that we wanted one. I could not get an online chart but our CityMaps2Go app had maps of the area that could be accessed without an internet connection. We had loaded the local maps and with the nautical chart we always knew where we were and could avoid problems. We found a new chart across the street at a different charter company on our last day and purchased it for a future reference.

The view from our spot in the reeds on the first night. The raised rudder is on the next boat down the shore.



Sailing

The charter company was very near Gizycko, Poland, on Lake Dargin. The lake was quite large and had interesting islands near the charter base in Plenka Gora. We wimped out and returned to the base every other night to get showers and to avoid bad weather. The nights out were quite pleasant. We would just pull into a slot in the reeds that surround the lake and tie to a tree. The reeds kept the boat facing the shore and all was snug and sound. We monitored the weather and did not feel the need to deploy a stern anchor after the first night. The sailing was great but the surprise was how many sailboats were out on the lake on weekdays. The charter firms appeared to only have half of the boats out of their slips, but the lake was chock full of sailors even before peak season. There were very few motor boats about.



The charter base. Many companies rented space in the basin.

We would sail out from the base for three to five hours, cross half of the lake or more, then look for a good place to spend the night. One mini cruise also involved a visit to the center of Gizycko in the canal. We found the ice cream shop and all was well. The town had been totally flattened in WWII by the Soviets. It was not as quaint or historic as other Polish towns. (Gdansk was very interesting, our having visited on the way in and out.) It was amazing to be able to approach a canal and drop the mast in two or three minutes.

On the nights in port we met some interesting fellow sailors but the language barrier was significant. However, we often shared the basin with a Polish couple with good English skills. We got to know them, shared a provisioning expedition and learned more about Poland. They had a similar habit of returning to the charter base. Pavel, our English speaking friend, recounted that he would have not been more surprised to see Martians than to see Americans in the basin. It appears that we were breaking new ground. By far the majority of the charterers were Polish. We hope to see Pavel when he comes to the US for next year's solar eclipse.

In all, we loved the experience and the sailing. The boat was in great shape and anyone who can sail a Catalina 22 is ready to go. We have a lot more experience than was required. We currently sail a Shearwater 28, have had a Piver Nimble 30 trimaran and a Bristol 30 sloop. We have chartered in the Florida Keys, the North Channel and the Apostle Islands. This was our first adventure in international chartering that was simple, inexpensive and included the option of a small cruiser in safe, forgiving waters.

The overall trip included more than sailing. We traveled via Stockholm due to an Air France fare deal. Great choice. We took a flight from Stockholm to Gdansk, visited, took a train to Gizycko, sailed, took a train to Malbork Castle, visited, took an overnight ferry to Stockholm, visited and finally headed home. Combine a charter with some additional European sightseeing and cap it off with some sailing. Bon Voyage!





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Day 1: "Tackless in Trouble"

Fifteen minutes after finally completing a laborious tack in water so shallow that the ultrashoal Dovekle sometimes scrapes across underwater oyster clumps, I see trouble ahead. The water goes from shallow to down-right Puddle Duck skinny 30' directly ahead and there is no way to tack with the stuck centerboard and raised leeboards. There was only one thing left to do, jump overboard!

It is the first day of the 2016 Texas 200, a 200-ish mile multi day sailing and camping trip starting from Port Isabel and sailing up the Texas coast to eventually end at Magnolia Beach. In between lie a couple of hundred miles of the Laguna Madre, bays, ports, bayous, passes, mud, sand and seashell beaches and, of course, the Intercoastal Waterway with its barges, fishing boats, huge container ships and ferries.

Over 50 boats and 100 sailors launched this hot Monday morning to embark upon six days of sailing, rowing and motor-ing from camp to camp through oftentimes untouched and uninhabited waterways. The fleet includes a huge variety of boats from small homebuilt wooden boats to 25'+ production boats, from Hobie AI/TI trimarans to a 30' wooden schooner and everything else in between. There are even two sailless rowboats this year! There were zero Puddle Duck Racers this year though. The diminutive 8'x4' scow sailboats may be able to sail over 3" of water, but sailing one 200+ miles requires a certain amount of insanity and apparently everyone passed the sanity check this year.



On the way back to Mississippi from Pennsylvania after picking up the boat three weeks before the Texas 200 trip.

I'm sailing *Mulsae* (Korean for water bird), a 21'5" Dovekie ultrashoal unballasted boat by notable designer Phil Bolger and produced by Edey & Duff in the late '70s and '80s. Three weeks before I drove to Pennsylvania to pick up the boat in an 1,800 mile round trip. This is the first day actually sailing the boat since purchasing it and it has been, umm, interesting in the 25+mph wind gusts. The morning starts out mild but the wind quickly builds.

Thirty minutes after leaving port saw *Mulsae* swinging wildly back and forth from her anchor just outside of the Intercoastal Waterway (ICW) while her captain (me) struggles to install the first reef. The task was even more difficult since said captain had never actually reefed the boat's sail before now. The result was a somewhat sloppy reef, bruises and exhausted relief. In spite of zero reefing practice beforehand, it gets done and the boat is back underway.

As the sun rises higher in the sky, so does the wind. Typical for south Texas summer, it is not uncommon to start a day with a mild south to southeasterly breeze that ramps

Mulsae Does the Texas 200

By Mike Mangus

Reprinted from the *Shallow Water Sailor*

up to a windy 20+mph by the afternoon. As the boat heels a little more with each passing hour I watch the speed creep up on the GPS, 5mph, 6mph, touching 7mph, almost 8mph, the boat heeling is getting uncomfortable and the weather helm induced tiller pressure makes my arm ache.

Suddenly the boat is hit with a heavy gust, heels way over and rounds up into the wind! It takes a moment for the panic to wear off as the luffing sail flutters loudly. OK, looks like another reef is in order. The reefing process is just as bad as the earlier attempt with the added excitement of dragging anchor and colliding with a fishing shack leaving me even more bruised. We really need a better way to reef!

Feeling more comfortable with the second reef in, miles slip under the boat's bottom. It is around 42 miles between Port Isabel and the first camp but there are challenges. The last five to six miles are sailed eastward through the Mansfield gulf channel close to the wind. This portion of the trip is new water for me, never having seen or sailed it. How shallow is the Laguna Madre close to the intercoastal island? Can the boat cut the corner and trim distance? Would be really nice to skim the island's corner into the windward shore's calmer waters.

Unfortunately I misjudge the course and get blown past the island, past the channel and into the very shallow waters beyond. *Mulsae* claws to windward against the south-east wind while barely maintaining course on too small leeboards. An hour later finds us running out of sea room as we approach the intercoastal island's shore. Time to tack!

Right. Tack. You know, turn the boat through the wind to the opposite close hauled course. I understood and practiced the concept many, many times over the years without fail. One would think that a 35-year-old boat knows how to tack. But for some reason *Mulsae* exhibits stubbornness and fails the tack, twice. What in the heck is going on with the boat?! Wait, didn't the manual say something about raising the bow centerboard? Right! OK, bow centerboard up, up, come on, up! Gah! Damn thing is stuck down!

Lashing the tiller in place, I dash crawl to the bow and yank up the centerboard before dash crawling backwards to the tiller just in time to steer the boat before it decides downwind is a much better heading. This time the tack slowly goes off without a hitch which eventually leads to the first paragraph of this account, heading towards an oyster encrusted barely underwater spoil island.

My feet splash into 12" or so of water and just miss an oyster clump. Hauling and anchoring *Mulsae* in 8" of water just short of the spoil island, I explore for a way over it. Deeper water on the other side is a mere 25' away. Between the boat and deeper water are layers of oyster beds inches below the surface and marked by a light froth on the water. Walking over the oysters to check the depth leaves me windmilling my arms for balance. Walking on oysters is like walking across a field of golf balls except these have razor sharp edges! Indeed, two boats and crews are

forced to retire on the first day for cuts and injuries requiring stitches after grounding on an oyster shoal.

Hmm, bare sandy spot to the right 30 yards away might work. Sure enough, its ankle deep water over oyster free hard pack sand, barely enough water to stoutly drag *Mulsae* over the spoil island into the channel. Success! Got to love having a boat that only needs 5" of water to float! Phil knew his stuff designing the Dovekle. The boat is perfectly suited for extreme shallow water sailing and camping.

An hour later I finally motor into camp as the second to last boat to make the Mansfield jetties. Even the rowboats beat me. It wasn't for trying though, but fetching up on the channel's lee shore after two more failed tacks and nearly losing the boat trying to re-launch it solo slowed the final leg down even further. All in all, the entire first day was an exceptionally exhausting sail.

Setting the anchor to keep *Mulsae*'s bow grounded to shore, I wander through the 30+ boats beached and anchored at camp. The variety of boats is stunning with literally no two exactly alike. Even the handful of similar designs sport captain driven modifications and preferences. I marvel at the two rowboats, a single and a double, and wonder if they will complete the entire 200 mile trip through very challenging winds and waves, 90°+ temperatures, sky high humidity and the sheer fact of pulling oars tens of thousands of times over the next five days.

Then there are the absent boats failing to make the camp. Some divert to Port Mansfield to avoid the long beat up the channel into the wind. Others fall victim to mechanical failures and/or injuries. Approximately 20% of the boats launched Monday morning withdraw on the first day for one reason or another. Chances are good that there will be more.

The tough day leaves me with a dehydration and stress induced migraine. After making the rounds for brief chats with skippers and crews, I return to the boat, skip eating (not hungry), and fortify with another bottled water. Setting up the cockpit's canvas porch tent, I crash in the boat while the sun is still above the horizon and sleep through most of the night.

Just after 4am the camp and I are awakened by a wake wave from a passing big ship. The wave was big enough to throw *Mulsae* sideways against the shore and reportedly partially swamp another boat. *Mulsae* even takes a small splash over the rail! Still tired, I fall quickly asleep again to the sight of starry sky seen through open hatch. After all, we have more sailing to do on the 'morrow.

Day 2: "Even Puddle Ducks are Faster!"

A mild breeze greets us in the pre dawn sky as the sounds of waves washing the nearby gulf shoreline serenade the sleepy boats and crews at camp. It is interesting that I wake early enough to experience this tranquil scene. Not a morning person, I usually sleep in late at home. Yet for some reason on every sail camp trip I've been in the pre dawn sky banishes my slumber. Digging into the food box reveals breakfast for this trip, a yellow pound cake to go along with an ice cooled breakfast drink. This is a typical everyday breakfast for me, nothing heavy and just enough calories to get moving. Not to mention preparation involves no cooking at all!

Looking about while kicked back on *Mulsae*'s bench seats and enjoying the morn-

ing coolness before the day's blistering heat later, I notice activity on a couple of other boats nearby. Today is a relatively long sail of around 38 miles so there are a few captains looking to get an early start. Indeed, even as the pound cake disappears a homebuilt wooden boat glides slowly and silently past with white sails raised and catching the very light wind. The boat's bow sends small ripples out across the nearly flat channel water.

Breakfast done, cockpit tent stowed and boat tidied up, I pause before raising sail. With the reefing difficulties yesterday maybe it would be best to put the third reef in now so I wouldn't have to do it later on the water. This afternoon is slated to be as windy as yesterday. The idea appeals, so it is done. The anchor comes up easily with enough momentum to send the Dovekle out into the channel. The heavily reefed sail picks up just enough wind to make headway and steerage west towards Port Mansfield.



Day 2 sailing over reefed in the morning on the Laguna Madre.

2mph is slow but gives the captain an easy sail and plenty of time to enjoy the scenery. The Sport-a-Seat cushion is wonderfully comfortable to sit on while feet are lazily propped up on the opposite side's bench seat. The sky brightens as the sun crests the horizon to grace all creatures on earth with a new day. And so it goes for the next hour and a half. The plan is to cut the corner to starboard just after the last right side spoil island, but for some reason the GPS won't turn on and I well overshoot the mark to sail into the open Laguna Madre. Once I'm past the southern islands marking the channel, the freshening wind driven waves start working on the boat. Taken as a cue to start heading downwind, we turn to starboard, angling northerly to rejoin the ICW.

In the meantime, a parade of boats sail, motor and row on by. With three reefs in and nearly everyone else with full sails raised, I poke along at around 2-3mph while other boats practically zoom past. Yeah, maybe a third reef wasn't a good idea this morning but surely it'll pay off this afternoon when it gets really windy. A benefit of getting passed by everyone is the opportunity to video each boat. If there is one thing most captains like to see, it is video of themselves sailing. It is a view captains rarely get to see. Hopefully the videos will eventually get uploaded to my YouTube page.

The Laguna Madre is a long stretch of water, tens of miles long. Long enough for the wind to build up 3'-4' waves by midday. Waves that easily overtake the slow heavily reefed wallowing Dovekle. My 3mph aver-

age speed is so slow that the boat refuses to surf on the faster overtaking waves. Heck, even Puddle Ducks are faster and can surf these waves! I am so glad no Puddle Ducks entered this year, the humiliation of getting passed by a Duck would be mortifying! So the Dovekie wallows in the waves tossing its captain. All I can do is brace and hold on. Taking a reef out is not an option in these conditions, besides, that reef will come in handy later on, right?

By mid afternoon the sides of the Laguna Madre close in towards the Land Cut, a tens of miles long channel cut across shallow water and land to connect the Laguna Madre with the more northerly bays. Only ten miles to go till the Hap's Cut camp! Woot! The water smooths out in the protected channel. In 2014 my Dad and I had some of the trip's best sailing in the Land Cut. Smooth water and good wind usually lets boats stretch out speedily. *Mulsae* likes the smoother water and the now working GPS shows a refreshing 5mph pace in a mild 10-ish knot wind.

In fact, the sailing is so nice that I cleat off the mainsheet, bungee lash the tiller in place, grab a cool bottled water and stand up in the cockpit to watch the scenery. Now this is good sailing! To my amusement, leaning from one side of the boat to the other causes *Mulsae* to steer in one direction or the other. Just like others have said, it is possible to steer a boat by leaning.

Tom J's Com-Pac 16 *Tomfoolery* slowly overtakes and passes. It is an easily recognizable boat because the name is spread boldly across the sides. We enjoyably chat back and forth before they pull ahead, but not for long. The wind abruptly gusts stronger and sends me scrambling back to the tiller. Within 15 minutes *Mulsae* is heeling and moving out at 6-7mph. Now this is why that third reef is in! We quickly reel in *Tomfoolery*, pass by and pull away.

But not for long. Heh. Quickly another boat overtakes us both. The blue Mariner 19 *Odissea* captained by Matt S is flying by sailing wing and wing with a single reef in. It is nearly obscene how relaxed they are, even as I grip the tiller to keep the heeling weather helming *Mulsae* under control during the windy blasts. Ah, the difference between a ballasted boat and an unballasted boat! Our 2014 Texas 200 in a Holder 20 was as relaxed as Matt and crew's with the Holder's 4' deep ballasted fin keel keeping the boat upright.

Odissea quickly disappears ahead. The miles pass quickly. Our 2014 land cut camp is long behind us. Once or twice the wind nearly rounds up *Mulsae* but we hang on until finally the trees marking Hap's Cut appear. Unfamiliar with the camp, I quickly run the boat's bow up on the southern edge of the beached sailboat group. Phew! Finally! Not the last boat either. Even beat the rowboats. Puddle Ducks beware! Buahahaha!

The migraine is back again this afternoon. Perhaps it was more stress induced than dehydration as I made a point to drink more during the day. Even so, no headache keeps me from getting *Mulsae* anchored to shore and then wandering around exploring this new to me camp. Everything said about the legendary Hap's Cut mud is absolutely true. Sticky, soft, slippery as only a small handful of many words used to describe the mud. Upon beaching and jumping overboard, I nearly fall as sandaled feet skid a little before sinking into the calf deep stuff. Messy as well. Before entering the boat one

has to spend a handful of minutes trying to swish wash the sticky slippery gray stuff off feet and shoes. Even so, some still makes it inside the boat.

Unseen from where I beached and around the corner in the cut itself lie docks, small shacks and most importantly the only true shade trees in this part of Texas. The copse of trees contains a cleared shady area where the early arrivers' tents are set up. There is even a picnic table. This is where I meet for the first time participants previously only known by Facebook names such as Ray W sailing *Mertlin* and his crew Painen D.

The migraine eventually drives me back to the boat to a cold bottle of hard root beer, some beef jerky and a short nap that somehow lasts until dusk. Taking advantage of the Dovekle's perfect suitability for camping onboard, I get the canvas cockpit tent put up and the Sport-a-Seat placed down flat as a bed cushion. Yeah, it is that comfortable as an impromptu bed. Leaving the hatches uncovered, I get a brief view of the darkening sky and the first glimpse of stars before sleep reclaims me.

Day 3: "Holy Round Up Batman!"

Waking up even earlier than usual to a shade lighter than dark sky, I blearily blink sleepy eyes, note how early it is and immediately decide to roll over and snooze in. That snooze only lasts about 15 minutes before the cell phone alarm suddenly goes off next to my head. If anyone had been watching the next handful of minutes spent trying to open the cell phone's hard case's stubbornly tight latches while mumbling hopefully inaudible curses may have seemed comedic. That alarm sounds awfully loud, but afterwards it seems like no one else heard it. May as well get up. The sky is still pre dawn yet light enough to see shore and boat activity. I give the guy just crawling out of his shoreline tent 25' away a cheery good morning because no matter how sleepy and disoriented a person might be, a cheery good morning is a great way to start a morning on a good note. His reply might not have been quite as enthusiastic.

The rowboats are already on the water getting a head start to the day. Even though today is a relatively short 25 miles to the next camp, we have to pass through Baffin Bay on the way. Good chance they also wanted to put distance in during the very light morning wind. Using the knowledge gained by last year's successful rower's trip, the two boats and three men look to have a solid plan to not only complete the entire trip but to make all the camps at the same time everyone else does. It will take some doing to row 200+ miles in only six days!

Getting *Mulsae* straightened out and ready to sail, I pause at raising the sail. Like yesterday morning, I contemplate what reef to use to avoid having to reef on the water. While the wind today is supposed to be the highest of the week, projected into the high 20s, the lesson learned yesterday was a slow boat and big waves did not make for a good sail. In spite of the wind projection, I decide to go with the second reef instead of the third reef. Hopefully the short trip and higher boat speed will get us to the Bird Island camp by noon to avoid the stronger afternoon winds.

Launching from Hap's Cut is an adventure. The slippery mud and relatively quick drop off does not give much to push off from. Given a light wind parallel to the beach, a weak push, a scramble into the boat and a

rush to get sheeted for steerage equals sailing hi jinks galore! In this instance, I fail to clear a moored boat nearby and bounce off with a thud that wakes the owners. Sorry! Luckily he is gracious and even helps with a good shove to get *Mulsae* headed out cleanly into the channel. Embarrassment aside, I get the sail sheeted, settle into the now familiar feet up semi reclined position at the helm and enjoy the easy sail.

The narrowish land cut shores slowly pass, dotted by stilted fishing houses in various states of repair (or disrepair). Some look like full blown well kept homes with multi stories, generators and water catch and store tanks. Others tilt and lean half over the water, peeling weathered walls and drooping docks, giving them an abandoned haunted feel. Sometime in the past Texas reportedly passed a law to prevent new builds as well as reverting existing structures to the state upon the private owner's death.

A side story to that is a savvy owner who, upon hearing about the new law, went and registered his baby child as his fishing house owner days before the law went into effect, thus ensuring family ownership for another generation. Given the signs posted on some of the houses by the Texas state, I'm inclined to think the stories may be true.

A couple of hours later finds the port and starboard shores receding as we enter the bay and pick up the ICW markers. Looking back over the starboard stem reveals the last green island sliding further behind. Ugh! More waves. Luckily the waves remain a relatively manageable 2'-3' due to the partially sheltered lee of the intercoastal islands. Having one less reef also helps keep the boat moving near wave speed and actually surf occasionally. This is nice sailing.

Mid morning finds the wind rising quickly, very quickly. By the time the GPS rings off the mark for angling out of the ICW towards camp a mere three miles away, the wind feels as strong as yesterday afternoon, especially on a beam reach in an unballasted boat with only two reefs in! *Mulsae* heels sharply and I brace with feet upon the opposite seat. The sheet is out as far as it will go without pressing the shrouds in an attempt to spill some air. The tiller quickly loads up as weather helm increases massively enough to require both hands to hold it. I'm horrible at guessing heeling angles, but I can see water splashes toying with the bottom edge of the port side rowing port.

This reminds me of another time sailing three plus decades ago on a local Michigan lake. My uncle had an old fiberglass 14' daysailer boat which was kept moored at a friend's dock. One summer day the wind was really blowing. All excited, I hoisted sail and boomed out across the water towards the best beam reach sailing spot on the lake. For the next hour that boat and I planed back and forth with me hanging out over the sides, whooping with glee and barely under control. Multiple times the boat heeled far enough to actually pull the rudder out of the water and round the boat safely up. Since the water was only 5'-6" deep, I did not worry about a capsize. It was perhaps the most fun sailing I ever had, even after capsizing at the end.

I wasn't having much fun now though. Even though the water is only around 3'-4' deep, capsizing in a 21' boat can be serious business. Yeah, the Dovekle has enough flotation to not sink but it is not something I want to go through in a mostly desolate area. The

GPS shows 7+mph while waves bash against the windward side. On gusts, the boat heels even more and the speed lumps up past 8mph and flirts with 9mph. Only a few miles to go, we can make it! Just hold on, keep holding on because land is right there! I glance back at the rudder and wince. Although the tiller is pulled to starboard, the main cassette looks to be twisting under the relentless weather helm load. Come on baby! We can make it!

Suddenly, a huge wind gust smacks the boat and throws her over to near horizontal. The oar port, blocked off with flat plexiglass and weather stripping, goes underwater and leaks water in like a broken dike. I'm frozen in panic with thoughts of death and dismemberment. Holy \$&*#! Well, OK. Maybe it happened too fast for those thoughts. But the freeze does let *Mulsae* round up for what seems an eternity on its side but is probably closer to ten seconds. With sail fluttering, the boat stands up as the gust continues to batter the sail, keeping us moving along at a reduced yet good clip. After the gust abates back to the still windy normal and myself calming down, I put the boat back on course for camp. *Mulsae* heels, I grip the tiller hard with both hands as the boat leaps forward once again.

Looking back weeks after the event, those last three miles to Bird Island camp could have been awesome sailing. Perhaps if I had sailed the boat and gotten comfortable with its sailing characteristics, it would have been great fun like that breezy day three decades ago on a local Michigan lake, without the capsizing ending, of course.

The water smooths in the intercoastal island's lee. *Mulsae* stands up a little and the sailing gets less tense. Up ahead and just pulling into the camp area is *Ancient Mariner*, a Manriner 19 captained by John A and crew. Five minutes later I sail past into water too shallow for the Mariner but just fine for a Dovekie. All anchored, we talk about the camp. Oddly, the GPS coordinates are 75 yards off the shore. A few more boats arrive in the next 30 minutes to join the discussion. The general consensus is to relocate further down shore where the water is marginally deeper for the deeper draft boats. So we do, dragging *Mulsae* 150 yards leeward to the new camp.

By now it is only noon, still early in the day although very windy. A radio call comes through, a few captains decide to skip tonight's camp and sail onward to Padre Island and possibly as far as Port Aransas. That still leaves a lot of boats to trickle in over the next couple of hours with multiple stories of the morning's

Anchored at Bird Island.

sail and of the 30+mph wind driven carnage including a blown out sail batten, broken rudders, jammed centerboards, a catamaran with a fairly serious hull leak and a bent mast. The afternoon hears the sounds of battery powered drills, pounding hammers and snippets of conversation from the guys trying to straighten the bent mast on shore. Luckily it seems everyone gets repairs made.

One unrepairable item is my GPS. It will not turn on. This is not good since John A's great chart pack is sitting 900 miles away on the kitchen table. That leaves me chartless and with a decision to make, should I continue the trip and stay on the known ICW course that Dad and I did in 2014? By this time, three days into the Texas 200, I am exhausted, not thrilled with the Dovekle's sailing characteristics (although its camping ability is unparalleled!), suffering daily migraines and honestly scared of taking the Dovekle solo and unsupported into the upcoming big bays. Losing GPS ability knocks out the back bays (a huge disappointment). Bottom line, I was not having fun.

Wise Everglades Challenge captains have a saying that goes something like, "Get a good sleeping rest before making a final decision." It is sound advice that I completely ignore. Given that Padre Island is the best possible mid trip place to pull out and I am not comfortable sailing *Mulsae* in the upcoming challenges, the decision is made to end my Texas 200 tomorrow morning. I'm not the only one to make that decision. A Laguna 23 family decides to press on to Padre Island this afternoon and pull out. A couple of other captains at camp have also decided to pull out tomorrow morning.

With an entire afternoon to relax at camp, people drift from boat to boat starting or joining conversations on a wide variety of topics. Chuck and Sandra L on a Loon 19 *Loonytoon* relate a side trip taken to explore a possible new camp and end up sailing wonderful miles downwind in one foot of water. John B in an immaculately built CLC Pocketship *Candy-O* tells of a stuck up centerboard that seemed to hardly slow him down while passing me yesterday. Stories of Saturday Night Specials zooming downwind and one SNS's mast bending under the morning's unexpected windy onslaught. There are many other stories told as sailors enjoy the shortened day.

On into the early evening tents bloom upon shore and boats while fires are lit for dinner. My go'urmet meal consists of a slice of Spam on a bread roll and an iced hard root beer afterwards. The food does not go down well and leaves me nauseous. The normal



light appetite on previous sailing trips has totally disappeared the last few days. Maybe I should get better food. Like previous nights it is early to bed. Asleep before star speckled darkness fully takes over the sky, I rest.



Anchored at Bird Island with the porch up and ready for the evening.

Day 4: "Anyone Offering a Ride?"

Like yesterday morning, the barely lightened sky greets my sleep filled eyes upon wakening. Unlike yesterday morning, I heed the pre dawn's call to work that every farmer hears and get up. Not that I am a farmer, mind you, and sailing is not work unless you're getting paid to do it, and I'm not getting paid. Poking my head out of the open hatch shows no one else on shore or boat is up or moving around yet. One may figure this is the best time to kick back and enjoy the coming dawn. Yet with the prospect of a possibly long day ahead I quickly get the camp gear repacked, scarf down a yellow pound cake followed by a cold breakfast drink and ready *Mulsae* for sailing.

The wind is light and with only 12-ish miles to Padre Island I don't hesitate to go with a single reef. Yeah, no reef may have been better but the ever cautious chicken part of me wins out. The water is shallow enough to drag *Mulsae* out beyond the other boats for a clean launch that goes off without a hitch. Shortly after, leaned back with feet kicked up, I enjoy the easy sailing through smooth yet very shallow water while angling northward towards the ICW.

We are the first boat out of this morning's camp, catching both wind and the dawn's first rays in tanbark sails. Thirty minutes later another set of white sails appear at camp. They are too far away to see who it is. Yet the captain must be very familiar with the area for taking a far more angled course towards the ICW. So much so that the other's sail reaches the ICW well ahead of me and slowly fades further in the distance.

The sail down the ICW is beautifully perfect. Mild wind lets me lash the tiller and stand up to admire miles of passing landscape. From behind a boat speedily catches up and passes. It is the long, lean and green Flying Scot *Watermelon* captained by Chris D. He has full sail up, even what looks like an asymmetrical spinnaker, it's a LOT of sail and the boat flies on by.

By 9am the spoil islands have grown higher and greener, turning into natural islands as we close in on Padre Island. Homes appear to starboard amongst trees further



Chatting with other Texas 200 participants at Bird Island.

inland as we leave the desolate uninhabited Laguna Madre behind. I keep eyes peeled for the channel leading eastward towards Padre Island Yacht Club. Never having been there nor seen it, I'm curious where it is. Yet, like in the 2014 trip, I miss guessing the correct channel and the club itself.

Luckily (or unluckily, depending on one's point of view) it isn't a stop this year. A couple of miles further along though is a planned stop for many Texas 200 participants; Snoopy's seafood restaurant and a nearby marina. Traditionally a good place to take a break, captains and crew can stock up on ice and stuff while enjoying a seafood plate. Some captains have actually taken impromptu showers using Snoopy's outdoor water hose! For some, myself included, it serves as a mid trip pull out point.

The boats ahead must have bypassed Snoopy's for none are moored at the dock. No surprise really since it is early yet. Around 9:40am *Mulsae's* bow bumps the restaurant dock. A single soul greets me and launches into a conversation about the Dovekie. He apparently used to own a couple, plus the Dovekie's bigger sibling, the rare 28' Shearwater. We chat back and forth while I tidy up and secure the boat.

Snoopy's doesn't open until 10:30am so we keep chatting and shortly start helping newly arriving boats moor up at the dock. There are so many so quickly that I cannot remember all of them. Pretty soon I'm directing traffic, tying off dock lines, catching boats without working motors and generally having fun helping out. Snoopy's finally opens and the boating horde descends upon the restaurant. Like the 2014 trip, I get and enjoy a wonderfully delicious three piece fish plate washed down with copious amounts of sweetened tea. Funny enough, my long lost appetite seems to have returned with a vengeance!

At the table next to mine sits Skip J and John W along with spouses Sarah and Susie. A stroke of luck because they offer a ride to Magnolia Beach to pick up my truck! After the meal with Skip and John on the water again, Susie and Sarah and I get on the road. What a great trip in itself. The two wonderful women chat the entire way, all of us laughing and enjoying the ride.

While waiting for the Port Aransas ferry we spy a T200 boat playing water frogger with the ferries. Wow! He is quick to be here already! Must be one of the boats that bypassed the Bird Island camp yesterday. By 2pm we bid each other farewell at JT's One Stop at Magnolia Beach. The ladies are off to try to catch their husbands crossing Redfish

Bay in Port A. Meanwhile, I'm off back to Port A and Snoopy's to pick up *Mulsae*.

After arriving back around 4pm, I notice a familiar sailboat still docked at Snoopy's, which is odd since this late in the day everyone should be well on down the route or even pulling into the night's camp at Quarantine Shore. Finding the captain and crew (father and son?), I find out they suffered a broken forestay not far out in Corpus Christie Bay, did a temporary on the water fix and epically sailed upwind back to Snoopy's. They were waiting for a taxi, so to save them time and money I offer them a ride back to Maggy Beach.

Originally I was going to stay in Port A for the night after loading up *Mulsae*. Yet there was no way I could not help out a fellow T200 captain, especially after receiving a ride earlier from Sarah and Susie! So we got the Dovekie loaded and headed back to Maggy Beach where I dropped the father off at JT's for his vehicle. Given no rooms left in Maggy Beach, I head to the nearby town of Port Lavaca and track down a reasonably priced motel near the beach. After a hearty pizza meal and some reading I crash to sleep in air conditioned comfort that takes some of the sting out of withdrawing early from the Texas 200.

Day 5: "Historically Epic"

Ah, the chance to sleep in late! So nice, air conditioned, er, wait, damn it's cold and the sun peeking in through the curtains brightening the room. Not to mention a bit of hydraulic pressure I'm feeling. Bleah, may as well get up! With the morning "chores" taken care of, I open the door to a brilliantly lit sea-side view that promises the usual Texas heat later on. Given a full day before tomorrow's finale on Maggy Beach, I figure a trip back to Port Aransas is in order, this time to visit a boat far older than I, the *USS Lexington*, a WWII carrier turned museum ship. Over the decades I have been fortunate to tour or visit most of the existing historical US ships across America. From the *USS North Carolina* and *USS Alabama*, to the mighty *USS Missouri* and the *Arizona* Memorial. There are a few to see yet though and this is a golden opportunity to check the *Lex* off the list.

The self guided tour is fantastic with well done displays, historical facts, an incredible media presentation on the Pearl Harbor attack plus rooms dedicated to other WWII ships and the brave men manning them. All throughout I record hours of video documentation for another of the many hobbies I do, Model Warship Combat. Halfway through the tour the

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phone dings a message. Turns out Gordo is inviting me to go out for dinner. Sounds like a plan and something to do tonight! I agree and we set a meet up time later.

Heading back in the late afternoon, I reflect with satisfaction on taking the trip to see the ship. For some reason seeing history at places and objects makes it more real to me. Knowing that I am standing where history took place, seeing things that were seen back then, fills the imagination and makes one wonder what it was like to be there. A great example is the *Arizona* Memorial Park in Hawaii where tables placed about the park point out significant Pearl Harbor attack events.

After reading the history, a person can look up and see where each ship was moored and what direction the torpedo planes swooped in. The historical information and vista makes it easy to visualize the event. I get the same feeling when visiting various old forts and lighthouses such as the Civil War era Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina. Fort Massachusetts on Mississippi's West Ship barrier island is another place on my to do list to visit.

After getting cleaned up at the hotel it's back to Maggy Beach to visit Gordo. He and his wife are staying in a local RV park. Very cool! RVing and taking trips is another thing our family likes to do. We've done epic trips to include California (north for the redwoods, south for Disney), Yellowstone National Park, Lake Tahoe, Vegas, Reno and a few cross US trips in between military assignments. Yeah, it's a slower trip but we see way more than anyone flying thousands of feet above the ground!

We chat for a while and find we have a good bit in common. So much so that we actually don't get to talk about it all before it is time to head out for dinner. Apparently there is a small local marina in nearby Indianola with a reportedly good grill. A short drive later we meet up with a few more T200 participants (sorry, but I forget names).

Even from the parking lot we can hear the dockside music. Inside, the marina store is tiny. They take our order (steak!) at the checkout counter and we head out the back to the dock, to be blasted with a great sounding but VERY LOUD live band. It is so loud that even while shouting it's hard to hear the person next to you! We move to another table at the dock's other end which helps a little, at least we will go deaf slower. The food lives up to the favorable reputation. While loud, the band is pretty good. People fish off the electric lit dock into darkened night time water. The place is literally packed with people. All in all a good time for everyone on a Friday night.

After dropping off Gordo and saying goodnight, I head back to Port Lavaca and the hotel. It was a good day, even if not spent on the water with the Texas 200 sailors still on the trip. We will all meet up tomorrow on Magnolia Beach for the finish and celebratory shrimp boll. Until then, a soft bed, air conditioning, zzzzzzz.



Day 6: "All Good Things"

Checking out of the motel at 9am is refreshing. Not having to worry about being someplace by a certain time makes trip planning incredibly easy, not to mention being able to sleep in a little. Heh. A couple of hours later finds me at Maggy Beach searching for our pavilion. Interestingly we are in the first one instead of the middle one like 2014. Pro, next to the parking lot. Con, gotta walk to the bathrooms. Gordo and a few others are already there greeting everyone.

I wander off to see and video the beach last seen in 2014 when Dad and I finished a day early. The beach is pretty much the same as then. A guy zips around on a PWC (personal watercraft) just off the beach. Families enjoy the water and beach. The sun is bright and day is warm with little wind. Hmm, not a lot of wind at all. What little there is seems to be coming from the north straight into the faces of our sailors. That may make a longer day than usual.

Over the next few hours, reports trickle in from the boats. A handful of boats stopping last night in the ICW to shorten the trip to Magnolia Beach today, perhaps a Saturday Night Special sailing in the darkness watching glowing phosphorescent wake and dodging those little flying fish popping out all around them. Sometime midday sees boats starting to trickle in. Not sailing though. The few with motors put them to good use. Luckily for those without motors, the wind shifts to the normal southern breeze and picks up some, though remains light. As the boats arrive, I attempt to video each landing.

By 4pm, most of the boats have arrived. Matt S gives all a short congratulatory speech and gives thanks for the organizers before turning us loose on the shrimp boll. Mmmm, huge boiled shrimp, potatoes, corn on the cob, all seasoned spicy for an outstandingly delicious meal! With many participants already on the road for home, there is enough for seconds, all washed down with refreshing Shiners beer. Very good! Wanting to get on the road, I bid adieu to all and get on the road by 5pm for the long 13 hour drive home to Mississippi. Unlike past epic trips, this one is smooth with a nighttime stopover for a rest. Midday Sunday finds *Mulsae* and myself safely home.

Final Thoughts

On the Texas 200's final day in 2014, I made a video comment when asked if I would return to sail in the future. My answer then was "Ask me in a month." I needed time to mentally process the adventure before deciding if it was something to be done again. This year, the question's answer is an immediate "Yes!"

Withdrawing early feels like a failure even though there were valid reasons. Although I had prepared for this trip there were gaps and things that could have been done to be more successful, such as sailing the boat before the trip to get used to it, practicing reefing, bringing the paper charts versus accidentally leaving them on the kitchen table and doing a lot more prep work on the boat to make it easier to single hand. Chances are very good *Mulsae* and her captain will be sailing in the 2017 Texas 200, this time far more prepared and ready for a full course adventure! Until then, Fair Winds!

Many years ago, many, many years ago, I paddled the length of Minnesota's Lake Pepin in one day. I discovered Hok-Si-La Park and campground quite by accident. This was my first experience on Lake Pepin. I was approaching Lake City and was getting tired of being beat up by the large waves, so I decided to land on a point of land. It was a lee shore and I got swamped making the landing. I had all my camping gear with me and everything got wet. While I was drying things out I explored my landing spot and found that it was a very nice campground.

A couple of years later some friends and I were talking about having a Messabout and wondering where to hold it. I mentioned the campground that I had found at Lake City Minnesota and I had started something that is still happening now 30 years later. Over the years the event has changed a lot as different people have chosen to run things. Originally it was small sailboats, rowboats and canoes.

It moved upriver for a couple years because one of the group was a resident of Frontenac, Minnesota. He had a friend who offered

The Evolution of a Messabout

A Short History of the Lake Pepin Messabout

By Mississippi Bob

the use of a sandy section of beach large enough for a large group for free. The place even had an unlimited supply of dry driftwood. This piece of land was a short distance upstream from a public landing. It was nearly perfect for the 30 or so boats that showed up.

Moby Nick used to live in a suburb of Minneapolis. I met him at one of these events where he showed up with his Dovekie and a friend from central Wisconsin. They came with a pair of these Phil Bolger/Peter Duff boats. That good deal only lasted two years, then we were no longer welcome because that beach was being developed. We moved back to Hok-Si-La and the event has been

held there ever since. I had been one of the original organizers of the event. At the same time I was very active in the Minnesota Canoe Association. That group picked up the reins and ran the event. Within a couple years it became mostly a kayak event.

Lake Pepin is a great lake to kayak on. The group liked the tent only camping so for a few years it was mostly kayakers that showed up for the event. After a few years the novelty of paddling in big waves in warm water was wearing thin and the turnout began to dwindle. The kayakers went back to Lake Superior.

Then another sailor picked up the ball and ran with it. Bill Paxton, who lives really close to me, was looking for a place to have a messabout and I told him about Hok-Si-La. He was interested and we drove down so he could check the place out. It met his expectations and he became the new leader. The event grew under his leadership and we began getting folks from all over the midwest. For several years under his leadership new activities became a part of the weekend event.

One activity that was popular was the Sunday morning breakfast across the lake in Stockholm, Wisconsin. That became a highlight of the weekend and, on our return to Minnesota across the lake after this breakfast, most folks began to break camp and start for their homes in Illinois or Iowa or wherever. Another thing that Bill started was the Saturday evening potluck dinner. The campground had some picnic shelters, screenhouses with cast iron grills and some indoor tables. They also had electricity. Many folks brought dinners in a crock pots.

This Saturday dinner has become another highlight of the event. Many people show up to socialize at the dinner, including many spouses. Jackie Monies showed up from Oklahoma one year with her late husband. She runs her own messabout there and this was a long haul to Wisconsin for her. She probably wanted to see how we run things up here in the Northland.

My friend Paul Breeding from Colorado has been there a couple times and Doc Regan has been a regular, he is always well received because he brings the beer.

Bill ran the show for several years until he burned out, then a new young family man offered to run things and is now running the show. I have had to limit my time at the event nowadays because of my caregiver's duties, so I show up late morning on Saturday to show off my newest boat. I stay for the dinner and long enough to enjoy some of Regan's beer. This event has evolved over the years and now that it is being run by a young family oriented guy it may change again. I am looking forward to seeing what becomes of my creation.

About Lake Pepin According to Wikipedia

Lake Pepin is a naturally occurring lake, the widest naturally occurring part of the Mississippi River, located approximately 60 miles downstream from St Paul, Minnesota. It is a widening of the river on the border between Minnesota and Wisconsin. The formation of the lake was caused by the backup of water behind the sedimentary deposits of the Chippewa River's delta. It has a surface area of about 40 square miles and an average depth of 21' which makes it the largest lake on the entire Mississippi River.

The wide area of the lake stretches from Bay City, Wisconsin, in the north, down past Pepin, Wisconsin, and Reads Landing, Minnesota, in the south, with Pepin being just upstream from where the Chippewa River enters the Mississippi. The villages of Maiden Rock and Stockholm border on the Wisconsin side, while Frontenac State Park takes up a large part of the Minnesota side. The largest city on the waterfront is Lake City, Minnesota.

The lake was named for Jean Pepin who settled on its shores in the late 1600s after exploring the Great Lakes from Boucherville. Nicolas Perrot erected the first of a number of fur trading posts, Fort Saint Antoine, in 1686. In 1727 René Boucher de La Perrière and Michel Guignas built Fort Beauharnois on the lake. In 1730 it had to be rebuilt on higher ground. Boucher was the military leader and Father Guignas was a missionary to the Sioux.

In 1890 it was the site of one of the worst maritime disasters on the Mississippi, known as the *Sea Wing* Disaster, when the *Sea Wing* ferry capsized in a bad storm, killing 98 people.

In 1922 Lake City native Ralph Samuelson invented the sport of waterskiing on the lake. Ever since that date Lake City has been known as "the birthplace of waterskiing." The city celebrates with a festival called Waterski Days every year on the last weekend in June. The lighthouse at the entrance to the Lake City Marina is the only working lighthouse on the entire Mississippi River.

Lake Pepin is the lake that Laura and her family visit in the "Going to Town" chapter of *Little House in the Big Woods*, the first book in Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House* series. Laura's family and their covered wagon crossed the frozen Lake Pepin in the chapter "Going West," the first chapter of the second book, *Little House on the Prairie*.

As with many other lakes, this lake is also the site of alleged sightings of a monster similar to the one said to live in Loch Ness. But Lake Pepin's natural flora are now threatened by the increased rates of sedimentation from upstream sources, leading the Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance to call the phenomenon a "wet desert." The lake is filling in at a rate of ten times greater than precolonization, due largely to increased runoff from farms along the Minnesota River.



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The Middleton Stream Team

A Non-Profit Organization
Dedicated to Protecting and
Preserving Middleton's
Streams and Wetlands

"The nature of the water, undisturbed by a complete absence of any breeze, had them looking down into the seeming darkness. Sand bars on the bottom 7' down in the channel were visible."

In mid November Stream Teamers and friends took advantage of a warm, windless afternoon. In canoe and four kayaks they paddled down and up river from Mortalo Landing, Maple Street, Middleton.

Fifty years ago Vito Mortalo came to us from Rome, his birthplace. Here he married and raised a family. In the past 15 years he has built the town three fine stone landings on the river at no cost. Farnsworth's Landing, South Main Street, Mortalo Landing off Maple Street and Peabody Street Landing. River access is now easy and safe thanks to Vito. The stonework is beautiful as we might expect from a stone artist who has seen ancient landings along the Tiber. Vito's are no copies, they are his creations that suit their locations. The huge natural stone steps we descended at Mortalo Landing are sources of Stream Team pride.

The November paddlers carried their vessels down the steps and launched them in the calm water. Peter and Bonnie MacPhee paddled from their new house beside the river to join them. The fleet of five turned north and rode the slow current down river toward the sea. The nature of the water, undisturbed by a complete absence of any breeze, had them looking down into the seeming darkness. Sand bars on the bottom 7' down in the channel were visible.

This past August in the same place visibility stopped near the surface. Summer heat, low flow due to the prolonged drought, and dense plant, algae and bacterial growth resulted in a noxious looking soup from a process called eutrophication. Fall temperatures and increased current have the water as clean as the old Closeteer has ever seen it. Bacteria broke the debris down in the process of respiration to colorless, odorless carbon dioxide and water. It happens every year in water bodies.

Ipswich River as a Mirror

Reprinted from *The Water Closet*
Newsletter of the Middleton Stream Team

A foot from the surface curtains of "maidens hair" strands quivered. These sheets of algae reminded the Closeteer of aurora borealis displays. In the low, late afternoon light the glowing green appeared much darker than its summer color. Many mid level patches of long stemmed potamogeton plants were admired, their lance shaped leaves pointing in the direction of flow. The river bottom, most of the year unseen, alternated in dark and light streaks of organic sediment and clean sand very pleasing to the eye. All this light underwater surprised us because of the late afternoon angle of the sun's rays. Our photographer, Judy Schneider, was ecstatic over the reflected lights coming from all directions. It somehow had a calming effect that we all felt. At times, when paddling around a meander directly into the low sun, its reflection off the mirror smooth water blinded us. No problem. On the sinuous Ipswich River paddlers are usually changing course.

En route downriver at a curve below Farnsworth's horse pasture marked by the base of a very large willow that has been dying for the last 20 years, we passed Kings Pool, once a popular swimming hole. Children from the town's center a mile away walked there when free from chores. The paddlers didn't swim. While the air was unseasonably warm, the water at 45°F degrees was not.

Somehow the peaceful water and motionless air much affected the travelers. They, while pointing things out to one another, did so more quietly than usual or remained silent for longer periods.

"Look at the line of turtles on the log at 2 o'clock." Eight were counted, the largest on the high end, the smallest on the low near the water.

"See the abandoned, collapsed beaver lodge." A dozen of these are along the river's banks in Middleton in the eight miles between North Reading and Topsfield.

"Wow! Look at the store of food, all those freshly cut branches floating near that lodge. The beavers will soon anchor them to the bottom for winter use."

"Look right, see the muskrat lodge." A week before two of the paddlers had counted a half dozen upriver from Farnsworth Landing off Route 114.

"I think it is a flicker," someone said on spotting a swooping bird going from beaver drowned snag to snag. Several other woodpeckers were seen taking advantage of the buggy corpses.

"Look up ahead at the large bird crossing. I think it is an osprey." Most agreed, it's black upper parts and white underneath contrasted nicely in the light coming at that point from behind us.

"Look left at the winter berries." The bush's leaves were gone, its many bright red berries presented quite a sight. Beneath the real bush from the water came a perfect virtual image. Someone asked photographer Judy how she will tell up from down in the photos she was taking.

And so the quiet late afternoon went as we paddled down river to a large beaver dam we could easily have shot safely over. We didn't because of anticipated trouble in coming back. After resting near the soothing sound of water falling over the dam the fleet turned south and retraced its route, the slight opposing current no obstacle.

We again passed what was Coco Crisp's mansion when he played centerfield for the Red Sox. His house was one of the first built under the Rivers Protection Act. It is further from the river than it otherwise might be. Several other large houses affected by the 200' "riverfront" buffer were seen. Since the law was promulgated in 1996, foliage in the warmer months keeps most new buildings out of sight from the river.



Not all the deciduous leaves had fallen. Many of the oaks on the highlands along both banks were still putting on quite a show of browns, handsomely glowing in the waning light. The floors of all the forests are now in their fall glory. This year's bumper crop of acorns is mixed in the purple, scarlet and brown carpets of leaves. The white pines now with less gaudy competition will provide deep blue green color all winter.

The fleet entered a valley flanked by highlands of pines and oaks on its way upriver after passing Mortalo Landing and under the deteriorating Maple Street (Route 62) bridge. This fine stretch of river, where Indians going east and west are said to have forded, has a wide flood plain of reed canary grass with a sprinkling of wild rice along the edges of the

channel. Gray patches of climbing hemp weed cover the grass and button bushes.

A decade ago purple loosestrife filled the valley's floodplain with color each summer. Loosestrife decreased and reed canary grass took over. This past summer some loosestrife came back. All the low floodplain plants' leaves and stems are now shades of brown. The tall handsome rice stems still show some green. Above the floodplain to the east a long high hill with mature oaks and pines stood between us and the fields of the long gone Danvers State Hospital for the Insane.

The old Closeteer imagined supervised groups of patients on walks along the river on the then open pasture with a few shade trees. They'd have looked down on folks passing in canoes. Maybe they, too, had therapeutic pad-

dles now and then. Just before the hill off Perkins Road there was a canoe rental business early last century. An outing on the river would have certainly been much more effective than the ice bath treatments of Victorian times.

After swinging east around the south slope of the hill the group reached its destination, another beaver dam across the river at the foot of Richardson Farm's cornfield off Gregory Street. It was again time to turn. Had we been on flood waters as in 2006 and 2001 we could have returned to the east of the hill on water that then passed 2' over Perkins Road. At flood times the hill is an island.

On a westerly course into the setting sun the paddlers, 40s to mid 80s, silently thanked Mother Nature for allowing them to share in another of her river's many moods.

B&B Day

By Bob McAuley

No, we didn't polish off a bottle of whiskey but we did haul our wooden Take-A-Part kayaks down to the local Des Plaines River. The put-in is located near the Brookfield Zoo just west of Chicago in McCormack Forest Preserve. The November morning started out sunny with a 57° forecast.

My son and I hadn't paddled together for over a month due to me being in sick bay. Today we planned to paddle upstream and check out our "glory hole." It's the home of at least one hungry Northern Pike that usually attacks our lures with vigor! In addition, we also planned to paddle that extra half mile and enter the golf course which is split down the center by our river. There we scoop up stray balls that went swimming and catalogue them for future sale.

Global warming may have given us another warm week but with a threat of showers in late morning. We were finally on the water at 10am with nasty cold front clouds floating toward us from the north. Unfortunately, when we put in the current was faster than normal and the level a foot and a half high from last week's rain up north. Paddling was hard as Mike led the way.

The fall foliage was a treat to look at and leaves were dropping all over, doing their partial fall migration floating southward past our struggling kayakers. The oaks, hickories and walnuts were in their autumn reds, oranges, violets and yellows. What a treat to the eye it was.

I was out of shape and called for a rest after finding a comfortable eddy against the river bank. Our sole bird representative was a lonely Great Blue Heron that went winging ahead of us when we got too close. After resting, we shoved off again and 500 strokes later we arrived at the fishing hole. The "hole" is a man made bypass junction consisting of three underground square roofed tunnels funneling Salt Creek water into the Des Plaines River. It was built years ago to limit the annual flooding around the zoo. The original natural junction is two miles further down river. Stocked fish lay in wait for bait to float out of those tunnels and into the daylight. We lay in wait for those fish!

Last year we both caught a pike or two but it's catch and release. Mike paddled just above stream of the tunnels and I found a snug spot next to the bank on the lower



"Fish on!"

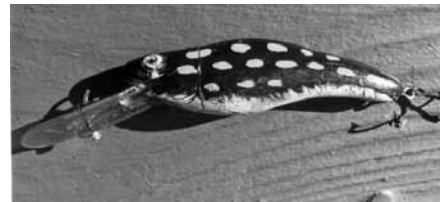


Mike with "big Billy Bass," note the bypass tunnels in background where we took shelter from the downpour.

edge. I stuck my bow into the muddy bank to anchor me. No sooner did we start casting when it began to rain. We quickly pulled our ponchos over our legs and kept fishing. Seconds later I got a big hit as some fish nailed my lure but I lost it when I tried to reel it in.

Then it began raining buckets and we quickly discovered our lightweight waterproof fishing jackets weren't waterproof! Mike called for Plan B, paddle into the tunnels, which we did. Our kayaks fit just swell inside those handy tunnels with 6" of head clearance. Five minutes later the rain let up. We exited and resumed fishing when it resumed lightly raining until I called for a retreat back to the van and McDonalds. Mike said to give it ten more minutes and I agreed.

Seconds later Mike hollers "Fish on" and surprises us both with dragging in a dandy 3lb bass. It's the first bass I've seen caught in that river ever. Thanks to the EPA, that river now runs clear and supports game fish. That lure that fooled that bass was an old beat up one that I repainted for the trip and it worked.



The damaged bass lure that did the deed.

We were now out over an hour in our cramped kayakers, wet and tired of fighting that river current just to stay on the fishing hole. The thought of battling that current another half mile to snag some golf balls was not appealing. We agreed to try again when the current was slower. We sat back and just steered our way downstream, this time riding with the current. Mike landed first and then held my kayak while I hopped out on that rain soaked slippery muddy bank. Wearing knee boots is a must at that take-out spot.

I awarded Mike the title of "Bass Master of Cook County" for catching our only bass. Oh, and I did snag one Dunlap golf ball off the bank near the fishing hole. So a B&B Day it was! (Bass & Ball) Hope to do it again before the snow sets in.

More Mosquitoes

Here I sit across from Rattlesnake Island on the other side of the Intracoastal Waterway anchored in the mouth of a bayou, swatting mosquitoes and wishing I had a fishing pole aboard. The fish are feeding all around me, some sea gulls about, not many though. Earlier I saw a wild pig cruising the shore. Had I a shotgun with slugs I may have taken a shot. I think I need better planning. The centennial candle don't seem to be doing its job this evening, another task will be netting to keep the bugs on the proper side.

The Bushnell tell me there are a few snow geese out across the way. Doesn't surprise me being anchored off the Bird Preserve. Their honking gave them away. The fish are taunting me as well as the mosquitoes, I could, but would not, bring my Linda out here without 100% preparation being made and foolproof, otherwise, I certainly would be the fool.

Tonight will be fully clothed with a head net on. Not as bad as it seems this time of year, nigh on Christmas with Thanksgiving just over. I've had to sleep the same twice before, maybe more, in the middle of summer on coastal Texas. We call this fun.

Reminds me of a time the brothers, cousins and a few friends climbed Mt Whitney. Not I, they did. I met them at the trailhead after the hike and shuttled them back to camp. They were much appreciative. Sitting round the fire that night a question was asked, "How long will it be before we call this fun?" Same idea.

Sun is now down and time to start dinner. A little latter I'll be doing a few boat chores in addition to cleaning up. Tomorrow, or later tonight actually, a norther is supposed to come in. Which, if so, the plan is to ride it back to Rockport. Looking forward to it.

Well, it's 0300. The norther came in before I went to sleep. With it the temperature dropped and all the mosquitoes left also. Went home to their warm little cuddy holes I guess, because the moment the temperature goes back up they're johnny on the spot.

The tugs and barges have been few and far between, another thing sitting here in the mouth of this bayou with an anchor light aglow, they aren't shining their spotlights on me as when in times past I anchored just out of the channel.

At my age I've learned I'll never have it all together. If I ever think I'm even getting closer, there's the proof in itself that self-deception has set in. The more I learn the more I learn I really don't know much at all.



At the moment as I write this let me describe my cocoon. The top hatch is drawn back and in place. The aft window is not in place, removed because the tiller extension pokes through and in turn allows free entry of air movement, which tonight is refreshing. The seat is tilted back as I'm sitting on the floor, I've a 4" cushion for the backrest

Meanderings Along the Texas Coast

By Michael Beebe

and another under me. If I wanted I could add another under me with two smaller ones on either side creating living room sofa type comfort here in a bayou. Snuggled up, warm, dry and comfortable. What's not to like?

Much better than at the beginning of the evening. The bad really makes the good good. The ride home was lumpy, bumpy, roly and gusty. Sitting there on the dock waiting for Linda to come with the car and trailer, leaning back against a pile in the warm sun, I about fell asleep, later that evening I was out at 6pm. Slept all night.



The Paradox

The Paradox is a sailboat, all of 13'10" or so in case you didn't know. A stout little thing, stiff, forgiving, it's a thin water wonder. I painted it a few months back. Hadn't used it until yesterday and today. It's been on the market, been for sale but no longer.

I'd made a concession with the owner, all along you thought it was me, no, I'm just the caretaker/benefactor. The owner said something has gotta go. Actually I dipped into the rainy day fund and it was time to reinflate. So the wife was right, something indeed has to go.

I've had a good summer as far as selling boats go, several have left the fleet. I'm whittling down some, trying to get the backyard down to three. The newest has to go, that would be the Hurlly Silhouette, cute little thing, hell for stout, built to ole Lloyd's of London specs. It's a nice sailer and it'll belong to someone else in due time.

Here on this coast of Texas I've found I have to admit a thin water boat is a must have for me. With the high winds and small craft warning alerts being issued they have me making plans with the Paradox, not the Silhouette. Therein lies the reason for the keeping and the selling.

These last two days out on the Paradox has got me thinking again about some things I had wanted to try on it but they were pushed aside pursuing a runaway mind. Whoa, Nellie! Throw out the anchor. I'm glad the owner put her foot down, something has gotta go, it'll be the Silhouette. The eyes are rolling, I can hear them rolling, no imagination, or is it envy? Ha! Doesn't matter anyhow, no how.

Winter is coming and the directional changes of wind as well. I missed the first

change, this next change comes this Tuesday with a good 15mph with gusts to 23mph or so. Small Craft Warnings will be displayed. That's out of the SSW. Overnight the wind to clock around to the north, which means a sleigh ride north come Tuesday, spend the night at anchor and ride the norther back down into town. That's the plan anyway.

I've learned as far as plans go it's always best to say, "I can't tell you where I'm going, but I can tell you where I've been." I'll let you know.

Boat Pox

We are all familiar with the dreaded boat pox, the blistering below the water line ugly, bumper of repairs. There's another boat pox that goes round called the affliction, some get it bad.

There's a fellow I have early morning coffee with at the office who talks a lot about people being on some sort of bell curve. I don't understand it myself. I can relate when it's said of some sailor he's afflicted, real bad. I know just what it means. This isn't just the two-foot-i-tis where you just gotta have a bigger sailboat, no, this affliction stuff runs deep, they're all fair game. Dinghies, day sailers, small cabin sailboats, even deep water boats all fit the bill.

Drag 'em home. You know you got it bad when they line your driveway, in the mountains, hundreds of miles from the coast and, to top it off, your place is used as a landmark when others give directions. I don't make this stuff up, I know of whom I write, no names though.

My precious Linda has been getting her fill and then some. Deals are starting to be made where before it was free range, I guess the honeymoon just may be ending. So far the deals made have been easy enough hoops to get through, but they're getting a bit harder.

Then there are the new builds I'd like to get after. This isn't something new, not by a long shot, nor is this incessant tinkering I do with another's design. My first build was a Glen L el Gato 12' plywood catamaran. I remember thinking way back then at the early age of 18 or 19 about using foam to build the hulls and then glassing them. I never got around to trying it but the roots of these thoughts go way back.

The other night I was talking with my brother about this very thing, of the next sailboat. What he said had me about ROTFL, that's rolling on the floor laughing. He said if I planned it right I'd bring it in after dark and just park it out back. Sneak it in like someone dropped it off during the night. By this time he was ROTF, leave a note in the cockpit, he said, with a card or something. "Take good care of her, please." Afflicted? May be just a little, I can hear that bell curve clanging!

Poly Sails

I'm at the end of making a sail for the *Summer Breeze* three sheet sailing skiff. Was supposed to be two but, hey, things go that way at times. This sail will be my last poly sail and I believe it's number five, maybe six. No more. The first one I did for a Trailer Sailor 16, sloop to junk, using blue tarp. I proceeded as directed using double sided tape. I didn't like it. Went to hand sewing. One of the sails, or the second one made for the TS16, was a grey tarp. A bit heavier than the lightweight blue thing. Though it was pretty with the setting sun behind it.



While building a house for my wife and I, living on site in an old fifth wheel, I put up a commercial grade white tarp ordered on line over the fifth wheel for shade. I was very surprised at how well it held up in the high desert sun, high winds and cold snow of winter. I thought I had found the solution. I ordered tarps by the box. When I finished my first Paradox, I had tarps, but no money for a custom made sail. Until I was able to save the money and send for one from Duckworks, the poly did fine.

But before the Paradox poly sail I had made a smaller one for a 12' Lehman cat rig conversion to balanced lug. The sewing thread on hand was a roll of dry line used in form setting left over from the build of the house. It was a fluorescent orange that soon turns pink in the sun. My daughter visiting with her future husband made sure to point out the truth of my having used that type and color of thread. I guess there was some disbelief on his part. We got along fine.

Well, when I finally got the sail from Duckworks for the Paradox, the old sail went to the O'Day Javelin, which I had also converted from sloop to balanced lug. When I put the new sail on the Paradox the difference was very telling. My sailmaking ability leaves much to be desired. Now on its fourth season, that was last year, the sunlight sparkling through the sail told me it didn't have much life left in it. I did keep it covered, mostly at first with bed sheets from the local thrift store. Better, I thought, than nothing, not by much though.

About this same time the poly sail started getting dandruff big time. I even carried it on a day sail so as to rinse it off it the water. No go. So this sail for *Summer Breeze* will be the last poly sail.

The next sail, by the way, to be completed after SB's will be a junk rig for the Lightning conversion. It will be of canvas. Even that material will be upgraded on the next go round. The current material for the Lightning's sail being made is low grade painters' drop cloth. Kind of stretchy so I've tried to tighten it up by coating it with boiled linseed oil cut 50/50 with mineral spirits. The spirits helps with the drying of the linseed oil. It adds water proofing as well as weight.

This being a junk rig fully battened it should work OK. Never for a sloop, by me anyway. When I move up to more sailmaking a tighter weave will be used on upcoming sails, they will still be limited to junks, lugs or maybe even a gaff. I've got some ideas rolling around in my head trying to get out. So for me, no more poly, this will be my last one.

A Best Kept Secret

The other evening I had to take a drive over to the local HEB grocer in preparation for an upcoming overnighter in the Paradox.

My plan was to ride the south wind north and with a norther due late in the day, the norther also brings cooler temperatures along with its very own north wind, and the following morning I'd ride the north wind back.

That little tidbit is not the best kept secret. The sailing on this Texas coast is the best kept secret. To any sailor plying these waters I'm sure to get a big huh?. No, the secret is the sailing of the coast is kept from so many, so many who don't have a clue yet it's right out their back door.

There's movements about to expose the masses to small craft sailing. I don't agree. Selfish? Yes, to be sure. I've seen what too many surfers can do to a wave. I've seen what too many fishermen have done to fishing, hunters to game, boaters to secluded little coves now overrun with jet skis and loud music into the night.

No, I don't share the enthusiasm of generating more of the same. We have small sailboats in which one can gunk hole, as it's called. Gunk holing is getting into the small out of the way places where the big boys can't go. Well, if this open recruitment keeps up, gunk holing may very well be another thing of the past. Those hidey holes will be shared with the very crowds we were trying to get away from. Doesn't make sense to me. It's like putting our favorite fishing hole in the local newspaper, truth be known. You know I'm right, admit it. Politically correct? No, but correct. Where did the buffalo go?

That said, it applies to the trade I was in as well. When the good time roll carpenters are a dime a dozen, when bad times fall the wages drop to a nickel and the wannabes are gone off to other work never to return, leaving the nickels. Over the years they recognize one another. I've worked with these fly by nighters. A particular one expressed to me his desire to learn, so I took him under my wing. Didn't work, it wasn't being a carpenter which was the heart's desire, it was the wage. He moved on.

Why fill the secluded places with every Tom, Dick and Harry with ghetto blasters? Now, in self defense, I'm all for sharing information and encouragement to up and coming newbies. I'll go out of my way to help fellow sailors and those just beginning, I hope you get my drift.

Do you want to go small boat sailing and take the nephew, niece or neighbor's boy? Let's go! You say you want to set up a booth at the local fair, spreading small boat fever? I'm going sailing.

Where...

Where were you? You should have been here yesterday. I took the Paradox out. Winds were nigh non existent. Two tugs, each on the end of a barge, were moving about the harbour. The first pulled away from the bulkhead and was just sitting across the water a bit. The second one still at the bulkhead was revving his engines and throwing a huge backwash towards the launching ramp. I was already in the water and decided to leave. It'd be easy keeping an eye on those big boys.

I left the dock with the sail still furled under power, my own. Figured if I kept to the left side and skirted the slipped boats I'd be all right. The noise started which told me to get back against the opposite side. I had wandered to center harbor while raising the mainsail. With just breaths of wind and now with two tugs and barges along with the other

buildings dotting the shore the puffs of wind were even flukier. Depending upon where I was in relation to the tugs, I wasn't going anywhere fast.

Finally the bigger of the two got turned around and began to head out of the harbor while the smaller one went back to the seawall. It may sound dicey, and I suppose it could get so in a hurry, but they know me and as I sail out of there quite often, we're used to one another.

Once in my 12, the same kind of activity was going on with one tug jockeying three barges in order to get the correct one to leave with. I left them behind and scooted out that day and cut across the flats. Normally I can't do that because the water is too thin, that day an east wind pushed in some water and gave me just what I needed to go that way.

Well, it was to be a short sail and about a good quarter mile from the harbor mouth where I could see the tug *Bill* still at its dock. Standing as I was while sailing, I'd bend over from time to time to check traffic by looking under the sail. One look and I'm looking at the barge not 30' off my port bow. The barge has a fellow on its bow talking with the tug captain with a hand held radio. The tug had been put into reverse, my fault. I told the bowman to give my sincere apologies to Captain Bill. As I sailed by the tug I took off my hat and hung my head. Bill waved with a smile.

Today was not like that. The bigger tug and barge left the harbor and were out into the bay before I cleared the harbor mouth. With such light winds it was slow going. Off the port side were about six spoonbill rosettes, pretty pink birds. Off to starboard were two more. I didn't want to spook the six as I figured there were being watched by the patrons of the nearby restaurant. The other two I glided up to within 50' and bottomed out. They didn't fly so I decided to enjoy the view and have my lunch. Earlier I had pulled back my canvas top which, by the way, is working just fine. I'm onto something. A simple ragtop similar to an old VW's sunroof. Only took me a year and a half. My hurry up days are over.

Getting off that intentional grounding was easy, the next one would require wet feet. While taking care of business it seems I wasn't. Hard aground. This is why for me the sliding hatch on the Paradox is not my cup of tea. It would just get in my way. Getting out onto the deck, back and forth, pushing with the 5' paddle, I'm stuck good. But still I don't want to get wet.

Up ahead I see a powerboat coming, maybe I can use its wake. Nope, no go. Man that water's cold. Now my water shoes I keep aboard will need drying. Small price for no step on de oyster with bare feet.

At the dock was a lone fisherman cleaning his catch. As I glide my boat on to its trailer he walks by saying, "You sure make that look easy!" He was driving away and didn't see my boat get hung up on one fender. Took three dunkings and still I had to get back aboard for a line to yank that transom around. That was a first, always something it seems. Where were you anyway? I thought you wanted to go?



25 Years Ago
in **MAIB**



Boomerangs, Leaky Tikis & Old Flat-Bottomed Skiffs

Rags Ragsdale

I could stop building boats, fishing and camping in boats, and loving boats, anytime I want to. In fact, I have stopped several times, not only to prove I could, but to recoup my finances.

I've never seen a boat that didn't make me stop and take a second look and judge its merits for a second or two. How would it be to go camping or fishing in this one or that one? Is it big enough? NEVER! Is it too expensive? ALWAYS!

What is it that keeps me interested? Well, part of it is the characters who you meet associated with boats. Like the guy in the Chinese sampan that was 150 years old, not the guy, the sampan. He couldn't get it to stay afloat so he cruised it on dry land. He kept it in a boatyard and would come and climb aboard and sit at the tiller or go below and sleep, or cook a gourmet meal for himself. He finally sold the old sampan and nearly had to go into therapy because he missed those cruises so much. I envy him sometimes.

I myself am not a boating character anymore. I am now normal, probably. Most of the time anyway. Now Milton was another story. He was a character and still would be, but he passed away several years ago, which ended his career as a character. Milton was always ready to try a new adventure and kept his camping gear ready to leave at a moment's notice. He was not the most coordinated guy, but he certainly was strong and especially enthusiastic.

Milt and I decided that a trip of exploration in the great Sacramento delta for three or four days would be new and different and forthwith began piling camping gear inside the fronts of our garages until the piles got so high that we had to either go camping or have garage sales.

The Sacramento delta is the gathering together of two of the west's largest rivers, the Sacramento and the San Joaquin. They both drain the Sacramento valley and the total length of the mighty Sierra Nevada range. All this water

meets in the western/central part of the valley and spreads over several hundred square miles of the valley, and has created a great area of islands and channels which are not only shipping waters but also farming and cruising areas which are endlessly fascinating.

After winding all over the place, these two rivers get serious and join into one great river that flows through the Carquinez Straits, San Pablo Bay, touches Angel Island and Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay before escaping boisterously out through the mighty Golden Gate. The whole place is nothing if not beautiful and fascinating. Movies have been filmed there and John Wayne starred in one of them, "Blood Alley".

I have over the years camped and cruised nearly every foot of the delta and become so familiar with it that my charts are usually buried in my gear someplace unless I got into some channel that I couldn't remember. For this trip I proposed that we start at a place named "Frank's Tract", a place on the western edge of a large body of water that had once been a farming tract but had become flooded during a period of high water back in the "early days". Levees still break and farms still get flooded, and some of them are never reclaimed.

This delta was all deep water before the settlers and miners came, but hydraulic mining washed cubic miles of soil out of the Sierras and filled the channels so that levees had to be built to accommodate the navigation of steam and sail traffic that supplied the farms and mines. Soon the shores of "Frank's Tract" became dotted with boat liveries and marinas where fishermen could rent flat-bottomed skiffs to aid them in catching black bass, sturgeon, salmon and the ubiquitous catfish. To rent a skiff was very economical and you added \$5 if you wanted one with an outboard motor.

I owned an old 12hp that ran as good as a motor can run and we took along three 5 gallon cans of extra fuel, figuring that at slow cruise we could go for three days.

The old skiff we rented was equipped with a cuddy cabin that covered only a fraction of its 16 feet, and would hold out the wind, but rain would have its way if it came. We would sleep shoreside anyway, so...

Our planned route was roughly circular and would take us 20-30 miles into the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers and the interconnecting sloughs, and then into a small stretch of the Mokelumne River (pronounced Mo-kol-a-mee), then back into the eastern side of "Frank's Tract", and across this big lake-like body of water to our harbor.

Several days before we were to leave, Milton asked me quite out of nowhere, "What do you know about boomerangs?"

"Strange you should ask," I answered, "I used to carve them for a local hobby shop. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, I've always wondered how they fly and return the way they do," he replied. So I began a short course on the construction and use of the boomerang. When we finally shoved off, Milton had in his gear sandpaper, a rasp, and a couple of blank boomerangs. "I can be working on these as we cruise," he explained. That's just what he did too. He sat in the front of the cuddy rasping and sanding while I handled the tiller and enjoyed the wonderful delta scenery and its bird population. Ducks, geese and every shore bird known to man seem to call the delta home. Milton soon had a perfect flying boomerang that returned every time he threw it.

We stopped at the old delta town of Locke, a community of mostly Chinese who are descendants of the early Chinese workers who were imported as cheap labor by the railroads and are the real reason that the rails got across the Sierra Nevada to link the east with the west. They became farmers and are highly respected as citizens of the delta. They still speak Chinese as their first language and they form the second largest Chinese community in California. Milton and

I threw boomerangs for a couple of hours in the park at Locke, and Milton's always came back at his feet. It was really a perfect boomerang. I wished mine would do as well.

As we started on down the river, Milton began working on his boomerang again. "Milt, you're messing with a perfect boomerang, you'll ruin it," I told him. He seemed to be almost obsessed with the rasping and sanding. Somehow the working and the sanding dust and the concentration seemed to relax his mind. Before our cruise was ended, Milton dropped a tiny piece of odd-shaped wood overboard with a puzzled look. "I can't understand what happened," he said, and never, ever mentioned boomerangs again as long as I remember.

Do you remember the halcyon days of the '50's and '60's? The back yard bar-be-ques, the mosquitoes, the dark evenings when you ate the crisply incinerated whatever? How about the tiki torches? Remember them? Kerosene smoke wafting with sweet aroma across the yard to bring exotic smells to your romantic meal? These torches didn't even make good lights. We thought they'd perhaps be more like campfire light on our cruise, so we included two of these torches in our supplies. We did not bring the poles to hold them as Milton had an old blue granite one-gallon coffee pot that he said would just hold the tiki torch and would keep the flame nearer to the ground.

The tiki leaked kerosene. It was a slow leak, a drip now and then, but a leak. So we included a quart of kerosene as fuel, and didn't add fuel until we were ready to light it. We only used one of them as it seemed to provide enough light, with the moon being the primary source anyway. Milt was right, the tiki just fit the old coffee pot. In fact, it was almost an exact fit, a fit that turned into a convulsion!

The breeze kept the mosquitoes roosting all night the first night so we never used the torch. But on the last night it was balmy and clear and the mosquitoes donned their napkins as soon as the sun went down. We soon had the tiki's smoke augmenting the smudge of our campfire. The meal resembled two windmills in a hurricane as we fought off the swamp pirates. We soon hurried into our sleeping bags to escape their ravenous little "soda straws". Mercifully, a breeze came up around 9 and the horde retired to the tree where they could have something to hang onto.

Milton and I always brought a bottle of wine to have with our last camp meal of a trip and we finished off the wine and then lounged in our sleeping bags across the campfire from one another in the tiki's

smoky glow. We had set the torch in its coffee pot stand just beside the fire and as the conversation waned we grew drowsy.

"FFFWWOOOM!!!!. A white fireball flashed between our faces. An explosive concussion caused my ears to ring and I heard my voice, "What the hell???" Across the glowing coals of the campfire, Milton's face gleamed a ghostly white and his eyes were bulged and staring. Fear and puzzlement and a wide open mouth, a grimace. I knew I must have looked much the same. It had suddenly become much darker. What had caused that? Where did that tiki go? It was gone. GONE! The kerosene vapors must have reached the flash point. The top of the coffee pot was quietly smoking and the trail of smoky vapor was mute evidence of the direction the tiki had taken.

Oh Boy! What goes up must come down. Remember the old movie sounds of falling bombs? Well, I can tell you that the sound of a falling tiki is almost exactly the same. Like a bomb, it was impossible to tell where it would land. I threw my arms over my head and buried my face in the peat dust of the small island on which we were camped.

CRUMP! The tiki hit hard not far from the old coffee pot launch pad. It had gone up several hundred feet, possibly 300 feet, be-

cause of the long interval that had taken place before we even realized what had happened. The tiki had performed a miracle by falling straight back down its upward flight path. Not one hair was touched on either of us and no damage of any kind could be found in our camp.

Grabbing a sock I heaved the hot tiki far out into the river. Its mate followed it the next morning. We decided then that the lighting system for any future camps would be of a more conventional nature, like roman candles or dynamite, something with a little more modern touch, maybe. Roughing it had its limits, we learned.

When we returned the old skiff to the livery we kiddingly mentioned that they should paint the name, "Leaky Tiki" on it. The man says, "Why, that boat don't leak." We told him our story, but he looked at us as if to remember to not be so careless as to rent to us again. I think he saw us as perhaps escapees from the palace for peculiars.

Milton said as we drove away from the livery, "When are we gonna do this again?"

"I dunno," I answered, "why?"

"Well, I never know what's gonna happen on these outings and I don't want to miss anything."

"Before long, Milt, before long." I was kinda curious too.

Wooden Canoe Heritage Association



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Dorothy Lee, a 1934 Hoopers Island dovetail built by famed Dorchester County boat builder Bronza Parks.



Dorothy Lee and *Martha*, two 1934 Hoopers Island dovetails, cruise behind 1955 skipjack *Rosie Parks* in the Miles River.

The 1934 Hoopers Island dovetail *Dorothy Lee* has recently been added to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's floating fleet, generously donated by Susan Friedel of Trappe, Maryland, in honor of her late husband Jerry Friedel.

Dovetails, also called draketails, are named for their distinctive round sterns that rake or slope forward from the waterline to the deck, the stern tapers down to the water. *Dorothy Lee* was built during a time when dovetails were used along the Chesapeake Bay for oyster tonging and trotlining for crabs.

Lovingly restored by Jerry Friedel, *Dorothy Lee* was originally built by famed boat builder Bronza Parks at Bishops Head in Maryland's Dorchester County. The boat was built for Theodore Woodland, also of Dorchester County, and joins the ranks of other Bronza Parks' boats in CBMM's collection, including the recently restored 1955 skipjack *Rosie Parks* and *Martha*, another 1934 dovetail.

"Jerry would've just been so thrilled. This was always his wish," Susan Friedel said. "CBMM is such a wonderful place, the boat restoration work, the shipwright apprentice program, it's all so nice. And it's great to have the three Bronza Parks boats back together."

Dorothy Lee measures 41.2' long and 8.2' in breadth and was originally equipped with a 35hp marine gasoline engine which was larger than typical for this type of boat. "*Dorothy Lee's* long, narrow, light displacement hull would have made her a particularly fast workboat," said CBMM Chief Curator Pete Leshner. "Speed was the allure for watermen who bought Hoopers Island dovetails, with their distinctive racy round sterns that imitated racing motorboats and the Navy's torpedo boats from the turn of the century."

CBMM plans to use *Dorothy Lee* for outreach and travel, enabling the museum to have a presence in locations beyond St



Dovetail *Dorothy Lee* Donated to CBMM

Michaels. "This donation is quite remarkable and we're delighted to add her to our floating fleet," said CBMM President Kristen Greenaway. "She is equipped with a modern diesel and has a hard canopy, making her a great candidate in helping to expand our on the water educational programs, private rentals and other uses."



Family members of the late Jerry Friedel, who restored *Dorothy Lee*, are pictured on board the 1934 dovetail while docked at Easton Point Marina. – Photo Credit Jessica Klotz

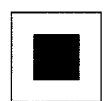


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About CBMM

Established in 1965, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum is a world class maritime museum dedicated to preserving and exploring the history, environment and people of the entire Chesapeake Bay with the values of relevancy, authenticity and stewardship guiding its mission. Serving more than 70,000 guests each year, the museum's campus includes a floating fleet of historic boats and 12 exhibition buildings, situated in a park-like waterfront setting along the Miles River and St Michaels harbor.

Back in '95, while I was away at Bible School, my Dad bought a cabin in York, Maine, just off of Long Sands Beach. The beach is rather flat and provides excellent surf in most conditions. All year long there are diehard surfers out on the water. In the winter they will climb over the snow banks to get to the surf and all summer long they are up at the crack of dawn to get some good waves before the surf Nazis (lifeguards) show up and restrict where, when and how far out they can go. Every year we looked forward to the beach, and as each child came along they learned to look forward to the biggest sandbox a kid could imagine.

While my wife has always enjoyed boogie boarding since I showed her how, my kids didn't like getting dunked by a wave or even getting their faces wet in the tub. My wife decided they needed to learn to swim and enrolled them in home schoolers' swim lessons. After a couple years of swim lessons, my oldest can swim like a fish and is nearly as fast as I am. Then her group started diving from the edge of the pool and I realized that while I taught myself how to swim, I had never learned to dive into deep water. If she was comfortable diving, I had better know how also in case I had to get her out.

I never learned how to swim as a kid. The few times I had the opportunity I didn't trust the water enough and panicked. In all my years of boating I wore a life jacket or was in a boat that it was nearly impossible to fall out of (dory). However, I still couldn't swim. Then the airline I was working for at the time sent me to Bangor, Maine, for a month, in November. It was cold, the days were short and by the time I got off work it was dark, windy and cold. Did I mention it was cold?

After I saw Stephen King's house, both blocks of downtown Bangor and the big mall, I'd seen everything there was to see. Going down to the hotel poolroom to use the hot tub, I decided it was a great time to learn to swim. By the end of the month I could not only swim all the way around the pool non-stop but could also swim corner to corner underwater. Of course, if I had failed to grab the edge while learning, the cleaning crew would have found the body at closing time. Learning to swim alone isn't recommended.

Since parents were allowed to swim with the kids before and after lesson time, I finally got my nerve up and jumped into the pool. By the next session we had a collection of dive rings and torpedoes to retrieve to help both of us learn to do longer dives.

Normally a yak board is an excellent beach toy. In small to medium surf almost anybody can catch a wave. They aren't as popular as a water toy though. Because it's a sit on top kayak made for surfing, the seat is low for stability, ensuring the paddler's seat is always flooded. In warm water this isn't a big deal, but in the Gulf of Maine with perfectly refreshing water straight from the North Pole (40°F up to a rare mid 60°F), I almost always needed to wear a wetsuit and paddle on hot days.

The big advantage of a surf kayak is that even in small surf, I can catch waves the surfers can't. I just start to paddle in quickly ahead of the wave, and it will scoop me up. In a moment the water starts to fountain up through the scuppers and then the hull begins to thrum as the wave accelerates me. Slight leaning will keep the kayak straight and a good paddle brace will allow me to go any-

The Rowerwet Chronicles...

The Day I Almost Drowned

By Josh With



where I want to go. When the water gets shallow I brace hard until broadside to the wave, lean into the wave and bob over it while spinning back toward the break. On the way out a quick front to back wave of my body will bounce the bow over most of a wave. Hard paddling will allow me to catch three waves to a surfer's one.

The other advantage of the kayak is that when the surf is flat, I can go exploring along the rocky cliffs after launching from the beach. My favorite trip being out around Nubble Light (the most photographed place in Maine, just look at all the pictures of it on Google Earth) as well as almost all the way down to the York harbor entrance. While the kayaks are perfect for the ocean, they are fairly rare and attract plenty of attention, especially when being paddled well offshore. The yak, being buoyant as a cork and rather wide and flat, I've never felt unsafe, especially when compared to the horde of SUP paddlers from the surf shop who continually fall off or have to paddle kneeling in any kind of swell.

The summer after learning to dive (we do swim lessons each spring) we went to the cabin, as always, and found out we had perfect timing. A hurricane had just passed by offshore and, while the day before we got there was scorching hot, the surf was so high the surf Nazis made everyone move off the beach and swelter on the sidewalk most of the day. Some people on a cliff were swept away by a huge wave in downeast Maine that day. Today the surf was still up and when I got the chance I took the surf kayak out and headed for the break (where the waves first break, I get the best rides from the extra energy there).

While I have boogie boarded in hurricane force waves before (AWESOME!!!) I'd never seen waves like this before. Getting dashed in the face by an incoming wave is part of getting the good waves. I shake it off and keep going. However, these waves were faster and steeper than I had ever paddled on before. About halfway out I realized I wasn't making much headway as the waves were more than the kayak was made for. I made it up over the next wave but then the kayak sank into the wave, which freaked me out a little bit. The surf was so foamed up the kayak sank into the top of the wave until I was the only thing sticking out. I tried to make it over the next wave but it grabbed the kayak and flipped it bow over stern

Normally getting dumped into the surf at York Beach means I stand up. A few times I've gone under, hit bottom and launched back up to the top. This time I sank quite a way down, blinded by foam, before I realized I wasn't going to hit bottom. I fought panic and struggled to the surface, cleared the foam from my mouth and eyes. The kayak was about 4' away and a wave was raging toward me. I missed the side of the kayak by about 6" and then I went back under again. Over and over again I had to force myself to be calm, fight up to the surface, get in a breath or two and get smashed back under by another wave.

After five or six waves I realized I might not make it back to the beach, my lungs hurt and I could feel myself getting tired. The waves were still smashing me down and, even when I was under, I couldn't feel the bottom. I was really praying hard now and wondered if the lifeguard way up on the back of the bathhouse could see me. Just before the next wave crashed down I saw the heads of a group of swimmers. This would be the very daring or stupidest who go out where they can barely touch bottom and then try to jump each wave.

While they weren't any help to me, they let me know I had almost made it back to the area where I could touch bottom. While I was under the wave this time, I hit the bottom and jumped to shoot me up to the surface. Once the wave cleared I was able to start walking between waves. A little farther and I was able to keep my head above the waves. I was so tired, my arms hurt and my legs were shaking. A boy brought my paddle over and a guy asked me if that was my kayak far off to my right. I was so tired I didn't care if I ever saw it again. I thanked the guy who brought it over to me and was just able to drag the kayak back to our picnic awning where my wife and kids were waiting.

My wife couldn't believe I was back already, while it seemed like I had been fighting to breathe for half an hour, I had been gone just a few minutes. As I sat there I realized the decision to not go back and get the life jacket I forgot at the cabin almost cost me my life. The only reason I probably did make it was the flotation provided by my wetsuit (one doesn't go swimming in the gulf of Maine without one except for the Canadians and my daughter learning how to dive). Otherwise I wouldn't have been able to keep my head after being smashed under by a wave.

I did go back into the surf after I got something to eat, spent some time thanking God and enjoyed watching the kids play in the sand. This time I had a life jacket on and only went about halfway out to the break, did a quick 180° and rode the fastest waves ever. I wasn't the only one to have an exciting day, one surfer came in with a bloody nose, she must have hit her surfboard, and another came in with his board broken in half.



Maritime News

Finland's Kone Cranes landed a pair of Virginia contracts worth over \$200 million. Norfolk International Terminal purchased 60 automated staking cranes while Virginia International Gateway ordered 26 of the behemoths, all of which will be delivered by 2020. Kone is taking the place of Nokia as Finland's primary economic export king.

Kone Crane is the world's leading 9001 ISO heavy duty lifting equipment company with five service and parts offices in the US. The company also provides maintenance and inspection services, mining and nuclear power plant equipment, power plants hoists, paper and pulp gear, steel gantries and, of course, shipbuilding cranes. Add in parts, repair services and upgrades and you get one whale of a Big Business.

Maritime shipping is experiencing what AP Moller-Maersk calls the "Perfect Storm." Hanjin, the Korean giant, went bankrupt and three of the Japanese largest shipping companies have announced a merger. Technology has aided in efficiency and scale but it cannot increase business. Unfortunately, disruptive events such as these send shock waves throughout economies of various nations. Companies are not standalones but rather conjunctions of many strands of an economy. Hanjin itself is a main financial entity of Korean wealth and business but it has tentacles that reach all of Asia and North America.

Daewoo Shipping, another Korean giant and its second largest shipper, needed a \$2.5 billion loan to avoid closure. Two state run banks provided the capital in no small part by simply burning up \$60 million worth of stock shares and then injecting \$1.5 billion in a debt for equity swap. The Korean Export-Import Bank purchased approximately \$1 billion of company bonds. The company exaggerated profits since 2014 and a government audit found a \$1.3 billion "hole."

New megaships that are substantially greener than their older sisters have made the latter more expensive to operate. Further, companies have been goaded into scrapping these ships before their prime in order to build newer and better ships. Scrapping ships in midlife messes up depreciation, credit and cash flow, causing a seismic wave of instability and supply chain operations. The business model, developed in 1997 in a book, *Maritime Economics*, has collapsed and a system-wide change is in the offing. Exactly how the shipping industry emerges is anyone's guess.

A Nobel Corporation rig named the *Nobel Lloyd Nobel* sustained significant damage when a crane collapsed injuring several workers at the Sembcorp Marine Jurong Shipyard in Singapore. The Ministry of Manpower is making a thorough investigation while the Nobel Company is making a more thorough examination of the rig that is supposed to be in place and operating at the beginning of 2017. The rig is supposed to be drilling for oil at 32,000' through 492' of North Sea. Technically the rig is a GustoMSC CJ70-X150-ST CAT-J Marine rig. Remember this, it's on the test.

Past columns have focused on whale hunting, the Sea Shepherd quests and the world vs Japan and Norway. Whales, like the buffalo of the plains, offer much to society. Inuit and other native cultures look to the beasts as a primary source of food while sushi fans like its beefy taste. Blubber, cooked down to oil, is the big ticket item for the industry. Whale oil is used in making the



Over the Horizon

By Stephen D.
(Doc) Regan

sheen in cosmetics, an ingredient in high end perfumes and is an element of exotic machine lubrications. Skin is used in the manufacturing of special glues while the leftover bones are ground up for fertilizers. Ambergris, a digestive tract product, is purged into the sea and worth its weight in gold. Perfumers use it for a fixative and all sorts of industries use it as a product that eliminates evaporation. Sperm whale oil is still used by watchmakers. A single blue whale can proffer 120 barrels of oil. Whale hunting will continue as long as the general public demands whale parts.

News on the ferry front is not good. Estonian ferry company AS Tallink Grupp suffered a 5.3% loss in the third quarter of 2016, down about \$10 million from 2015. Citing higher operation costs, fewer charters and increased marketing expenses, the company noted the loss in spite of an increasing number of passengers. AS Tallink ferries run from Stockholm to Helsinki to Tallin, Estonia. They also transport goods and vehicles to Latvia. A high speed (32 knots) ferry makes the trip from Center City Helsinki to Center City Tallin in about two hours. The Finns love the lower prices in Estonia while the Estonians, still slowly emerging from Communist economies, love the Nordic Euros. Note to travelers, if you want to see "Old Europe" you will love Estonia before it becomes clogged with McDonalds and enormous shopping malls.

The European Investment Bank and Societe Generale Bank, meeting in Marrakesh, signed a \$163 million agreement to support the declining shipping industry in Europe. This influx of money is intended to make possible the EU's Juncker Plan for a greener industry. This is the first time the EU guarantee was used for the Maritime trade.

White Fleet

Richard Branson, the bazillionaire, hates the word "cruises" so his Virgin Cruise Lines is now called Virgin Voyages. The announcement came complete with wild celebration featuring Branson playing a cabana boy surrounded by bikini clad beauties. Branson also noted that the company contracted with Fincantieri for three new 110,000-ton ships with capacities for 2,700. The first will sail out of Miami but there is no word regarding the other two.

A monstrous Wyland rendition of a humpback whale and her calf decorates the hull of *Norwegian Bliss*, a Norwegian Cruise Line vessel, thanks to one of the world's largest decals. Wyland, a noted marine life artist, thought it was appropriate since the ship cruises the Alaskan waters on whale watch tours. The company previously commissioned Peter Max of New York, Guy Harvey of Miami and Tan Ping of China for hull art of *Norwegian Breakaway*, *Norwegian Escape* and *Norwegian Joy*.

Carnival Liberty suffered technical problems reducing speed forcing the company to cancel a port visit at Progresso but kept

the planned stop at Cozumel. The company stated that the operating systems were being addressed as the ship continued normally. The cruise made its arrival at Galveston as planned and provided \$25 for onboard credit and a 25% reduction on a future cruise. Since the turnaround time was delayed, those booking on the next cruise may receive a full refund.

Viking Freya, one of the Viking River Cruise boats, hammered into a low railroad bridge on the Danube near Erlangen, Germany. The entire wheelhouse was torn off the ship immediately killing the man at the wheel and a sailor near him. The boat was heading down the Danube toward Budapest Hungary.

The P & O Cruise Lines *Azura* stopped for a bus tour of Dominica but the tour turned tragic when the bus was in a head on collision. One British passenger was killed and 12 others were injured. The injured were all treated and eventually released.

In the realm of Captain Obvious, a study of 30 persons who died going overboard on cruise ships indicated that most were in their early 20s but one was 15 and another was 30. In virtually all the cases alcohol was involved. Duh.

American Cruise Ferries' *Caribbean Fantasy* caught fire in the turbine department but quickly spread to other compartments as the ship approached San Juan, Puerto Rico. 485 passengers and 26 crewmembers were evacuated via slides. 105 were taken to local hospitals suffering from smoke inhalation, hypertension, dehydration and other problems. Most of the people on board were school aged athletes going to San Juan for an athletic competition. The US Coast Guard assisted in the rescue. A field hospital was set up on the cruise pier for triage.

Gray Fleet

The *USS Montgomery* (LCS-8) suffered damage while transiting the Panama Canal. This poor ship also lost a second engine and bent the drive shaft trying to return to the US. To add insult to injury, it collided with a tug. The LCS fleet is the unluckiest batch of ships ever. A multitude of these Landing Craft Ships that can do a plethora of different tasks have not shown to be up to snuff in engine works. The concept behind the LCS types is that they can do the job of a destroyer, a mine-layer, a supply ship, a troop transport, even a heliport and emergency hospital. The Surface Warfare branch of the US Navy has pushed hard to obtain these ships, especially in the face of the Air branch and the Submarine branch that believe they alone are the saviors of the civilized world. The Cyber community and the Unmanned group have always played second fiddle but are now making big, big headlines. And you think political infighting is only between the GOP and Democrats.

The *USS Illinois* (SSN-786), a Virginia class nuclear sub, was commissioned on October 30, 2016, and joins the ranks of anti ship, cruise missile and Special Forces delivery subs. At 7,800 tons, the 377' long, 34' beam single shaft submarine can do 25 knots underwater (that's the "official" information), the *Illinois* has four torpedo tubes and (in the vernacular of naval technical jargon) a whole bunch of Tomahawk missiles.

DARPA, a governmental research entity, tested a Towed Airborne Lift Naval Systems (TALON) off the coast of California. In the world of high tech weapons and military systems, this particular item is using a 14th century concept of the children's kite.

The kite module holds antisubmarine detection equipment and is simply towed high above a ship covering more area than the ship itself. Next thing you know, the Navy will be dropping hand grenades from biplanes. Didn't the Army use hot air balloons for observation posts during the Civil War? Gee, some engineering PhD thought this one up and the DOD spent millions making it. And, of course, the Admiral in Command of the Bureau of Naval Acronyms (BANANA) came up with the name.

A US Navy diver was working on a sunken barge near a pier at the Norfolk Navy Yard when the barge shifted, pinning his air hose shut. Fortunately another diver rescued him before rescue teams could arrive on scene. He required no medical assistance. But one could bet he peed his wetsuit.

Inland Waterways

No less than the US Navy voiced concerns over the continuing lack of commitment to our rivers. An article in the *US Naval Institute's Proceedings* fired a withering onslaught at the neglect of our internal shipping resource. Trucks carry 66% of the freight within the US thanks to the Eisenhower Interstate Highway Program that started in 1956 and ran for 35 years building multilane roads for ease of traffic, trucked goods and general public works.

The issue is that only 3% of our nation's commerce travels by water despite it being the least expensive transport per ton and the greenest vis-a-vis carbon emissions, fuel consumption and use of petrochemicals from paving to tires. 12% of our bridges over the major rivers are only marginally safe. The Marine Highway Map includes both coasts and the Gulf of Mexico, the Great Lakes, and the major rivers (Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee and, to a lesser extent, the Arkansas and Columbia).

The locks and dams of the Marine Highway are in dire need of replacement and modernization to cope with increased traffic, ports along the rivers need to be built and connected to the Interstate Highway system, appropriate dredging is necessary and an entire national marketing campaign is essential. One example may be the former Ford truck plant in St Paul, Minnesota, where all Ford trucks were built (white in color) and then transported by rail to other factories around the country for finishing and sending to dealers. An entire trainload of trucks could have just as easily been sent to St Louis via the Mississippi for less money and a greener environment.

Onalaska, Wisconsin, sits in the swampy backwater region near La Crosse, Wisconsin, and is home to large number of eagles that enjoy the spring thaw that allows dead fish that died during the winter to surface. One DNR person counted 50 eagles sitting in trees on a small island, 25 more on wild celery mats and over 200 in a cluster of trees on shore near Pool 7. The eagles are now feasting on dead coots, ducks and other birds. Over 60,000 waterfowl have died eating faucet snails that have trematodes, a fatal parasite. Pool 7 is the worst area on the Upper Mississippi but the parasite has been found from Pool 4 to Pool 13 (Alma, Wisconsin, to Clinton, Iowa).

Louisiana officials, international shipping companies and federal experts are discussing the continuing loss of coastal land and the impact of sea level rise near New

Orleans. The mouth of the Mississippi will see the world's largest increase of sea level over the next 50 years according to the data over the last decades. Lake Pontchartrain is expected to rise 1'-3' feet and Lake Charles is expected to rise 2' over the next half century. Experts are proffering a \$100 billion plan to counter this environmental problem.

Maritime History

During the Second World War Japan started with 11 aircraft carriers, *Akagi, Chitose, Hiryu, Hosho, Juno, Kaga, Ryujo, Shokaku, Soryu, Zuiko, Zuikaku*. One was sunk and two were heavily damaged at Coral Sea (May 1942), four were sunk at Midway (June 1942), one was heavily damaged at the Battle of the Eastern Solomons (August 1942), one was so heavily damaged after Midway that it became a training ship, one was later used as a decoy at Leyte Gulf. No Japanese aircraft carrier was built during the war.

The United States started the war with only a handful of carriers but the Navy built 110 carriers during the war. As Admiral Yamamoto said, "We awakened a sleeping giant."

During the Washington Naval Conference of 1922 three treaties were signed, the Four Power Act, the Five Power Act and the Nine Power Act. The first of these was a reaction to the post World War I impact on a naval arms race. Great Britain, France, the US and Japan decided to stop building capital ships (battleships and battle cruisers) and reduce tonnage to a 5-5-3 ratio. In other words, for every five tons of ship built by England, the US could build five tons and Japan could build three tons. Japan wanted a 10-10-7 ratio but lost out in the end.

The rationale for the 5-5-3 ratios was that naval strategists believed they could win a naval war if their navy had 70% of the size of the opposition. At 60% they could not win. Obviously, the Western Powers feared a war with Japan and did not want them to be up to strength for a victory. The Japanese only agreed to this because the other side agreed to a status quo regarding Japan's Mandate Islands and Japan's intentions to occupy some of China (specifically Manchuria).

Etiquette in the Navy has been prescribed for centuries. One must not wear a cap in the Wardroom or the offender must buy a round of drinks (actually covers aren't supposed to be worn inside unless for specific reasons). Talking shop during meals is unacceptable. Captains dined alone so the Executive Officer was the "host" of the wardroom. Food is passed clockwise. Since officers must come and go as duty requires, dinner is considered an ongoing event, therefore, one need not stand when a senior officer enters. Dress is to be smart, the uniform of the day is acceptable. In olden days junior officers were not to speak with senior officers unless asked questions.

Nautical Linguistics

Jib of Jibs: A sixth jib placed outside of the flying jib to be used in the lightest of airs. Evidently it was used on larger vessels than a Potter 15.

Limmer: A rogue or scoundrel, a strumpet or a hussy.

Swab: A Dutch term from the word "swabbe" meaning mop. William Shakespeare used the term in the doggerel:

"The master, the swab, the boatswain, and I,
The gunner and his mate,
Loved Mall, Meg, Marian, and Margery,
But none of us cared for Kate."

Lobscouse: Salted meat stew with vegetables and hard biscuit.

Slubberdegullion: A worthless, slovenly person, a term not used by Boot Camp Company Commanders who found much more colorful terms to describe their men.

Articles of War: 36 General Orders instituted in 1652 by the British and read every Sunday to the entire crew by the ship's captain. These mandates covered everything from gambling to desertion. Article 36 allowed that any action that was considered wrong by the Captain was indeed wrong and the penalty was at the discretion of the Skipper, similar to the definition of "sin" as perceived by nuns.

Small Boat News

Six illegal immigrants attempted to enter England via an inflatable boat but were apprehended by the Maritime and Coast Guard Agency (MCA) cutter *HMS Valiant*. Eighteen Albanians were smuggled into the country earlier this year by four British men who were charging over \$100,000 per journey. They will spend the next four years eating off England's government. The short distance between France and Dover allows undocumented people easy access to the British Isles, however, local fishermen have kept a close eye for unusual activity and have been the primary eyes and ears for the MCA.

Pond-Tini is a small, 6'10" pontoon boat designed strictly for ponds. Powered by a mighty Minn-Kota 55lb thrust electric motor, this little nugget seats three. The various editions of this boat range from \$3,600 to \$4,600 depending on whether they have a live well, four seats, a bimini, navigation lights and full railing. In the Midwest where many farms have small ponds to control run-off and provide some home fishing, these are just the right size. While they are interesting, they are certainly not usable on a river or a larger lake. On the other hand, the concept of a cooler full of beer, a bamboo pole, a bobber and a rusty hook sounds like a perfect afternoon.

A British Columbia ferry caught a near incident on camera as a 21' motorboat with two passengers cut immediately in front of the ship barely missing the speeding vessel. The amazing footage clearly shows the small craft attempting to jet across the path of a large ship that was moving pretty fast itself. A potential Darwin Award recipient, the person manning the wheel of the pleasure craft certainly needs to be flushed from the gene pool. The ferryboat captain blew the whistle several times to no avail. The small boat missed being crushed by about 10'.





Selections from the *Mainsheet*, Newsletter of the Delaware River Chapter TSCA

Melonseed Building Project

2011 -2015
By Don Kerr

From January 2011 to March of 2014 I wrote several articles for the *Mainsheet* describing the building process of a 16' Barto designed Melonseed sailboat, but then I got busy with work related projects and didn't finish the series. Then on October 1, 2016, at the annual Mid Atlantic Small Craft Festival in St Michaels, I entered my melonseed, *Keltic Ayres*, in the judging competition and won 1st Place in the Traditional Design/Contemporary Build category for the Melonseed Class. On my receiving this award, my good friend (and *Mainsheet* Editor) Frank Stauss reminded me that I needed to complete my series of articles for my melonseed sailboat.



Keltic Ayres

At the beginning of April 2014 I started the process of cutting the hole for the centerboard trunk, building the centerboard and its trunk and trunk logs. By far the most challenging part of the process was determining the amount of lead to install in the centerboard so that the board would submerge when it was dropped for sailing. To solve this issue, I constructed a temporary chamber to hold the centerboard. I then filled the chamber with water, submerged the centerboard into the water and measured/weighted the amount of water that was displaced. I believe I added about 15lbs of lead to the centerboard. The centerboard trunk was installed without any problems and the corresponding logs were epoxied to both the sides of the trunk and to the hull of the boat.



As I was working on the mast, a friend of mine was dismantling an old sailboat and wanted to know if I would like to use the old mast for my sailboat. What a deal, I now had a vintage Douglas fir mast that needed to be sanded, smoothed and painted for the melonseed.

Throughout the summer I started to install the floor joists and deck beams for the boat. Each of the deck beams was laminated to meet the boat plan's specifications. As I installed each deck beam I also installed solid wood at the various points that would need additional support for the hardware that would need to be installed once the final decking was applied.

Installing the king plank, fore and aft, all decks and the floorboards consumed the remainder of the fall and then it was time to apply the first coat of primer to all interior surfaces. After numerous hours of sanding and filling in various crevices that seemed to appear, it was time for the second coat of interior primer and then the first coat of Interlux Brightside paint. Before I knew it September had come and gone and I knew I wouldn't be able to continue work on the boat until the following spring.

On March 8, 2015, I went back to work completing all the sanding, priming and top coating the mast, boom and gaff boom. Now it was time to install the inner coaming, so I built a form to bend the $\frac{5}{16}$ "x3" cherry that would make the coaming. This was a relatively easy task with two of my trusty boat buddies assisting with the steamer and then the bending jig. As I recall all was going well and then it decided to rain but we kept adding clamps and the steamed cherry went right around the form, maybe the rain assisted in the bending process.

June and July were fast approaching when I realized that the annual MASCF was only two and a half months away and I wanted to launch the boat at the festival. So I started installing the decking and then applying two coats of epoxy to the deck followed by several coats of Non-Skid off white deck paint. Now it was time to have several of my experienced sailing buddies come over and show me where to install the blocks for the mast, boom, and halyards, topping lift, traveler and various cleats. The boat was finished on August 14.

After purchasing a Honda 2.3hp air cooled outboard and receiving the necessary DNR licensing requirements I was ready for the first shakedown cruise which was held on September 8, 2015. September 8 was a glorious day, bright blue sky, about a 5mph wind with low humidity so I loaded up the boat and my wife Babs and we went to the closest boat ramp which is on the Bush River to meet friends Bud and Ben. After some anxious moments we had the sails installed, all the rigging attached to its proper places and the boat floating in the water. Ben and I hopped into the boat, up went the sail and we pushed off and away the boat sailed. As my wife Babs said, "it flies like a leaf on a pond."



After several "shake down cruises" I loaded up the boat and made plans to attend the MASCF in St Michaels and then word came that the festival was to be cancelled due to a huge storm that came up the Chesapeake Bay. As it turned out, it was a huge storm and the CBMM's grounds were completely flooded and all the piers were underwater. With all of this happening I took all the gear off the melonseed and buttoned up the boat for the winter.

When spring of 2016 arrived I started the sailing season in April with a four day trip to Janes Island in Crisfield, Maryland, followed by sailing adventures on the Elk, Sasfras, Bush, North East and Chester Rivers during the months leading up to the annual MASCF on October 1.

Building *Keltic Ayres* has been one of my best life experiences full of “what ifs,” “how will this work,” “there are no notes in the plans” and “I’ll have to ask Mike” questions and ideas. Now all I have to do is wait for Ole Man Winter to fly away and I’ll be off sailing in 2017. Even though the total project took 655 hours, they were all worthwhile as I look forward to gliding through the water with the sails high in the wind.

Visiting the Roanoke Maritime Museum

By Carol Jones

Bill and I visited this museum on the Outer Banks three years ago and again this past fall. It’s small but filled with local boat building history and has several local types on display. The pictures include a Swiftsure yawl boat, *Hard Roller* one man racing boat, North Carolina shad boat and an Amesbury skiff. There’s also a display of old outboard motors including a Scott-Atwater. There’s usually a project boat under construction, too. Manteo is a nice town for walking in and the waterfront on the protected harbor is pretty. There are probably nice restaurants there, too. A short drive away is Wanchese, home of several production boat facilities that manufacture various recreational fishing boats. Walking around these boatyards is really neat.



Roanoke Maritime Museum in Manteo, North Carolina.

The Swiftsure yawlboat.



The Boat Floats Again

By Bob McAuley

It’s been 40 years since I built our first plywood, stick and fabric kayak for the kids. It consists of a 1/4” plywood hull with plywood bulkheads supporting several stringers running bow to stern. The skin was muslin cotton stretched tight with aircraft dope. The dope waterproofed it. When finished, I called upon my number two son Dan to test it on the local Du Page River. I shot movies of him paddling it downstream. All the kids tried it on other outings. We even brought it up to Fox Lake and they shot the waves made by speedboats as they waves crashed on shore. It was unbreakable and almost unsinkable.

Years later, when my kids grew up and married, I donated it to the grandkids who used it on their local ponds. Finally the cotton got rotten and it began to leak. So we took it back home for reskinning. Mike and I skinned it, this time with aircraft Dacron secured with Gorilla Glue. We tightened the fabric with a household iron and primed and painted it blue again with Rustoleum paint. Mike tested it in our local pond and it’s watertight. My other daughter has four kids and it’s headed for her home. It’s lightweight and easy to paddle. I think it’s good for 40 more years. Am I?

Spring of ’81 or ’82, 40-year-old kayak at left.



Wylie Coyote inspecting the new Dacron fabric covering.



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Mike testing our handiwork, no leaks!



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My return to this chronicle marks a full five weeks since I voluntarily committed myself to the guy with the bone saw and chisels and grinders. I'm thinking there was a chain saw in there someplace, too. It's been a hard fought month and a quarter trying to get the leg with the new knee to operate "like normal" and I'm not really supposed to be doing shop stuff yet. But a committed Type A with a strong tendency toward ADHD can sit in a recliner with his leg wrapped in compression hose and toes pointed towards the moons of Jupiter only so long. I'll bet you know somebody like that, now don't you?

Fortunately the Christmas elves have done a splendid job of completing a number of the holiday projects on my list. That saved me the ire of my physical therapist. She's been insisting that 15 minutes on my feet out in the shop should be followed by the balance of each hour back ensconced in that damn chair. And apparently some of the guys from the night shift have been making reasonable progress on *Mobius*, the bunkhouse barge abuilding out in the Frankenwerke. I really appreciate the help. I have this hair-ball idea that I'm gonna be able to launch and sea trial in January. It's right now the week before Christmas so things could start getting pretty tense around the water cooler over in the Scheduling Department wing.

I haven't completely retreated to my sickbed, waxy stare on the ceiling. I do get out to the shop pretty regularly just to look around and most days there's something new. At least the crew has been good enough to keep chippin' away while I'm stuck here with an ice bag and a still swollen starboard pin. In fact, one of the whizbangs over in the Wunderwhat Section came up with this objet d'arte. He claims it's just what I need to hang on *Miss Kathleen's* fanny to improve steering.



A Modest Proposal

Part 15

Back in the Saddle Sorta

By Dan Rogers



He figures that, paired with the robust anti torque steering gear that came out of *Mobius'* hull, this outboard rudder setup will finally balance *Miss K's* somewhat unpredictable steering ability. It'll take some rather invasive surgery (amputation of the current rudder at the 1" bronze rod serving as a rudder stock, for starters.) At least I now know what happened to a large chunk of the Duck'pox and glass order that the Pony Express rider brought all the way from the Texas Hill Country hideout of legendary El Weber. But that is just sort of a diversion.

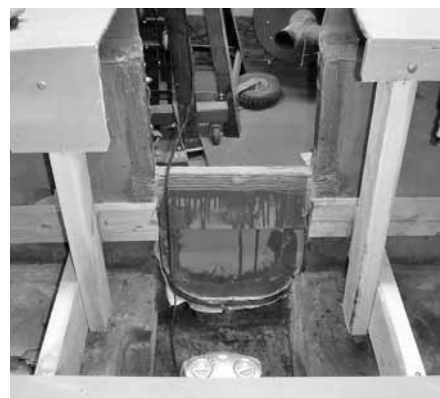
As I was saying, it's the week before Christmas and we who denizen around the 49th parallel this time of year often get to do the Currier & Ives reenactments. In fact, The Boss and I were just out on Alice the tractor. Neither one of us can sing, but if we could I think the appropriate a capella version would be a full throated rendition of

"Dulcinea." At least to my view, nothing resembles "The Man from LaMancha," i.e., jousting at windmills more than pushing snow around. We have the temerity to shove the white stuff from where God saw fit to put it to where we think it might be more convenient to store it and, as soon as we get it all pushed and shoved into some other place, well, it just melts or snows some more. Either way, a windmill joust for sure. Anyhow.



We came in kinda cold and sorta wet. When we are in that sort of situation the better part of valor is to go change clothes in the shop. And lo and behold, the furnace was running huckity buck and it was a balmy 70° in there. A harbinger of Duck 'poxification for sure.

The Boss decided to sign off on the work from a distance but I just had to know how this went down. Seems the day crew has gotten a bit antsy about our planned January launch over the endless weeks of my medical incarceration. Nobody seemed to be making any progress on the aft cockpit, especially the motor well. So finally, yesterday some nimrod just grabbed the sawzall and started hacking away. In order to allow for all the interferences to stop colliding, he just chopped a great big swath out of the boat's hindquarters.



As I came to understand, this long shaft motor is gonna have to do its teeter totter act through this transom and aft deck.

So, after deciding the guzzintas for calculating all the potential movements of an out-board were too many for finger counting, he just cut the whole thing out of the way. Simple for sure. Elegant, maybe not so much.



And then, to keep the ocean out, a chunk of $\frac{3}{4}$ " MDO and some bi-ax cloth brought things into an approximation of what I had sort of backed away from.



There's a modicum of carpenter work still to undo and redo. Unfortunately, I can either lay all the way down, a'la Cleopatra and a bunch of grapes or I can stand flat footed and stoop. Kneeling isn't on the list of approved activities yet. And speaking of approved activities, it seems there were more things to discuss that have been going on while I'm supposed to "ice and elevate."

More about that in a bit.

Part 16

But Wait, There's More

Considering that I've been laid up for over five weeks, those Christmas elves have really taken up the slack.



About the time I had to go on the disabled list, things were pretty much 3-D. That was with about three man weeks total into this job. Tantalizingly close and, speaking of close, that coach roof is only about 14" from the shop ceiling. I've been wondering how it was going to get sealed up. Glass would be pretty expensive and probably heavy. Paint on stressed plywood almost always ends up checking. It was a problem.

So I got to ruminating on different things that I've never tried. At some point in the cobwebby past I had a relationship with some canvas on cedar Oldtown canoes. It wasn't such a stretch to leap to doing a 10'x6' coach roof. As long as the elves were game for it anyway.



After just a minimum of semi controlled experiments we were off to the races. Just plain ol' plain 'ol cotton duck for less than six bucks a yard at the local Ben Franklin fabric department, set in a liberal coating of Titebond II, squeegeed and tortured into as smooth a surface as possible.

One night when the elves had already headed for home, daughter Logan and her boyfriend Derrick came by at an opportune moment.



Not even good working conditions for the elves. But since I wasn't supposed to go within a dozen miles of a ladder, I jumped at the chance to get this important job underway. And their work is looking real good. In fact, I was so impressed with the work on the lid that I started covering the entire exterior and cutting short the R&D phase almost completely. At least I THINK it'll stay stuck on.



Er, the elves took it on for me and they were having such great luck with the outside surfaces that they started covering the inside surfaces, too. First came the facing berth/couches up forward.



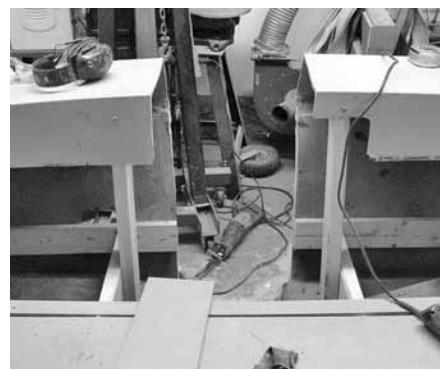
And that went so well my next target is going to be interior partitions. Maybe even the overhead. This stuff goes on in minutes and takes paint well. If only I could kneel. That's the big deal breaker. Some of these spots are kind of hard to reach and the elves' contract is up in a couple days. Guess we'll be seeing whatever happens.

I'll let you know what I hear.

Part 17

Today is Christmas Day 2016. A most vexing year is just about to hit the "exeunt stage left" moment. Probably just as well. To add a bit of personal confusion, that makes tomorrow the beginning of my rookie season as a septuagenarian. At odd moments all day, I've sort of wandered out to the shop to "check on things." It's a holiday. No day crew, no night crew. The Boss even took the day off. Just me and a little shanty boat that has her initial cruise scheduled for just shy of 90 days hence.

So sometime between when the turkey went into the oven and when I got the "are you sitting down to dinner in that...?" look, a more robust cockpit sole sort of happened.



The beginnings of an engine slop well and surround sort of appeared from the plywood cut bin.



Then, between whenever I wandered out to deliver an overflowing kitchen trash can's contents to the bigger repositories in the garage, Duck'pox and glass tape started appearing all around said cockpit.



Not all that really great shakes for progress until I come to remember that this new bionic knee doesn't allow for kneeling or much standing either. That sort of ends up with a lot of standing on my head and bending double to spread this goo around. Anyhow, sometime after dessert and coffee and before midnight, all the potential leaks and miscellaneous seams have been goo'd. I'll probably cover it with that still experimental canvas and glue and paint over the cockpit surfaces with non skid painted into one of the latter coats.

Anyhow, the jobs yet to do are diminishing. I'm just hoping that the old guy I'm supposed to become tomorrow morning won't be too overwhelmed.

Here's a little story about my own boat aspirations. From 2005-2009 I was the Trail Director at the Maine Island Trail Institute and I spent a lot of time in their aluminum 18' Lund skiffs. They are durable and seaworthy and a fun way to travel along the coast.

This past September my neighbor Brian and I were having dinner and I mentioned that I was looking for a used Lund "or maybe a Grand Laker," a wooden boat I have admired but never experienced. A few weeks later Brian said he had a suggestion. How would I feel about building a Grand Laker with him, using his tools and his boat building skills in his heated shop a few houses away from my

My Grand Laker Project

By David Mention

house? Brian had built a beautiful Rangeley Guideboat some nine years back and was interested in repeating the experience. If left to my own devices I can take the most careful set of plans and create a pile of wood scraps, so this was a tremendous offer.

We are following plans from Gil Gilpatrick's book *Building a Strip Canoe*. Being as how it's not made in the traditional manner and it's not made in Grand Lake Stream, Maine, it is not, properly speaking, a Grand Laker, but merely a "square stern canoe". Whatever. I'm pretty excited..

(In the meantime, as I was browsing *Uncle Henry's*, I found a Lund SSV18 with a 35hp Honda at a fair price. So I think I'm set for both inland lakes and coastal waters. For the time being.)



Brian after the outside layer of glass has been applied (and before it has been cleaned up)!



Brian with the laminated Ash stem he added.



Early in the process. The plans were from Gil Gilpatrick.



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Lawton's Old Town Project

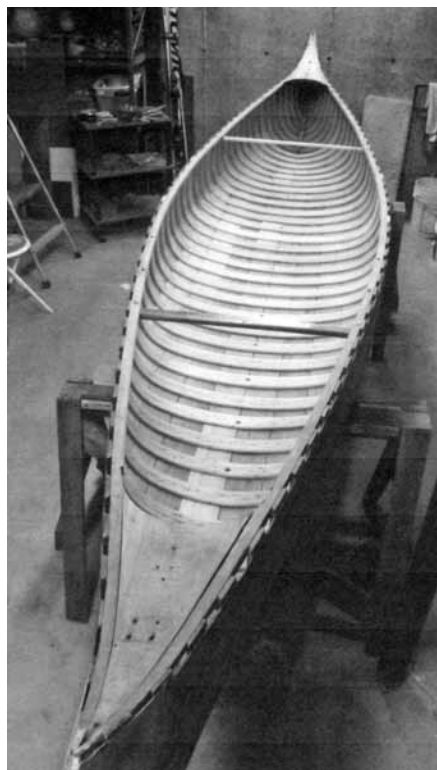
Lawton Gaines has been busy in his basement workshop working on the 1916 OTCA that we featured in the Summer Newsletter and he has furnished us with an update:

"My project has been going slowly but steadily. I've made plenty of mistakes that took some time to fully correct but as of October 1 the last full size plank went on, thanks to clinching help from my wife, and you can't see any of the mistakes I made. Chris has been a big help with this project.

I do need to replace some very narrow strips of planking that run along the rails that the outwales fit over but that will be easy. All of the old planks that surround the new ones needed the edges feathered down so they were an even match and that involved pulling the tacks along the edges and retacking after sanding. The canoe may have been originally built as a heavy duty canoe, the canvas I took off was a #8.

I still need to reclinch many of the old tacks in other parts of the canoe before final sanding. The interior is fully sanded with #80 grit so after reclinching I'll sand it down with #100 grit and then #150 grit and it will be ready for varnish. My cellar will hold the heat for a while (I can't heat it) and the humidity is dropping with the cooler temperature so the conditions for varnishing should be good. I hope to have three coats of varnish on it by November and then it should be ready for canvassing.

I'll have to wait until spring before I can put the canvas filler on though since it has to dry for many weeks and the cellar will be getting too cold by then, but that's OK. I have plenty of work remaining with repairs to the outside wooden stems, outwales, decks and stuff like that which will keep me busy."



The Old Town is now ready for its final sanding prior to varnishing.

Norumbega Chapter WCHA News

Reported by Steve Lapey

Canoe News from Roger Andrews

Roger Andrews is busy with two restorations in his shop. Recently we reported on his Old Town project, an HW from 1914. Since last spring he has made some progress and he shares his news here:

"To date the Old Town has 15 new ribs, the starboard inwale and the decks steam bent and installed. The replacement bow and stern stem "splices" have been made and await installation as does the port inwale and the two outer gunnels.

The Old Town now has been set aside while I complete the courting canoe trim out. The installation of the king planks, gunnels and stem bands remain.



The Kingsbury courting canoe as it is now with the deck panels installed, along with the coaming. All that mahogany goes well with the two tone paint scheme.

I found an interesting old picture of an identical Kingsbury canoe in a history book written about the town of Weston, the pictured canoe was in the Charles River, south of the Route 30 bridge, with caption describing one of Alden Kingsbury's daughters paddling down the river towards Norumbega Park.

The courting canoe was used in two Norumbega events this year as I did not want the season to go by without getting her bottom wet."

Stevens Canoe Works News

After a three month shutdown for a switch to home construction, the canoe shop is almost ready to be back up and running. First in line for restoration is the Morris canoe belonging to Gary and Diane Amirault.



Gary and Diane on a recent trip in the old Morris. It is a Model A, Type I.

This Morris is estimated to have been made between 1907 and 1910. Unfortunately its serial number tag has gone missing, although there are holes in one inwale where the tag would have been attached. It started out in a livery on a pond in Lynn, Massachusetts, where it spent many years in rental service. Gary's uncle purchased the canoe well over 60 years ago and it has been in the family ever since.

Approximately 35 years ago the uncle repaired the canoe, replacing almost all of the bottom planking and recanvassing it but never filling the canvas nor painting it. After his death Gary and his dad finished the work and Gary has enjoyed it since then. Now it is time for another rebuild and we are excited to have it here at the canoe shop for this work.



A work in progress. The hull has had the canvas removed and the old varnish has been stripped, four ribs have been replaced along with some red cedar planking

Work is progressing nicely on the Morris. Amazingly all of the ribs in the canoe were originals and we only had to replace four of them. A mystery here is that while Gary's uncle found it necessary to replace almost all of the bottom planking he did not have to replace any ribs. He did, however, make repairs to three of the ribs by wrapping a length of duct tape around a cracked section. This is a repair we have never seen before, the funny thing is that it worked! Yes, those three ribs were all replaced with new ones.

We are expecting the hull to be canvassed soon and finished in time for spring paddling. It will be getting new outside stems along with new mahogany rail caps and outwales to make it ready for more years of paddling enjoyment.

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I spent the day outside playing in the shop and turning over my new boat, *Queen Anne*, and putting her in her new home. I'm pretty good at rigging to move big things so I told the guys to just ignore me and I'd do it by myself. The turning over went well, I had a cup of coffee in one hand and the winch button in the other. I pushed the button and it took eight seconds to lift and roll the boat. Then I moved the strap, pushed the button again and lifted the hull up so Steve could drive our lowboy trailer under it. You can see my head inside the boat as I lift it up and down. To get it off the trailer I tied the back to a tree and just pulled the trailer out from under it. This whole operation took about a half hour. Having a skyhook and a big winch helps.



The shop is slapass full with boats in building but the holidays are taking a toll on some of the builders. Leaving Florida to go to Ohio or Kentucky for Christmas seems like one of those above and beyond things. All the kids should have to come down here instead of asking the poor old folks to freeze to death up in that frozen hell hole, NORTH.

From the Tiki Hut

By Dave Lucas

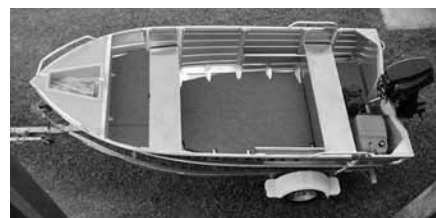
This is yesterday, we lit the fire just for the hell of it and turned the fans on to get the heat out. Notice the winter clothes. It's 80° here. That's me, Jim, Howard and John in the picture.



I'd like to say that these beauties came from our shop but you all know what we think about bright finished boats. The best varnish is white paint. However, I do know the guy who made these. He's up in North Carolina. Dale is a master and his fit and finish are unbelievable. His prices for these boats seem pretty reasonable. Check his site out. If you have some strange kind of disease he may be able to help you there also, he's a doctor of strange things. I think Richard Honan needs one of these for his Boston clan, may even get a vet discount.



Next is "down under" John Hockings, master builder of all manner of wooden boats from day sailers to this nice cruiser. But like most of us it's eventually hard to resist a good, simple aluminum boat (or tinny) if you're an Aussie. They're hard to beat when you want a boat to just dump in and run in sheltered water. Personally I think he's gone over to the Dark Side. I know several Johns who have these.



This one is in one of the back shops right now being modified by our John. It was OK but he wanted just what he wants so he took the saw and started cutting. I'm not sure what it is but this shop will change you into a designer of just what you want, even if you have to cut it up and glue it back together a dozen times.



Here's another John who's building an aluminum boat down in Venice, Florida. He's had boats all his life and decided to make just what he wanted. He's a master welder and is doing everything by himself, well, Dawn helps a little.



Another melonseed is going together in the main shop. Jim is a brand new boat builder and wanted to do one from scratch. I got Roger Allen's plans out and showed him what a table of offsets was. I told him how easy it is to lay out, how hard can it be to go over six and up four. He found out, after a while the numbers start to swirl around and the smooth lines look funny. Then he ripped up a bunch of wood and then Christmas came to slow him down. He's really having fun.





Jim's Scamp is flipped and it sure is a fat bottom girl. This 12' boat is huge. We all like seeing every stage of the build.



It's so much fun that Richard is starting one. I ordered a set of plans for me so I'd have my own sail number back when we

got Jim's, but got involved with that giant red thing you see in the background so I gave the number to Richard. He's watching Jim closely and decided to pre glass all of the parts before assembly. If you're not an expert when you start, you will be at the end.



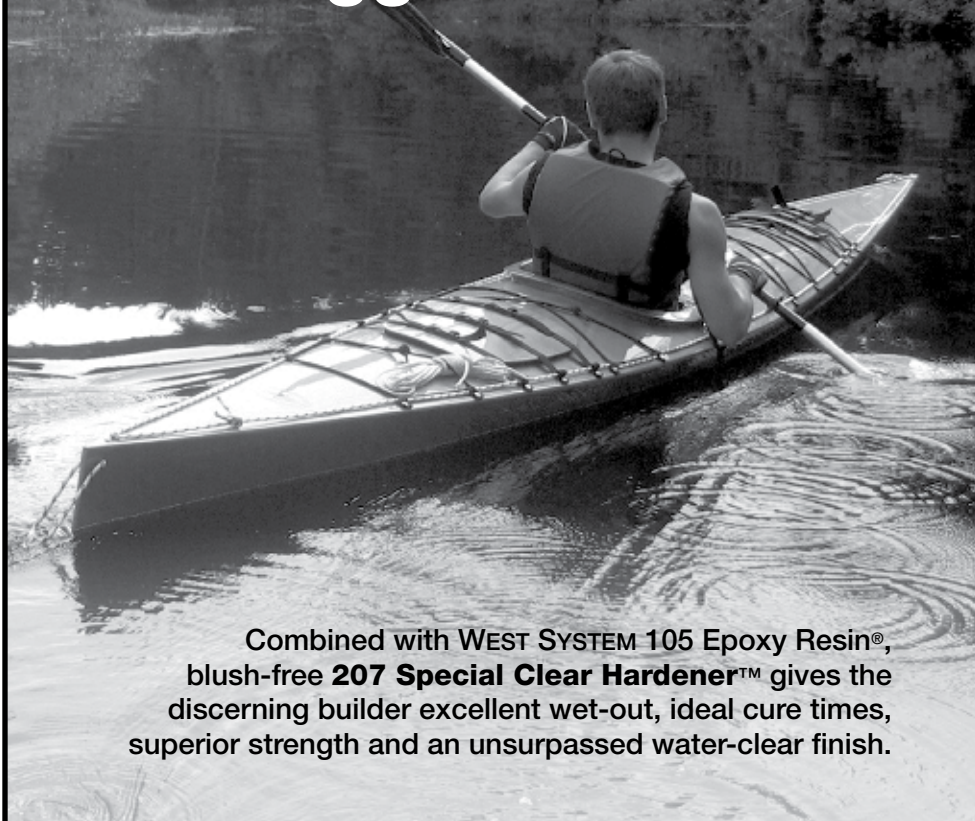
Both of the big garveys are coming along. Wally is having a hard time getting his cabin the way he wants it. He puts up sticks and looks at it and moves them and looks at them and then starts all over. Howard is making a center console open fisherman with his. The Chris Craft with the fin is what he really wants to make but he's dithering around. It would be perfect for him since he's allergic to epoxy he could make it like they did before they had the stuff.



I got to meet my faraway family for the first time this Christmas. Ken is in the Navy in Japan where he met Ako and got married and had two smart little kids, Jouji (George) and Ann. They were here for a week and left just today. Kids were like you'd expect one and two-and-a-half year olds, run till they drop. We really like Ako. They're in that giant 17' foam kayak I made.



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Getting to know the *Charles Henry Ashley*

by Keith Muscott

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

(Above) Sailing along the north coast of Anglesey in the sail and oar lifeboat *Charles Henry Ashley*, built in 1907 by the Thames Ironworks of Bow Creek, London

The skerries seen off the starboard bow behind that uncompromising towing bollard form the Middle Mouse (or *Ynys Badrig*, Patrick's Island), which lies about five cables due northwest of Llanlleiana Head. It is a 'white-washed' rocky haven for seabirds. Once the Mouse is brought level, the outer bay of Cemaes Bay opens up to port. On entering, the site of the old lifeboat slip and boathouse lies to starboard under Wylfa Head (see photographs right), where they gained shelter from *Ynys yr Ōen* (Lamb Island) in winds from southeast round by south to northwest. I hope Heaven helped any lifeboatman who had to launch there in a gale with any east in it. *CHA* was brought on station in Cemaes immediately on completion in 1907. She remained there until the station closed in 1932, when, being non-self-righting and obsolete, she was sold out of service. Following her rebuild and her dedication service in May 2009, Cemaes Bay once more became her permanent home. She is now in the care of *Clwb Cychod Cemaes* / Cemaes Boat Club, which is dedicated to preserving her in sailing condition, among other laudable educational aims. I joined the Club a few weeks ago as a sailing member



I WAS ALWAYS AWARE that no matter how much material I read or viewed on the romantic old sail and oar lifeboats my knowledge was strictly limited by never having stepped on one, much less sailed one. This applies to all boats, of course; studying plans and photographs is no match for getting on board and hoisting sail. I believed that the sailing LBs would be slower, clumsier and harder to handle than

modern sailing boats, as they are left over from a different era, but no doubt still enjoyable to sail if approached with the right kind of philosophical resignation.

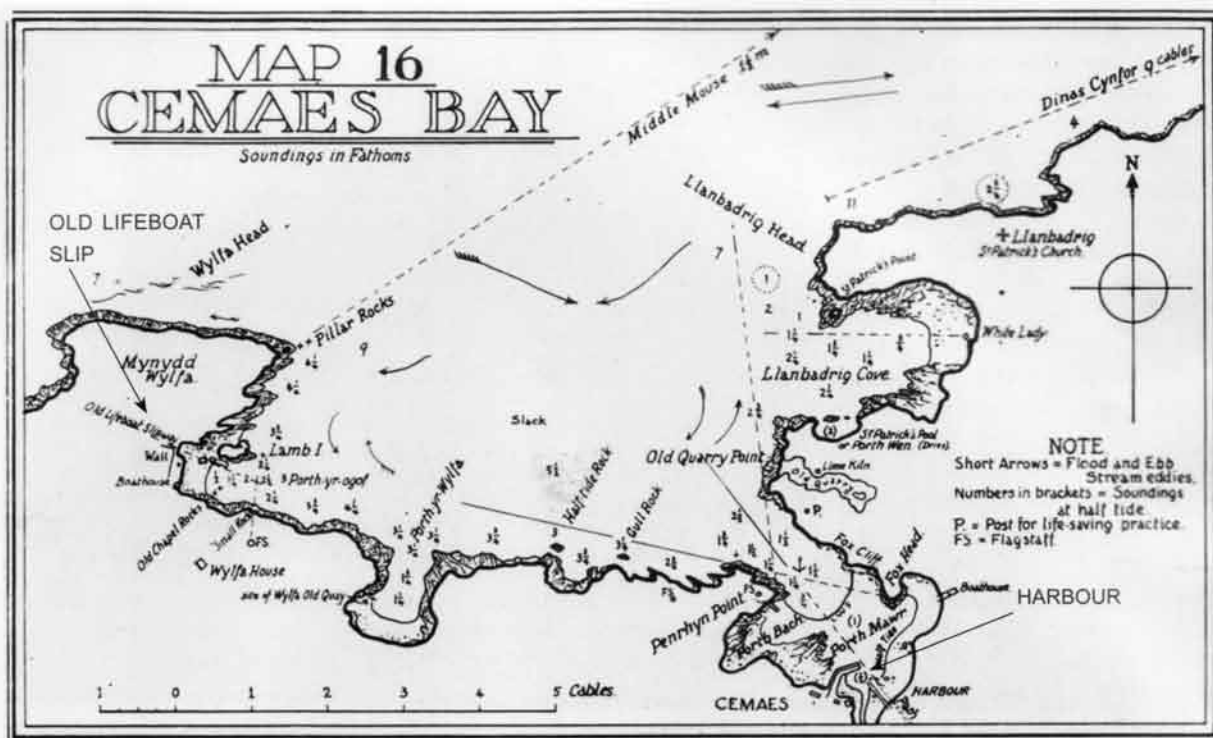
So to June 19th. When I had quickly signed up to join *Charles Henry Ashley* for that day I had forgotten in the heat of the moment that it would be my birthday – so whatever happened it would be a difficult occasion to forget.

I reported to *CHA* in Cemaes

Harbour at 08:00hrs for an 08:30 start to catch the tide when she floated.

First sight revealed a vessel that is beautifully proportioned, longer and leaner than I had expected. She was riding to a buoy that kept her away from the rough stone harbour wall in an attitude of gently-swaying readiness.

The weather was not what had been promised a week earlier: it was going to be blustery, grey – and possibly a little exciting? It was.



I have indicated in red CHA's original base and her present one on this chart, which is taken from the classic *Anglesey & North Wales Coast Pilot*, by Henry Glazebrook, 2nd edition (revised), 1967, published by *Yachting World*. This is a unique pilot, the result of years of exploration undertaken in the author's 14ft sailing dinghy *Mermaid* out of Trearddur Bay. It engages the coast much more closely than the skippers of yachts would ever wish to. It evolved from *The Inshore Passage*, a short guide probably named after a hair-raising but safe deepwater course that Glazebrook found,

close in under Rhoscolyn Head, by way of Hawk Point and Thistle Rock, on which you can scare the living daylights out of walkers on the shore when you suddenly appear in your boat among the fearsome rocks merely yards from them (I have had this pleasure). Glazebrook started plotting the Anglesey coastline on his return from WWI while living in a cottage on Llanddwyn Island. He took another ten years to expand the first guide to take in the whole of the North Wales coast while he was art master on the staff of Trearddur Bay Prep School. (He taught Kyffin Williams as a boy)

Sailing doesn't offer much better than reaching along the north coast of Anglesey at 8 knots at the top of a Force 6 in a 38ft sail and oar lifeboat. That said, Neptune often claims a forfeit to pay for his grudging kindnesses and in our case it was paid by Bowman Bob Trueman when he lost his favourite cap of 15 years over the side, got a crack on the head and was drenched by a wave. He doesn't

look too unhappy about any of this in the photograph taken afterwards, though.

In this photograph you can see too how shallow is the cockpit of *Charles Henry Ashley*. There is room underneath the sole for items like relieving valves and a bilge pump, so the cockpit is not deep enough to enclose the crew comfortably in a protective cuddle. It is easy to

imagine being plucked out of her by a passing Irish Sea roller; but there is something very stimulating about this elevated position nonetheless. You are up in the breeze enjoying good all-round vision with the sails rustling close to your face.

Speed through the water is a contentious subject, but our cruising



dinghies in the DCA usually average between 3 and 5 knots over a day just like roomy cruising yachts, unless slowed by choppy seas. So the first surprise was that old *CHA* slipped along twice as fast as that.

George Lennox Watson became the RNLI's Consultant Naval Architect in 1887 and in 1890 designed the first two lifeboats to carry his stamp, a 38ft pulling boat – *CHA*'s type – and a 43ft sailing boat with auxiliary oars carrying a big sail area and lots of ballast. They both depended on hull stability for safety, not self-righting design. A small sail plan was soon added to the pulling boat, similar to that seen on *CHA* now, and it is hard to imagine a better rig for an amateur sailing group to use in the present day: standing fore lugsail and standing mizzen lugsail, plus jib.

Both of these Watson boats were popular and within six years nineteen of them had come into service. *CHA* was one of the last to be built without an engine, and was launched 17 years after the design had been drawn and three years after Watson's death. I understand there are just four sail and oar lifeboats of this kind left now, three in sailing condition, and the only one identical to *CHA* is in a museum. During the season, *Charles Henry Ashley* is moored in Cemaes Bay Harbour, Anglesey, just ten minutes away from me by car.

Your face wears a permanent smile when you are cracking along at 8 knots. Instead of mooning around

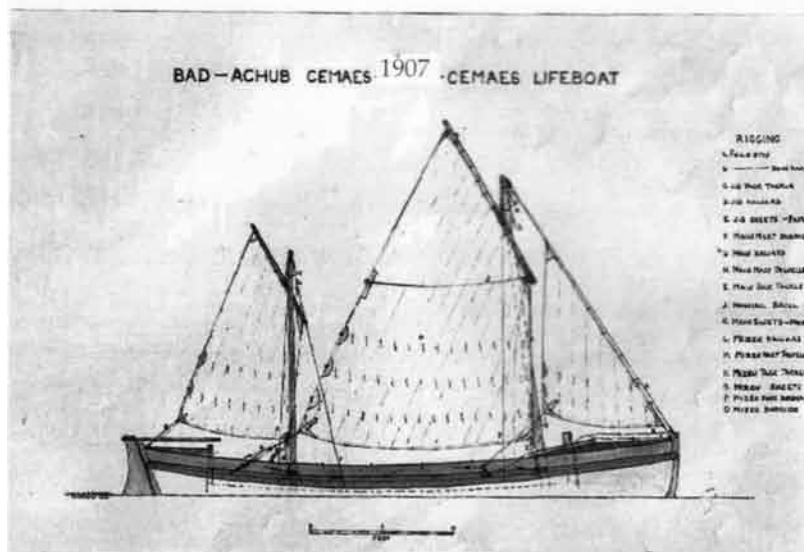


Charles Henry Ashley on passage to Holyhead for the first time after her restoration, just passing inside West Mouse (*Maen y Bugail*, 'Shepherd's Rock'), which is 7 cables northeast of Carmel Head, a notorious headland. The Skerries light is on the horizon.

Photograph: GWYN JENKINS



Taken by MIKE THOMPSON, Crewing Organiser, around the same time as the shot I posted on our Forum, at HW Slack when her speed reached 11 knots. Keith Downs (left) talking to me; directly before me is Simon Drakley, Cox; on the right is Norman Mason, Bosun.



Note modest sail plan on what was originally a pulling boat

on the tiller waiting to fetch distant waymarks, like watching for pots to boil, they are there beside you in a trice. As she was initially designed to be a pulling boat she has an 'easily driven hull', as you can see from the harbour photographs (previous page), which does not need a big spread of canvas to perform well.

She is sea-kindly, too: in the restless conditions she just sliced the top off an occasional wave and threw it over her shoulder to keep us on our toes. There was no continuous drenching.

The wind scampered up the Beaufort Scale, despite some DCA



Bowling along westwards at ± 8 knots. The pimple on the horizon is Middle Mouse. Note the colour-coded oars in the boat, and also the shallow cockpit, the result of raising the sole to be self-draining and to allow various items to be fitted underneath.

friends cruising in the Dee Estuary, not that distant, and enjoying sunshine with wind speeds of 8-10 mph. We coursed up and down during the afternoon, eating up the miles, enjoying the rising wind and observing the wildlife, which included terns, gannets, seals and porpoises. Unlike us they were not there for the exercise, but more likely for big mackerel shoals.

I spent a long time on the tiller, for which I thank all those present, and the crowning moment came when we recorded 11 knots through the water by GPS at High Water Slack. The crew agreed that it was the fastest they had personally achieved in her.

Sailing a 38ft open boat without a big diesel to rely on concentrates the mind wonderfully. The dropping

tide and the forecast for 47 mph wind later persuaded us to head back to the broad outer bay at Cemaes. The mainsail came down on entering and she proceeded very quietly and steadily under staysail and mizzen alone, clearly the best choice if required to reef quickly in a sudden blow.

The smaller sails were stowed as we approached the inner bay and we shipped the oars to bring her behind the harbour wall. I can't say that rowing was on a par with sailing. The oars were made for the boat by Scott Metcalfe, colour-coded white to port and dark blue to starboard, or *gwyn a glas*. They are heavy enough, but more niggling is the feeling that you can't really get your back into it. The distance between the front edge of the thwarts and the rowlocks seems less than one would expect in a modern boat by a few inches. There are two possible reasons for this. As the vessel was built to retrieve hypothermic victims from the clutches of Davy Jones, deck space was needed to stow them after rescue – giving twelve oarsmen more room to operate would have cut that down drastically. The second reason was offered by a DCA friend, Lt. Commander, RN (retd), who in his



Seen from the starboard gunwale, bows to the right. Stainless steel bilge vents for harbour use only. They are replaced with screw-in Henderson hatch covers before sailing. The stretcher (left) is for the feet of the seated oarsman (right). The intakes of two relieving valves can be seen behind the vent on either side of it. (They are non-return drains to rid the cockpit of water – ten altogether)

youth spent more time operating a sweep on 27ft Montagu Whalers launched from warships during unsociable hours than should be expected of any sentient being. (See *LETTERS* section). In rough seas you can forget about putting your back into long raking strokes, says he. They 'catch crabs' and destroy the rhythm. Short strokes using just the arms and upper body are required. My admiration for those who took these boats out in appalling seas continues to grow.

The strengthening SSW wind was running down the harbour wall and pushed her head off on our first attempt, but we managed to pick up her buoy at the second time of asking.

The sturdy force 7 leaked over the top into the promised 'force 8 fresh gale' later when both she and her crew were secured comfortably in their berths.

I had been taken to task for referring to a 'starboard oar' instead of identifying it by colour. No-one could come up with an accepted reason for the two-tone variation, but it was suggested that keeping things colour coded and simple would have been advisable in the old days when your call-out might have included two or three novice farm lads in the crew. These boats always needed twelve pairs of hands for propulsion, in addition to Coxswain, Second Coxswain and Bowman. In a seaside community most men, young and old, would have boat handling experience and no doubt would be called on in an emergency.

A more simple explanation might be found in the number of oars on board. Dividing them according to colour makes certain that all twelve are returned to their right places immediately – having to restore the balance by passing a supernumerary oar across the boat during the rush that is a normal part of shipping them would be messy, unseamanlike and potentially dangerous.

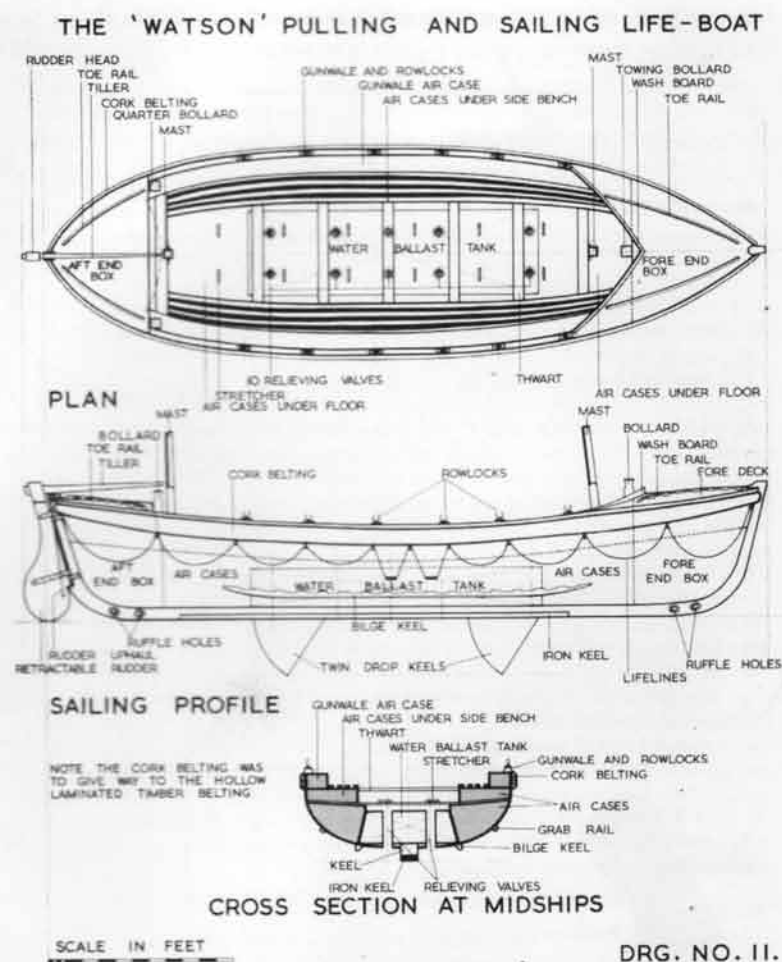
I did wonder whether this colour-coding had some precedent in the Royal Navy, but this proved not to be the case (*again, see LETTERS*).

The Navy oars had a short but interesting life at sea, and were



CHA's rudder and tiller – or, why my arms ached on Monday morning ...

A yoke and a rope bridle with block and tackle was set up to enable two crew to help the helmsman control the rudder in heavy seas



This drawing comes from *Life-Boat Design and Development* by Eric C Fry, publ.1975, by David & Charles. The drawing number (11) is Fry's, used only in his book; it is not the RNLI's or Watson's, though the original drawing would have been Watson's. Many of the features here are typical of all Watson sail and oar boats, but this specifically shows the 43ft big sister to *CHA* – proved by the scale, and other details. Beam was 12ft 8ins and weight was 11 tons, which presented launching and recovery difficulties, as compared with *CHA*'s stats of 38ft x 9ft 4ins x 4.75 tons. Other details and comments on the next page. –Ed

sometimes used in the dark – so whichever one you grabbed first was the right one, no colour differentiation needed. They all looked the same.

It would be easy to make the mistake of thinking that the non-self-righting boats were superseded by self-righting LBs in a kind of Darwinian progression, but in fact the SR boats came first.

The RNLI produced a report which expressed concern about the performance of the SR boats at that time: 'In 1887, the standard of self-righting for the self-righting lifeboats was much increased, and as by far the greater proportion of the fleet of Life-boats were of the self-righting type, it became necessary to test all these boats to ascertain what their self-righting power actually was; the result of this proved that a very large number had less than the new standard, and consequently it became necessary either to replace them by new boats, or if possible to alter them in such a way as to increase their self-righting properties up to the requisite power.'

This came right after the *Mexico* disaster in 1886, in which four Blackpool and Fylde lifeboats were involved and 27 members of their crews died. The RNLI then called in GL Watson, which led directly to his two first non-SR boats. There were tweaks to their design over the years before *CHA* was built in 1907, but more of that next time. *KM*

Membership of the Cemaes Boat Club as a Friend costs £10 pa and entitles you to two sails in her. Full membership is £20pa. If you are interested, contact Laura Downs, Membership Secretary, by email, and she will send you full details and an application form: laura.m.d@btinternet.com (Mention the DCA journal.) If email is a problem, contact me first (my details are on page 2) *Keith Muscott*



Charles Henry Ashley as she was. Her double diagonal hull planking of Honduras mahogany may be seen clearly – she has a 'starving horse' look. This was a tough resilient form of construction common to most lifeboats of the pre-GRP era. The planking survives intact on *CHA* today.

Differences between the 38ft and 43ft boats can be seen clearly; there are no air cases inside up to the gunwale to be seen here, for instance. It looks like her fore and aft decks were replaced after retirement as there is no forward towing bollard. At one point she was owned by Alec Robertson, who bought her for £600 in 1960 and motorised her with a small diesel engine so he could use her for pleasure trips. Her recent 2009 restoration cost £81 000 initially, but it rose to exceed £100 000.

(Below)

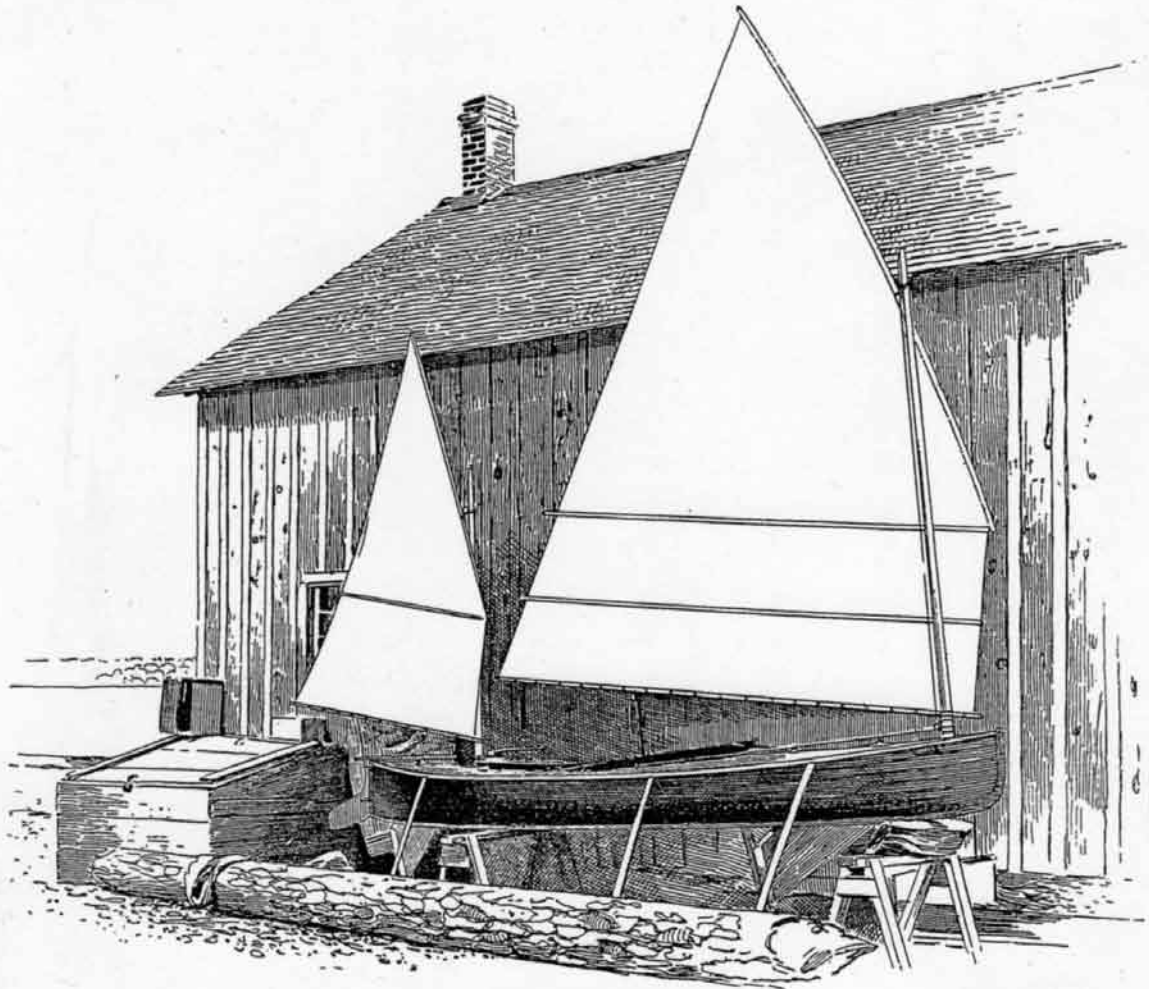
Dried out in Cemaes Bay Harbour and looking her gleaming best: a credit to John Jones of Classic Boats, Bethel, who did the renovation, but even more to *Clwb Cychod Cemaes* / Cemaes Boat Club, and Bosun Norman Mason, who have looked after her with all necessary love, care and hard work over the years since 2009



CANOE LIFE.

I've travelled all the world around,
From China Seas to Puget's Sound,
In every sort of craft that floats,
From schooners down to jolly-boats ;
And for calm or storm my choice is made
Of a stanch canoe and a paddle-blade ;
And I toast the man, whoe'er he be,
Who first shaped paddle from the tree.

THOUGH in itself one of the most recent additions to the pleasure-fleet of the sportsman and outer, the modern canoe is but a younger member of one of the largest and most ancient families of



A SAILING CRUISER.

boats,—a family whose members are found in all climes and of all sizes, but each possessing the same salient characteristics. In proportions they are long and shallow, the breadth being only about one-sixth of the length, and the depth less than one-half of the breadth ; in model they are alike at both ends, being sharp in bow and stern ; and for propulsion they rely invariably on paddles held in the hands and used without a fixed support, the crew facing the direction in which the boat is moving.

These characteristics are found alike in the war-canoes of the Pacific, craft upward of a hundred feet in length and carrying a crew of sixty or more warriors, in the similar canoes of the Indians of British Columbia, in the tiny skin kayaks of the Esquimaux, each with its single occupant, in the Indian birch bark, and in all varieties of modern canoes, from the mock "war-canoë" to the lightest ten-pound paddler. The canoe may be hewn and burned out from a solid log, or it may be the most delicate fabric of Spanish cedar veneer and oiled silk; the crew may number half of an Indian tribe or but a single lone explorer; the paddle may be the elaborately-carved blade of hard wood that constitutes the chief wealth of a savage warrior, or the simply-formed but pliant piece of spruce or maple so dear to the heart of the Canadian huntsman; but, large or small, crude or highly finished, the same few and simple principles will be found embodied in each craft.

From the earliest times, the canoe has been known and honored as one of the most useful of all types of craft, but within a little less than thirty years the name has become doubly familiar in connection with a novel variety of pleasure-boat and the popular sport to which it has given rise. The canoe of small size, the birch and the light dug-out, is essentially an American institution, both varieties having been known since the discovery of the country; but after serving a most useful purpose in the hands of the early explorers, making it possible for them to reach the innermost recesses of the continent, they have become practically extinct in the United States; though in Canada the primitive type of canoe has survived in a modified and improved form.

Modern canoeing originated with Captain John MacGregor, a traveller and explorer, familiar with nearly all the waters and boats of the world, who in his search for novel and attractive means of travel took up the crude and primitive form of decked paddling canoe once used to a small extent on English rivers, and set to work to produce from it a craft suitable for his purpose, of solitary voyages on strange waters. The result was the Rob Roy canoe, in which his notable cruises on the Rhine, the Baltic, and the Jordan were made, a craft so nearly perfect that after twenty-five years of development and improvement it still stands alone as a distinct type of modern canoe. General types by the score and special models by the hundred have since been produced, filling in the whole scale from the ten-pound paddler to the small cruising yacht, but the Rob Roy of Captain MacGregor, in the condition in which he left it, is still recognized by canoeists as one of the three or four distinctive types of cruising canoe.

From this little craft, and from the voyages made in it, has grown up a pleasure-fleet of thousands of canoes; while the sport of canoeing has expanded and developed into the several distinct branches of cruising, pleasure-paddling and sailing, and racing.

Each of these branches has its host of devotees; the racing canoe, both sailing and paddling, has become a subject of special study with many ardent racing-men; but it is in its original function, as a means of travelling, that the canoe appeals to the largest number.

Given a watercourse over four inches in depth and six feet in width, the completely-equipped cruising canoe offers every convenience

for travel which the canoeist can reasonably demand. It is a means of conveyance, its sails or its light double-bladed paddle carrying him along the watery highway; it is a hotel, its mess-chest and its tiny stove furnishing his meals, while rugs and blankets unrolled from its capacious interior make a snug and comfortable bed in the cockpit; and it is his home, its neat little tent and its many odd receptacles affording him a place to read and write, and providing room for clothing, books, rod, gun, and numberless conveniences. Depending on external sources only for a fresh supply of food once or twice a week, the voyage may be prolonged indefinitely, the charm and variety of the last week of a summer's cruise being no less than that of a three days' outing.



LANDING FOR A CAMP.

The original Rob Roys were designed for a special work, the exploration of shoal and narrow rivers in foreign lands, where the canoeist must rely almost entirely on himself for all handling ashore, and where the canoe must at times be taken by rail from one stream to another. Under these conditions sailing was hardly thought of, and the main requirements were portability, light weight, and compactness of boat and outfit. The canoe itself was about fourteen feet long over all, twenty-six inches beam, and nine inches draught amidships, with very little sheer and a slightly-rounded keel of one inch depth, the loaded draught being under five inches. This light hull was completely decked with mahogany, leaving only an oval well about three feet long and sixteen inches wide. The space below deck was well filled with blankets, clothing, food, etc., the outfit comprising all that an extended experience had shown to be really necessary on a voyage of indefinite length. A very small sail was usually carried, but the principal means of propulsion was the double-bladed paddle, used on each side alternately.

Once afloat in such a craft, there is no limit to the range of one's cruising. Nearly all the great rivers of the world have borne these

light canoes, not alone over their navigable portions, but up to their head-waters, revealing the secrets of their origin that have been locked for ages to all other means of exploration. The usual course is to start well up a river, thus utilizing the aid of the current, and to descend as far as one pleases, or until the broader waters become less suited for so small a craft. Then, if in America or Europe, a night's ride or less by rail will land the canoeist and his canoe well toward the source of some new and totally different stream, to be in turn descended at leisure.

For a man of medium weight, and for this sort of work, the little Rob Roy is unsurpassed; but there is a still wider range for the canoe before it encroaches on the domain of the yacht. For work on the larger rivers and on lakes and bays, a different type of canoe is used. The hull in this case is about sixteen feet long, thirty inches wide, and ten and a half inches deep amidships, the ends rising up in a sheer of some six inches at the bow and three inches at the stern. The model has



A CRUISING FLEET IN CAMP.

changed with the proportions, stability being now more important as the sail-area is increased and the crew gives up his position on the floor of the canoe to sit on deck. The canoe is still decked over, with a well as before, though larger and provided with a series of movable wooden hatches to keep out the rain or waves. A centre-board of sheet brass is added, also a rudder, connected by wires with a cross-bar on deck just abaft the crew for steering, and the small sail of the Rob Roy gives place to a very ship-shape and stylish rig with two sails of probably fifty-five and thirty square feet, with all the requisite gear and rigging.

As these sails will be relied on for most of the work of propulsion, and as there will be less shore-work and portaging, all the weights are increased, and a larger supply of stores, clothing, etc., is carried, giving still greater independence of all external sources of supply. The paddle, true emblem of the canoeist, is still retained, but its two halves, disconnected, are likely to be stowed below the deck for a great portion of the time.

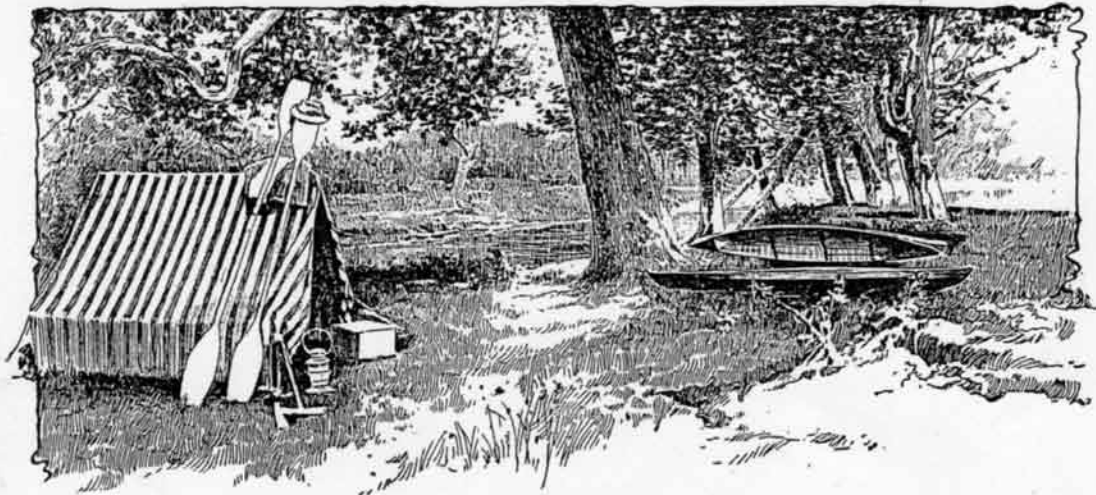
To such a craft in the hands of a skilful sailor are open the length and breadth of Long Island Sound, the Hudson below Albany, the Dela-

were below Philadelphia, Chesapeake Bay, all the smaller inland lakes of the country, the Florida rivers, and the coasts of the Great Lakes.

Between these two types of decked canoes stands the open Canadian canoe, a craft that shows its savage ancestry in its graceful and unconventional form, light and buoyant as an autumn leaf on the water, its free and natural curves showing no resemblance to the formal and geometrically correct outlines of the other two. The Canadian canoe is a creature of the forest, and its special territory is on the small lakes and watercourses that abound throughout Canada, and especially on those rivers where rapids are plentiful. Possessing two great advantages, a form that adapts it to a wide range of work, and an exceptionally low cost, this canoe is found everywhere throughout Canada, being owned not only by those who may be classed distinctively as canoeists, but forming an important item in the outfit of every hunter, woodsman, and fisherman, as well as of every water-side farm. Its wide, spoon-shaped bottom permits of easy propulsion under the light single blade of the lone canoeist; while its full, round lines and the fact that it is open from end to end give an immense carrying capacity when needed, offering accommodation for two voyagers with their entire duffle, or even for a deer should fortune favor their ready rifle.

Within half a dozen years this same canoe has found a still wider sphere of usefulness, indicated by the name "girling canoe," bestowed on it by an American canoeist; and it is found in great numbers both in the States and in England, being used for exercise and light afternoon paddling.

Happy the canoeist who knows no clock nor watch, but whose time is his own, and whose day is broken only by the natural divisions of a



A RIVER CRUISE—ROB ROY AND OPEN PETERBORO CANOES.

free, open-air life. Sunrise finds him awake and alert, a few minutes serve to start a hot fire from fuel prepared over-night, the chops or eggs sizzle in the frying-pan, the coffee-pot sings gayly beside it, and from the inner depths of the canoe are unloaded stores of jam and marmalade, canned vegetables, bread, sugar, and the ever-ready "tin milk." Breakfast despatched, each pan and dish of the simple outfit is washed and stowed compactly away, one tin pail of moderate size containing

everything pertaining to the kitchen. Blankets and bedding are rolled up, lashed tight, and stowed below, each in a special nook, the little tent is similarly disposed of, masts are stepped, the paddle laid ready on deck; a shove over the sand, and the craft is afloat, probably by seven o'clock, with a whole long bright day ahead.

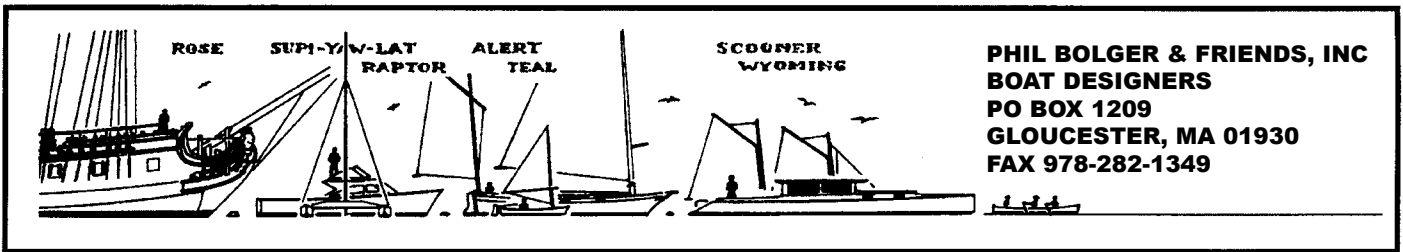
Under the fresh morning breeze she bowls along, the crew to windward, the strain on each nerve and muscle varying with the motion of the boat. Our course lies by sedgy banks, by stretches of bright sand shining under the morning sun, by a fisherman's hut here or a handsome water-side villa there, by a bustling group on a country wharf waiting the boat for the city, or perhaps the tiny craft is headed for more open water, a long stretch off-shore, with no outlook save the sky above, the water about us, the distant shore-line, and with only a stray gull or wandering porpoise for company.

The day brings a constant change: now a halt on the beach for a swim and a bit of cold luncheon; now a luffing up for a chat with the crew of a fishing-boat busy with their nets; now a passing greeting from a yacht. At times the sails are stowed, from choice or necessity, the paddle taking their place for a few miles. As the sun declines, the thoughts of the crew are turned inward, or to home and supper; "home" standing for a clear piece of sand or sward with fresh water near at hand, and "supper" for a very substantial sort of repast after an early breakfast and a cold lunch. A camp-site at length selected, the canoe is beached and drawn up above the tide, the camp-fire is started, the stores and blankets are unpacked, supper is cooked and eaten with a zest such as only comes from an out-door life, the pots and pans are disposed of, the little tent is pitched over the well and a snug bed made up within, an hour is given to posting the log, sewing on buttons, repairing a torn sail, or to a little reading, and the tired canoeist turns in for a sound and hearty sleep.

This is but one day, and perhaps on Long Island Sound, Chesapeake Bay, or the shores of the Baltic: every other day is alike, but different, the same general routine, but varied by a constant change of surrounding and incident; while the scene may be laid as well on the Mohawk or upper Hudson, the Schuylkill or Delaware, on Georgian Bay, the Severn or the St. Lawrence, or on the Rhine or Danube. Each different locality, with its special one of the three canoes mentioned, has its individual charm, of solitary forest, of wild rushing rapid, of pastoral landscape, of quaint Old-World town or of curling salt wave, an endless variety that makes canoe-life not only one of the healthiest but one of the most fascinating of out-door sports.

W. P. Stephens.

Contributed by Dick Winslow – Reprinted from a 1880s Magazine



Living and designing boats in America's Oldest Seaport comes with certain opportunities and even obligations. What makes Gloucester, Massachusetts, the first in the nation is primarily its role as a fishing port since earliest days of settlement along this natural harbor in 1623.

Having grown up a quarter mile from Montgomery's Boatyard on the Annisquam River at 29 Ferry St, Phil did see Nick and Herb Montgomery design and build fishing craft. Almost inevitably then, Phil came to design a few fishing craft, from inshore lobster skiffs to a 64' offshore dragger, built in materials ranging from traditional wooden, strip planking, ply epoxy glass to aluminum construction, plus a fisheries research craft or two.

By 1990, as he continued design work steady as ever, he began, however, to take an interest in my appearance in his life, then scheming his idea to pull me into his life and work. We ended up being really quite distracted by this new life together by early '94. Expanding on Phil's routines, we merged two minds into one shared venture, over time gradually adding my perspectives to design and then the writing about now our work, with Phil insisting since about '95 on either shared bylines where formally typical, or at least see my thinking woven into pieces such as here in *MAIB*. So we did not notice what was taking place in the fishing fleet here in town concurrently.

In 1994 some bureaucrats in the Gloucester Regional office of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) felt compelled to impose on the industry new regulations that were intended to limit the growth of the fleet beyond what the scientists suggested the resource, edible life below the waves, could support. Sounds reasonable enough, yet just another bit of tweaking the rules towards sustainability of the resource as, in fact, dictated by the 1976 Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) under the principle of promoting optimal exploitation of US coastal fisheries.

Much of the world had, by 1982, agreed in the UN that each country bordering on an ocean would have a so called Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) reaching 200 nautical miles out from its coast, essentially kicking out, for instance, foreign fishing fleets, thus reducing the catch pressure on the various species deemed lucrative.

Predictably though, and actively supported with federal incentives, a fishing boat building boom was triggered that would fill that void. Soon it was on track to exceed nature's capacity to reproduce fast enough what was taken out of that web of life with this new growing domestic fleet. Therefore seeing NMFS's New England Regional Office here in Gloucester trying to put on the brakes to (presumably) control the future of the region's lucrative but complex 19+ species groundfish industry seemed a sound policy. From America's oldest working waterfront, a New

Phil Bolger & Friends on Design

Design Column #508 in *MAIB*

Messing About in Fishing Boats Chapter 18

England demonstration to the nation of well rounded science based forethought following principles of sustainability.

Alas (no kidding about the ominous tone of alas), in their vision they got some crude but simple basics remarkably wrong, an astonishing set of few but very consequential mistakes in both a few key technical details and then the institutional failure to get independent second opinions on those policies. These mistakes have had tragic consequences, first here in New England and taken nationally since 1999, on all the nation's coastlines. And they reverberate well into the future, continuing to inflict damage on fishing ventures, their families, their communities, thus our working waterfront, the seafood marketplace to your plate, the ecology of the resource and the environment in general.

With some of you no doubt traumatized by the extent of our *MAIB* narrative this far, you may recollect that we discussed at some length our perspective on this ongoing tragedy for Gloucester's working waterfront. I could go (again) into a tedious in depth chronology of our efforts in house and, since March 2003, in public testifying, commenting in writing, speaking at conferences etc. Suffice it for interested readers to look at one, some or all of the 17 chapters so far published in *MAIB* in these issues:

July 1, '07 Ch 1, July 15, '07 Ch 2, August 1, '07 Ch 3, August 15, '07 Ch 4, September 1 '07 Ch 5, September 15, '07 Ch 6 Pt 1, October 1, '07 Ch 6 Pt 2, October 15, '07 Ch 6 Pt 1 (repeated due to a printing error), November 15, '07 Ch 7, December 15, '07 Ch 8, June '08 Ch 9, July '08 Ch 10, April '09 Ch 11, May '10 Ch 12, June '10 Ch 13, November '10 Ch 14, February '11 Ch 15, May '13 Ch 16 and November '14 Ch 17. Who could possibly resist?



Phil trying one more time to reason with the Council.

As those who have studiously followed this narrative on the topic know, those who took copious notes along the way went back again and again to refresh memory, always stimulated by intriguing design concepts for 21st century fishing craft, those who arduously, well, never mind any of that, you'd have caught the drift that the policy mavens at NMFS Gloucester thought that limiting the fleet by length, tonnage and horsepower would be an effective approach to keep it from outpacing nature.

What could be wrong with that? A few hard parameters via easy to determine numbers, confined by upper limits through this new 1994 batch of regulations and reason would prevail to prevent the emergence of an oversized resource damaging fleet.

Well, one of the creators of this policy lived(s) here in Gloucester just down the road from Phil and, by then, us. But he apparently never felt any unease in his judgment on matters of regulation directly affecting boat design, in fact, the whole physical fleet structure, to perhaps get an independent second opinion from outside the closed chamber thinking at NMFS such as, say, from neighbor Phil Bolger at nearby 29 Ferry St.

In fact, as reflected in these 1994 policies then, and more recently again confirmed through research into both regional and federal staffing choices, NFMS to this day does not appear to have anyone with design and boat building experience to bounce regulatory ideas off, rather an astonishing recruitment failure in likely the world's largest such agency tasked to manage this 320 million eaters' national seafood resource. NMFS policy makers did not consider that fishermen use specific boat types to do their fishing from.

So it came to be in 1994 that marine biologists, administrators, legal counselors, etc., all presumably with stellar academic/administrative/regulation drafting records, did figure that limiting length, tonnage and horsepower would be plausible regulatory tools to keep the fleet from expanding beyond what nature could support. They ran this through a formal public hearing process, when Phil and I were blissfully unaware of their intramural proceedings, and arrived at their policies from their collected wisdom.

You'd figure that having no one on their staff, nor outside advisors, providing advice on the predictable technical consequences of their proposal on fishing boat design, that they would have tried to then reach out actively for this advice, an easy thing in here in America's Oldest Seaport. But that thought apparently never occurred to them. In fact, in light of our direct personal experience since 2003 of trying to be heard by them, knocking on their doors, writing and speaking to them, Phil voicing his very seasoned technical perspective (by 1994 based on 42 years of designing boats for a living) why would he have been ignored. Did marine biologists, lawyers and administrators simply assume that they know

more and better about all sorts stuff?

Let's briefly go through their special insights, their mutually agreed to assumptions, with most readers indeed messing about in boats already seeing where they went so remarkably wrong:

Length alone is not a reliable indication of a given boat's size, as beam, draft, etc, matter significantly as well. Since probably before the Egyptians, or even the first Chinese Emperor, any limitation by length has resulted in wider, if not deeper boats, typically harder to push through the water. Phil could readily quote late middle age English problems with this crude taxman approach, "let me pace this ship to tax it" approach. So if you want to limit any boat's carrying capacity, and thus its fishing power, limiting length will not do a decent job. This limitation just ends up with fat boats.

So they added tonnage as an overall idea to capture the boat's size somehow but seem to have been confused about what that term might mean, since there is actually a lengthy range of definitions, with some that could have been useful and others that would lead off into some conceptual void.

The leader of that '94 effort suggested recently in a phone conversation that he may have misunderstood what the concept "tonnage" could mean in its rich diversity. Since he and they did not define tonnage as actually measured boat weight, but got lost in some disputable volume based definitions, tonnage became a near useless, often contentious, legally expensive and overall unreliable to define exercise in nailing a pudding to the wall.

Even in 1994 there were plenty of travel lifts along New England's shorelines with capabilities to take any fishing boat's actual weight measurement for a plausible definition of tonnage as in weight, here for the NMFS record, with half fuel, no crew, no gear, no fish, no ice, no shenanigans. But none of that industrial infrastructure was considered as an obvious regulatory asset by these non technical policymakers. Why would marine biologists, lawyers and administrators ever come into contact with boat hoisting devices?

Horsepower seems a sturdy enough idea, with hard numbers routinely supplied by the engine manufacturer. And yet, as any motorhead knows, if you are determined enough you can double or more engine peak power output by leveraging a rich range of technical adjustments and upgrades while likely burning more fuel and probably reducing the engine's reliability. But if that power can fish more, extra repairs and an engine rebuild sooner may well be paid for out of daily extra income, not to mention being written off as business expenses. Anyone just looking at that cast iron assembly would not necessarily know what is actually going on inside, that fishing craft would just be known as a fast for that engine type of deal.

However, with all three chosen metrics taken together (predictably) failing to offer solid controls against fleet growth within a few years, while opening up perpetual disputes if not inviting systematic abuse, they could then have just stepped back and objectively registered a technical failure. And that would then suggest the reinitiation of the regulatory process in pursuit of better options.

Not so. We pointed out the obvious in voice and in print, starting with NMFS meetings in March of 2003, challenging the utility of tonnage and indeed, more impor-

tantly, length. Only tonnage would ever be considered as problematic and was finally removed from the formula by 2014, 20 years into this spectacle of fleet and resource damaging regulatory incompetence.

Any strenuous suggestions leading up to, and during, that 2014 process, that swapping out length for actually measured weight would be more critical, yet while indeed still dumping tonnage, was dismissed again by the self selected policymaking marine biologists, lawyers, administrators, etc.

Apart from shifting from length to weight, we had, since '03, argued that retaining horsepower was both conceptually necessary and technically the least problematic metric in light of many fishermen's interest to come home reliably, courtesy of a less than high strung reliable engine.

So what then? They did not do what we thought was the right thing. Nobody should care about some personal disagreements. The world full of know it alls seemed to include some from Gloucester.

But there are two points to bringing this up once more now.

Damage to people, businesses, infrastructure, communities, resource and the ecology at large. There has been, and continues to be, actual serious damage caused by these regulatory failures based on fiercely defended technical myopia. What was started here in the northeast in 1994 was taken nationwide by 1999. So this has triggered a cascading sequence of ugly consequences along all saltwater shorelines, also affecting inland fishing industries, their craft and thus their communities as well. And Canada is doing no better on this!

To list just a few basic consequences:

Technical and thus operational stagnation: While inherently dynamic in its ever moving evolution since earliest Colonial times, the New England groundfish fleet has been frozen in time for the first time in its history since first discussions of these regulations began in the early 1990s. Locked into short hulls, many fishermen went to wider hulls, making them lumpier, thus harder to drive through the water, often much wetter, and therefore more prone to icing in winter, more dangerous, while burning more fuel for the given rate of progress and fish caught.



In your face wide bow on a short lobster boat as well.



One of the more cartoonish limited length fishing boats.

But is this not just limited to the groundfish fleet? In principle yes, except that boat builders do not have the luxury to run several parallel production lines. If much of their business is in catering to the groundfish captains, then the historically unprecedented rules dictated that the wide hull design will also be sold to lobstermen and into other fisheries. In fact, those NMFS dictated short and wide hull geometries out of the groundfishery perniciously became normal elsewhere as well, sold as more stable, roomier, etc, claims that were either not quite so or could have been had with much leaner but longer hulls, at far lower operating cost with smaller engines.

By 2017 unarguable examples of vessel obesity can be found growing in prevalence on all national shorelines. When every other fossil fuel based industry is seeking efficiencies by just about every means, the nation's fishing fleets are almost all going in the opposite direction despite the equally unarguable impact of climate change via water temperature increases (and thus species displacement into colder waters and depths) and early stages of ocean water acidification.

Where here in New England during the first 360+ years, this oldest working waterfront was constantly seeking improvements in vessel characteristics all the way up to developing new types, while endlessly developing species targeting effectiveness and efficiencies in fishing methods, this tradition of dynamically responding to challenges has been progressively paralyzed under these inhibiting regulatory dictates. Driven by ecological forces, the laws of physics and economics would strongly favor longer and leaner hulls again, at least towards the 4-5:1 length to beam ratio from back in the age of fishing under sail, if not the leanest 7:1 of those ex US Navy 110' subchaser hulls built 100 years ago and fished from until the early '70s. Even likely, a return to motorsail. But that remains legally impossible, since prohibited.

Destruction of small businesses afloat and ashore: This NMFS dictated high carbon fleet will, as a matter of vessel economics, always need more fish than may be available long term, thus destroying what are typically small businesses by preventing their agile adaptation to new challenges, such as by going for much leaner hull and drive train geometries to allow a profit to be made from a much lower intake of limited resources. And that in turn would allow more players to stay in business until the ecology recovers from over exploitation or new ecological conditions emerge, adapting to which would always require the nimble agility prohibited by these NMFS regulations.

Irretrievably losing more of our already limited working waterfront: With shrinking numbers of boats and businesses, gentrification pressures are near inevitable, making the future of the remaining fisheries related ventures ever more tenuous. Sudden zoning changes pushed for by ailing property owners begin to undermine decades and indeed centuries old assumptions and reflexes, tearing into long established business models and undermining long planned business developments. The basic way of running a port economy is typically progressively squeezed out by real estate manipulations and trading centric mindsets.

Moving a limited number of notes and deeds around is myopically deemed desirable, rather than the vision of another 400 years here in Gloucester of an ocean centric perspective supporting whatever it takes to perpetuate the sustainable exploitation of the resource, along with that port economy's proven jobs generating effect. All to feed many mouths and support families here and elsewhere with ocean centric jobs.

Continuous damaging of the resource: Approximately a quarter century now of this dictated fleet and catch method stagnation has done little to assure the sustainability of regional fish stocks. While climate change is increasingly quoted by NMFS as a serious element, NMFS prohibition of advanced least carbon boats and thus the emergence of much more selective and yet economically plausible catch methods has worked contrary to not just our economic interests here on the working waterfront, but also continues to violate its congressional mandate to sustainably manage the public's resource as outlined in MSA. A backwards fleet and under-evolved catch methods constitute a severe long term liability working against the plausible sustainability of the resource.

This is forcing even more importing of seafood from uncertain and often unsustainable sources overseas, now past the 92% mark of all seafood in the US, if one can be sure what it actually is. Whatever the at times lyrical names of seafood from faraway may suggest, the farther from anyone's plates the seafood comes from, the more high carbon it is by sheer transportation effort and thus the less sustainable it is. The more carbon in the atmosphere, the more ends up absorbed by the ocean, altering its chemistry towards acidification while warming the waters for species dependent upon previously cooler waters. At the end of this vector stands shrinking viability of common and familiar food fish species.

Manipulated mutant species appear to carry extraordinary risks to the long term viability of naturally occurring siblings. And so far, many fish farm models still use more fish to be fed to the farmed fish than is being produced in the end, meaning over exploitation of cheap trash fish (or something) to be processed into fish meal at an astonishingly accumulating carbon cost at every step.

Only vegetarian farmed fish may offer advantages, still though depending upon how and where their feed is generated, where their waste goes and what is actually in their waste in terms of growth and health related pharmaceuticals, and pesticide residue from the veggie feed production, etc. A dark tale.

Well wait, there is more! Here, as promised earlier, this should explain why all of this is being revisited in this unhappy Chapter 18.

New England Fisheries Management

Council (NEFMC) Meeting, November '16 in Newport Rhode Island, more retrenchment, deeper into the high carbon mindset. As touched on, our agenda continued to be pursued, such as during the ramp up to the 2014 discard of tonnage. This issues cluster simply is too important to leave the existing myopic viewpoint unchallenged, too important to Gloucester, New England and by now from this narrative you know how far this reverberates, if you were not already ahead of the game via Chapter 1 through 17.

I kept nagging the NEFMC to revisit this tragic regulatory failure. While they discarded tonnage in '14, they did not yield on, or did not understand, the point of favoring weight over length. Shifting from length, tonnage and horsepower to weight and horsepower would at long last, after well over two decades, open the door towards fishermen and their ports reasserting dynamic agility in the exploration of much more suitable boats that could then also support the evolution of much more advanced selective fishing methods. So I had at it some more.

On August '23 I was invited to address the Executive Committee of NEFMC with a 20 minute presentation, along with a matching handout for each present in which I made the points we had first mentioned in our first appearance at a public NEFMC meeting in March 2003. After my 20 minutes, a 50 minute discussion commenced, however, despite the caliber of folks in the room, discussion was still at the level of comprehension and inquiry we first encountered in tired fishermen coming in from a fishing trip and not eager to talk much with us. Odd angles on their apparently not getting the difference between length and weight included doubts about whether one could force fishermen into such craft, as if that had ever been proposed in word or print anywhere, along with doubts by marine biologist, lawyers and administrators about the seaworthiness of low carbon craft, etc, judgments they clearly were not qualified to make.

While I was pleased to be invited, the questions posed to me and the discussion between these high powered policymakers suggested little study of the material I had sent them in preparation for this first such discussion ever of this topic at that level. So I proposed a second round, now based on just the study of my handout. But none was convened. At least I had been heard (sort of) after being introduced as being very persistent.

During the next full NEFMC meeting in September, based on a range of policy initiatives I had offered, several were compressed into two items as part of the list of proposed 2017 NEFMC priorities. Both were officially introduced with me being invited to offer a brief outline as well. Sounded good enough to me. The matter had never gotten this far since March of '03.

This November NEFMC meeting would see the Council decide. By early November I found in the public package of documents for that meeting that a survey of Council members had resulted in the matter being deemed of not enough interest to put on the Council's 2017 schedule. At the day of the vote I outlined one more time why this would be indeed a historic decision for this Council on America's Oldest Working Waterfront, between rich opportunities to lead the nation towards a much more sustainable fishing fleet structure or to slam the door shut against any relief for fishermen, fleet, ports, communities

and indeed the resource.

Live streamed, and with full introduction, the New England Fisheries Management Council voted against even just discussing this matter for the first time ever before the full assembled body! Their vote thus reflected no resonance with their personal copy of the August presentation or that final email just days before that vote. That vote was not to be on any grand moves, any programmatic changes or new legalese. On November 17, 2016, NEFMC was the first Council in the US to have had this issue before it, just for a first round of a full and open public discussion, and it voted against putting it even on the agenda.

This was quite a public display of indifference, the faithful perpetuation of that '94 myopia and utter obliviousness that this would not be a good thing for any voting council member to have done on the public and political record! Under MSA before the public and even under Trump, mindlessly damaging a small business based fleet, its communities and thus the long term domestic seafood supply seems imprudent. The NEFMC Executive Committee had dated their vote against the issues cluster November 4 '16, well before the election on November 8, so they really meant it, perfectly unencumbered by outside considerations. A clean display of their true perspective.

But someone must have voted in favor of this? Not the Federal Regional Administrator for New England, suggesting an idiosyncratic view of the MSA mandates in general and his role within NMFS and thus NOAA, along with an optimistic outlook of his personal professional reputation moving towards retirement, apparently eager to go out on a distinct note. No assuming policy leadership here towards an integrated view of fleet, resource, socioeconomics of fishing ports, and commensurate political opportunities.

None of the state or NOAA/NMFS related scientists saw any science philosophical problem kicking this topic off the agenda the first time it got on it ever in any of the eight national Fisheries Management Districts! And this would make them (mostly publicly paid) scientists defending in public an ugly high carbon legacy based on embarrassing errors by ignorant rule makers of decades earlier. Why any scientist would want to be known as stonewalling science-based deliberations is an odd question. But their names are now on the record!

None of the states' emissaries to this regional Council, the folks there to actually represent the given state's fishing communities, whose mayors may well be assumed to never get to hear any of this.

No representatives of the fishing industry stepped forward either to argue for at least a discussion this once later in 2017. That one I did see coming. Hostility to the cause since earliest days, especially by our local chiefs here in Gloucester, but also in Chatham, Massachusetts, and the nation's richest by income port of New Bedford. The latter has gone belly up once before with whaling after someone found oil in Pennsylvania. New Bedford's fishing income stems primarily from scalloping, with ocean acidification, not only on the west coast but also already in Long Island Sound, shown to weaken the growth of these critters due to creeping acidification of ocean water in these first regions, with much worse to come.

Gloucester is ailing, with fewer trying to

make a living in groundfish, with more going lobstering. However, south of Cape Cod increasing water temperatures have given rise to a nasty shell disease already with nothing to stop this from creeping north. Having a long time ago agreed to this ugly set of '94 regs, these leaders never felt like reconsidering those erroneous decisions, not even to take measures to boost the fleet's resilience, now by late '16 voting against even just discussing one way out of the worst of situations in their industry here in New England.

Also, no letters of support by the usual eco groups such as the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), Pew Charitable Trust (PEW), Conservation Law Foundation (CLF), Ocean Conservancy, Oceania, Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI), Penobscot East Resource Center, etc, to advance the issue of much "greener" boats! The Council's Science and Statistics Committee (SSC), run by a PhD from EDF, had nothing good to say about the idea of just discussing green fishing craft, a conviction he has displayed towards us across many, many years now. No abstentions either? Someone must have had a self protecting spark of unease? Nope.

That would leave the possibility of a strong annoyance factor with Phil's and my inputs over the years, our (and later my) persistence in making our case. It may well be this results from a flat out irritation with our strange idea that boats should have something to do with running the commercial fishing industry, aggravation to the max with our claim that sustainable boats are a prerequisite for any hopes to get anywhere near sustainable fisheries management ambitions. So an example had to be made of this disruption by disruptive people offering disruptive ideas.

Or could it be that the lack of awareness of the importance of the boats exhibited by

those marine biologists, lawyers and administrators in 1994 when arriving at their definition of best thinking at NMFS New England here in Gloucester is still being applied on New England's coast?

Now how could all this be? Irving Janis' book on group think is always worth a refresher look. Thomas Kuhn's outline of how paradigm shifts occur in science (and elsewhere) would clearly find no traction here quite yet. DSM-V, however, might offer some reference to a syndrome under the mass hysteria heading.

This was cause for me to be aggravated, exasperated, down and heavy hearted (for a moment) on the one hand. Yes, by Jove! What this has cost us since mid 2002 in energy, resources, opportunity cost. We were trying to help!

And then came the rush of unbridled delight in that performance of all those policymakers in full public light, with names and associations attached, to strut their fierce determination with not even one abstention as far as I could tell. Only a third rate movie script would have gone for that implausible plot line. A united front in late 2016 against even talking about the possibilities around green fishing boats?

National NMFS/NOAA HQ in Silver Spring, Maryland, may have different practices. Question is how they'd want be seen in the context of that November 17, 2016 NEFMC vote. In the age of telephones, faxes and the internet they are bound to find out whether any of this in NOAA's interest.

What would President Elect Trump make of such a case of persistent multi decade regulatory overreach damaging small businesses, their towns, their port infrastructure, their jobs and tax base? We may find out.

In the meantime, there are no immediate prospects of aligning the economics of the

fleet with the ecology of the resource quite yet. However, the next time you purchase fresh wild caught fish, you'll know what an unsustainably high carbon fleet your meal likely came from, apart from a few notable exceptions. And about that fine fish with that nice blue MSC label attached, claiming utmost levels of virtue along its whole path on to your plate, looking at their standards online you'll notice that they don't care either whether the fish came off a high carbon sled glistening in the sun with heavy crude all over or whether it came from the least carbon conceivable mega modern near scifi boat ever devised to gently convince fish to be harvested. MSC has not discovered yet either that boats are part of the supply chain. No joke this. When you ask them here in the US or in their UK HQ, they refer to evolving policies possibly in that direction, or some such mumblings. The elixir imbibed under the gaze of her majesty?

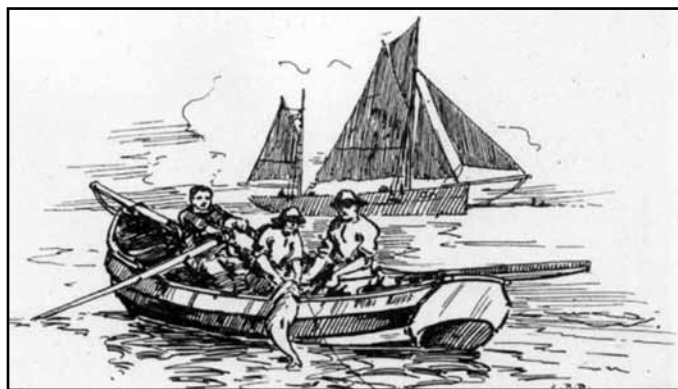
And thus the circle is closed, the "boats don't matter in commercial fishing" mania penetrating through near every level of analysis and related pious claims, at least around certain sectors of this globe. Good thing then that you have just had your fill of sturdy incorruptible wisdom, borne of over 14 years of determination, rooted in decades of balancing design priorities, the steady focus on the essential, a brush with, shall we say it, virtue in the face of dark myopia. After all, you read it first here in *MAIB*, beginning with Chapter 1 on July 1, 2007. And by now the full brass section should be at it in full harmony parting your hair for maximum emotional effect.

Will there be a Chapter 19, or even 20? Less plausible things have come to pass. Writing this in late 2016, 2017 looks to be quite interesting indeed. Stuff to get done.

300hp straining to move that lumpy hull at just over hull speed.



Two sister ships almost half as wide as they are long.



A few columns back I suggested using dog training pads as a place to put oily/greasy engine items. The absorbent part of the pad would hold the oil/grease and it could all be wrapped up when finished because the plastic backing would hold everything nicely. Those pads are a bit expensive and not that large. In the supermarket the other day I came across an alternative that might be a better choice in some cases as it is less expensive than dog training pads and it is much larger. The item is a plastic backed, absorbent tablecloth. Food and drink spills are absorbed and when the meal is over you wrap it all up in the plastic for disposal. What works for food and drink should also work for oil and grease. The tablecloth provides a much larger area to place things and would probably fit in the bilge by the engine better. Reader responses on this option would be appreciated.

One of my "clean ups" is the disposal of a collection of tools I have acquired over the years. Each of our three vehicles had a toolbox with an assortment of wrenches, pliers, screwdrivers and the like, as well as a shovel, a tow chain and jumper cables. When we sold the GTO, that toolbox and other items became my "reserve." After donating our boat to a charity group, I had two more toolboxes (one electrical and one mechanical) and a metric/standard socket set that was no longer needed.

The metric/standard socket set was left over from our Sisu 22, which had a Perkins diesel. The Perkins had both metric and standard nuts and bolts so both types of sockets (and wrenches) were needed. While I did not need the metric for the Sisu 26's engine, the standard sockets were useful now and then.



From the Lee Rail

By C. Henry Depew

Oh yes, I also have in storage my father's entire tool set and he did not throw anything away either (want an offset wrench to adjust the timing on an old Chevy block?). The current "winter" project is to get all the tools together and sort out all the extras. What is to be done with the spare tools in another matter.

Clean fuel on a boat is an important item. My Sisu 22 had two large fuel filters and used an electric fuel pump to push the fuel through the filters as the mechanical pump at the engine was not designed for the suction needed. I found this out one day on the St Marks River when the Perkins engine quit while heading out. After putting out the anchor, I bled the injectors and the engine restarted, only to fail as soon as I advanced the throttle. Anchor back out to hold the boat against the current (a lot of oyster bars in the river). I had a fuel problem of some sort and decided to call for assistance on my CB.

I was answered by a nearby boat with a friend of ours onboard his Grand Banks 32. Under tow back to the marina I worked on the fuel problem. Once more the engine started, only to quit when I advanced the throttle. The boat idled at two knots so we dropped off the tow when we were opposite the boat's berth

and idled in and tied up. A diesel mechanic I knew stopped by and after some testing said I needed an electric fuel pump or I needed to remove the extra filters. I elected for the electric fuel pump and he installed one for me. No more problems for the rest of the time we owned the boat.

The diesel fuel filter on our Sisu 26 had a clear bowl that allowed us to look at the condition of the filter (and the amount of sediment in the bottom) without removing the filter. Between the fuel tanks and the main fuel filter I had a "day tank" arrangement that trapped most of the water and sediment and could be drained separately. It also had a clear section of the tubing used that allowed me to see how things were going. Due to the way I had arranged the fuel system, the main filter (and the second one at the high pressure pump) did not need to be changed that often.

Changing a fuel filter (diesel or gas) on the water is not a fun job. I carried a plastic gallon jug with part cut away so I still had the handle and room for the fuel filter to drop into the container to minimize spillage that seems to always occur during the process. Friends with a standard fuel filter in the system had to change the filter on a regular basis. More than one of them had engine/fuel problems on rough days when the junk in the fuel tank clogged the filter. Such changing is always easier to do tied up at the boat's berth.

A lot of car and boat fuel tanks have wire filters in the tanks that can become clogged. In the case of a fuel tank in a boat, the rocking and rolling of the boat will often displace the material clogging the filter when the engine is shut down for a short time. If this approach does not work, there are two other solutions to the problem. One is to carry a can of compressed air to blow the line clean each time the in-tank filter clogged (not the best solution) and the other is to clean out the tank and replace the clogged in-tank filter.

I once pumped in a load of "bad" fuel into my car's tank and had the clogged in-tank problem. When the engine started giving an indication of a clogged filter I would stop the car, turn off the engine, get out and "rock" the back of the car to move the fuel around in the tank and unplug the in-tank filter. I finally replaced the tank when I went over the Sunshine Skyway Bridge at 45mph because that was as fast as the car would go. Replacing a vehicle's fuel tank is a lot less effort than doing so on a boat, which is why there are firms that will come and clean the fuel and tank in the boat (expensive but worth it given the alternative).

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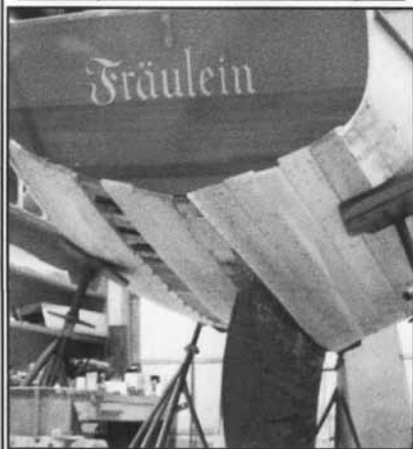
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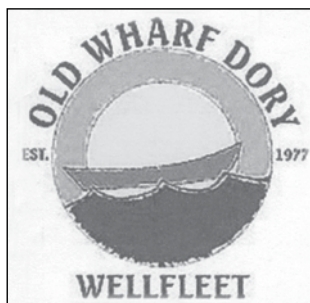
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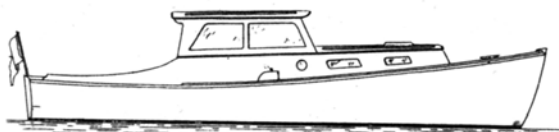


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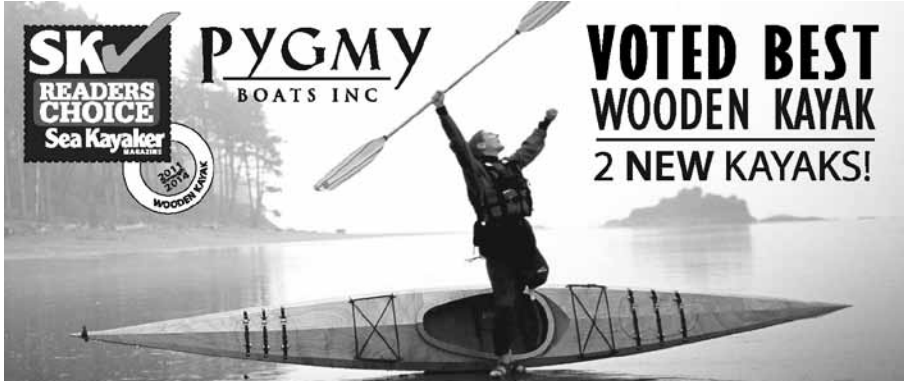
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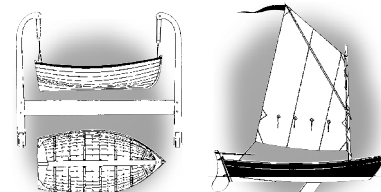


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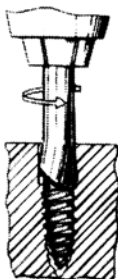
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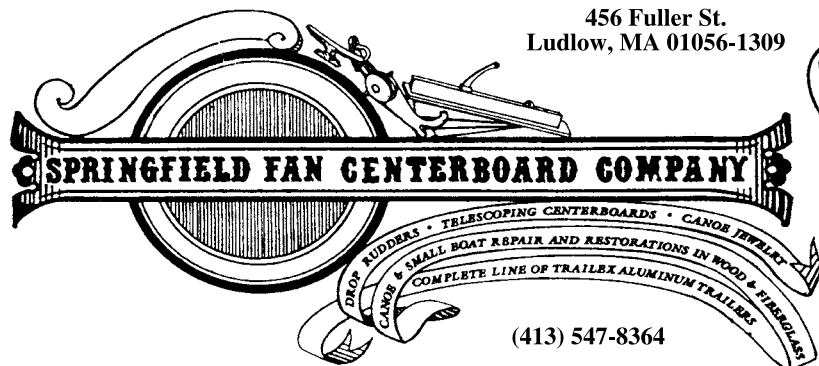
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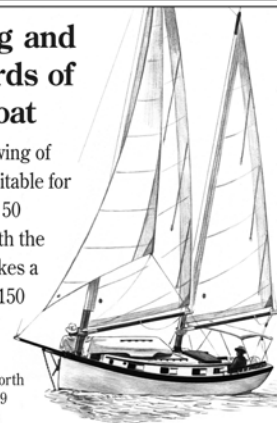
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This photo was taken at the Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival a few years ago. Sandy Goodall, a sail designer from British Columbia, asked if he could borrow our wooden boat to compete in the race. We said sure and took a few minutes to teach him how to row it. A few months later he ordered a Kevlar guideboat, which we shipped to him. The following year he again borrowed our wooden boat. In this photo he was approaching the race-committee boat and they yelled out to him, "HEY, GET OUT OF THE WAY. CAN'T YOU SEE, THERE'S A RACE COMING."

Sandy called back, "YES, I KNOW. I THINK I JUST WON IT."



In a few weeks we will again be bringing our boats to Canoecopia in Madison, Wisconsin. Dates are March 10-12. As of this writing, in the last days of 2016, we have 3 slots available on our trailer. (Yes, sales have been good.) If you'd like your boat in one of those slots, give us a call. Free or modestly priced delivery along our route.