
JOHN GARDNER TSCA NEWS NOTES

The Latest from Around Our Chapter

This latest issue of our informal “News Notes” is offered as a way of keeping in touch during these times of COVID Restrictions. We in JGTSCA have held off on monthly meetings but this month we held our first on-the-water activity for the year and plan another October 11th. It looks like we may move to Phase 3 next week as Connecticut continues to improve our numbers. Progress is being made!

September’s Oar & Sail Outing:



At 10 am Saturday, September 19th we launched from the Burrows Ball Field ramp off South Road, ducked under the rail bridge and rowed between the old trolley line bridge abutments to nose in beside the runway to hoist sail. A Spring tide brought lots of water; it was hard to find the “beach”. Parts of the parking lot on the State Park side were flooded; folks were kayaking around parked cars. Plenty entertaining. René steered our Peapod; I rowed. It was a brisk and rousing sail! Phil Behney brought two JGTSCA dories. He rowed one; Michael and Kristin Culbertson rowed the other. The three of them circumnavigated the island next to the park, just north of the beach. I didn’t even know there was a channel back there! Brian Cooper brought his fabric-on-frame rowing boat sporting a new sail; it really flies down-wind! We caught up with Brian at the “Beach” along the runway for a quick snack, then it was off for some more spirited sailing. On the way back we did a mid-bay down-rig as the breeze abated a bit and the tide ebbed. By 2 pm we were all back at the ramp, exchanging stories and trying out each other’s boats. A good time was had by all. It is good to be back out rowing and sailing.



And this from Mystic Seaport Museum:

Mystic Seaport Museum (MSM) Boathouse has been very busy this summer. With indoor venues closed, folks have waited up to an hour and a half to “rent” a Livery boat for free. Individual rowing experience varied as one would expect. A practice rowing station was built with bench and oarlocks on which to practice. Folks found rowing different than paddling. Large, flat bottomed skiffs like “George”, the John Atkins’ 16 ft. Ration Skiff, were most popular. Three working skiffs from the Shipyard were pressed into service as passenger load increased. Small boats like “Captain Hook”, the Whitehall shaped yacht tender, were also heavily used as were two Beetle Cats which, for expediency, were accessed from the docks. Stop by and try them out; they are not scheduled to be hauled until October 17th.

It is interesting that multi-oared gig programs around the country are on hold but small single or family oar and sail boats are in demand. Ed McCabe at Hull Lifesaving Museum has a call out for “barn boats” to rehab for next summer’s program. MSM, in the meantime, is rebuilding Livery boats one at a time in full public view in the exhibit space at the River end of the Thompson Building. Stop by and watch Shipwrights like Walter Ansel steam bend and replace frames as well as replace and and caulk fresh cedar planks.

The 2020 Dyer Dhow Derby will be held on October 10th at 10 a.m. at the Seaport’s Sailing Center. Registration is free to yacht clubs, sailing associations and individuals who have donated to or supported the Dyer Dhow fleet. The race is open to all. Except for a suggested donation of \$20, there is no fee for an individual to register or for the use of a boat. To register, email Liz at elizabeth.sistare@mysticseaport.org or call the Museum Sailing Center at 860-572-5369.

Mystic Seaport Ship Modeler Activities:

This from Bob Andrie: “Hi all, I hope everyone is well and staying safe. About half-a-dozen or so of us had a good time at the (abbreviated) engine show back on August 15th, and Hans Berger organized two more events at the floating docks Sept. 12 and Sept. 26. Covid precautions are being observed and I have to say I did feel quite safe, especially considering that the events are held entirely outside. Otherwise, we're definitely holding the group together and simply waiting this out, hoping that the situation improves and we can get back to regular meetings and events, whenever that may be.

Last Saturday (the 26th) we had the last of our bi-weekly Saturday R/C and display shows on the floating docks at the Seaport. Thank you Hans Berger for organizing these. We had sail and powerboats running most of the time through the day and the visitors on shore appear to have enjoyed it very much. We're now looking to see if there are enough people interested in holding our annual Ship Model Building Demonstration some time in October.”

Mike Wick Returns:

In a sequel to the early August Delaware river TSCA Camp Cruise Mike, responds to our query, “Who designed and built your 16 ft. Melonseed”. His reply: “She is a John Brady design. She was built by Carl Weissinger. Only two were built, the other was built at the seaport and is still there. I went back to Barn Island on Monday, alone and just got home again, three days of perfect sailing, if a little wet this morning. Except for Assateague, it has become my favorite for Boomtent camping, either alone or as a group. The birds, the beach, the Pawcatuck River, just right. MIKE” (I think Mike just coined a new term for overnighting aboard, “Boom Tenting”- Ed.)



A Video Clip of Brian Cooper's New Sail:

As we continue to follow Brian Cooper's sail design and fabrication, here is a short clip of his latest effort: “Here is a link to a short clip of my sailing yesterday. Trying out a new tiller design. Not much wind yesterday but this was the biggest wind of the day. Brian” <http://www.connyak.org/Rainbow.mp4>

Our Latest Correspondence:

Mike Axelsson, a Senior at the USCG Academy, dropped us a line expressing interest in our TSCA group. I replied w/ info, explained that we build, repair, talk about and use our traditional boats and copied member Professor Matt McKenzie who replied supportively, I think: “Hi Mike, I teach at Avery Point, so if you're ever wishing a socially distant tour of the campus, please let me know—I'd be happy to show you around. This is a great group: my students have benefitted from their generosity and wisdom (and occasionally patience) many times. You'll learn much! Best, Matt”

An Update from Building 36:

From the Avery Point Boathouse, Dory Manager Phil Behney reports : “Shop activities are moving along nicely, I have had several people offer assistance, but have not been able to get my act together to coordinate times. There are two Dories nearing completion and I plan to order some more Davis style oarlocks . The interiors need to be painted and we have about a half-gallon of paint; may need to get more. Number 4 is sanded on interior and number 2 Dory needs sanding and minor repair on transom. As soon as these two boats leave the shop we can bring in the new club project the "Swampscott Dory". Remember that it is parking ticket season if you visit the shop during school class hours. Friday's and weekend's are safe.” (There is a convenient App available to pay for parking, “PayByPhone”. Just input your parking area number and length of expected time. It will remind you as expiration approaches. - Ed.)

Save the Date: October 11th:

And this just in from Phil Behney: “I am planning a row for October 11th, a Sunday. I would like to do this one on the Thames river so it is not for the squeamish as there is large shipping and military comings and goings. This could qualify as a "Indigenous people/ Columbus day/Halloween Row” all in one! This is a very exciting and interesting area to row, lots of history and sites to see. We would leave from the "Ken Streeter" CT State boat ramp under the Gold Star Bridge under I-95 on the Groton side. There are several options for which direction we take from there. There are to the north, sunken wrecks, old shipyards, Coast Guard Academy, Submarine base, Mamecoke nature preserve , and to the south, old Town Mill accessible through under street tunnels, Tug Boat operations, State pier, City pier, and more! High tide will be at 5:30am and low at 11:30 am so we would be rowing an ebbing mid-tide depending on a start time of 8am. I hope to be done by 11am. We could even do a lunch back at the club on Avery Point if there is any interest. Novices will definitely be required to have an experienced rower with them and we all must use our PFD's this time of year, safety is paramount for all.”

Another 17th Century Visitor:



Here is a photo of the “Kalmar Nyckel”, fresh off the Seaport Shiplift: 9/22/20. To see her underway, view a stunning video at <https://vimeo.com/185652443> The original ship was built by the Dutch in 1625 and carried Swedish colonists to New Castle County, Delaware in 1638. The replica is a bit younger, having been launched in Wilmington, DE in 1997. A little known story, the Swedes were led by a former leader of Dutch New Amsterdam. After settling, they started offering Native Americans better prices for pelts than the Dutch, who considered the “South River” (the Delaware) their territory. That ticked off Peter Stuyvesant who mounted a military expedition that reestablished Dutch control. Meanwhile, the Native Americans, who had better communications than Stuyvesant, counterattacked the Dutch in Yonkers while he was away. Ah, we think we live in interesting times.