

JGTSCA



John Gardner Traditional Small Craft Association

Welcome to the John Gardner Chapter of the
Traditional Small Craft Association

Visit us at the Community Boat House: Building #36 UCONN Avery Point
1084 Shennecossett Rd, Groton, CT 06340

Welsford “Navigator” update as well as Winter Maintenance on Rowing Craft
at UCONN Avery Point Boat House Building 36

Next Meeting: Sunday, April 7th at 11 am at the Community Boathouse
Rowing and Sailing gatherings occur during three seasons with special programs and visits planned throughout the year. All are welcome.

Local: www.facebook.com/JGTSCA and <http://www.jgtasca.org>



News from around the Chapter

Welcome to the John Gardner Chapter of the Traditional Small Craft Association! Visit us at the Community Boathouse, Building #36, on the University of Connecticut’s Avery Point campus in Groton, CT. We invite you to attend one of our gatherings, go for a row, a sail or get involved in our next boatbuilding project.

Upcoming Events:

Meeting of the John Gardner Chapter of the Traditional Small Craft Association:

Sunday, April 7th at 11 am at the Community Boathouse, Building 36 on the UCONN Avery Point Campus. Free Parking on Sundays. Short Meeting followed by interactive program. Program Topic: “Simplified Sharpening” - Hands-on: bring your pocket knives, chisels, hand pruners, what have you, and up their edge with tools from our new kit.

We also have plenty of Boathouse chisels to experiment with...minimal talk, maximum participation. Invite your boating friends. For those who have not visited us before, attached is a map doctored by John Hacunda which shows the location of Building 36 (in red).

Upcoming Events (cont'd)

From our host, UCONN Avery Point, an invitation to join UCONN AP and CT Sea Grant for the 28th season of their Coastal Perspectives Lecture Series. This annual lecture series spans the breadth of human interactions with coastal waters, including speakers from the natural and social sciences as well as humanities.

Coastal Perspectives Lecture Series:

Tuesday, April 2, 2024; 7:30 p.m.

Michaela J. Thompson, Ph.D., Sustainability & Environmental Management, Harvard Extension School

Shadows in the Water: What Sharks Tell Us About Ourselves

Tuesday, April 16, 2024; 7:30 p.m.

James T. Carlton, Ph.D., Professor of Marine Sciences Emeritus at Williams College and Director Emeritus of the Williams College-Mystic Seaport Maritime Studies Program

Krystal Rose, M.F.A., Curator of Collections, Mystic Seaport Museum

Spineless: The Magical World of Marine Invertebrates, and Perspectives on our Finger on the Pulse of Changes in Coastal Invertebrate Diversity

Visit the website for more details on the presenters and their topics: <https://marinesciences.uconn.edu/lectures/>

Want to Join us at the Live Event, In-Person?

The event is hosted in the Avery Point Auditorium (AUD): [Directions](#) | [Campus Map.pdf](#).

Parking is free after 5 p.m.; closest lots are near the library (LIB) or in Lot B. Enter from the Academic Building main entrance, the auditorium is on second floor at the end of the hall (mobility-disabled accessible); or enter through or near the Student Center and go up two flights of stairs.

Want to Join the Online Lecture?

Click to sign on: <https://uconn-cmr.webex.com/uconn-cmr/j.php?MTID=mc2942830413ac0a17ac284d44bacdb8f>

- Meeting number (access code): 2634 524 4333
- Event password: coastal
- Join the audio conference only:
- +1-415-655-0002 US Toll
- Use meeting number (access code) shown above.

Lead Article: Sid Whalen's Article on Guideboats

Sid Whalen was a great and good friend of the Traditional Small Craft Association and in particular our John Gardner Chapter. As a remembrance to him, attached is a copy of his article from the December 1978 issue of the "Ash Breeze" that Sid sent us just this January.

Dear Bill,

I thought you might like to have this copy of an early Ash Breeze.

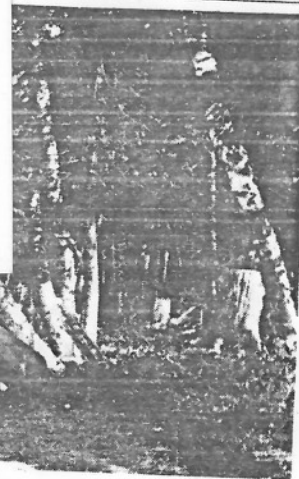


Thanks for the cover of my gift to the John Gardner Chapter.

Deeply appreciated.
Stay Well! Sid

EEZE Association

December, 1978



Courtesy - Adirondack Museum

The Adirondack Guideboat by Sidney Whelan, Jr.

One of the sweetest experiences is to step gingerly into an Adirondack guideboat. Helpful hands will get you clear of the dock, and after a minute of threading your way through the congestion, you are ready to pull a half dozen good strokes. That will put you well out in the harbor. It's like kicking off from the side of a swimming pool and gliding halfway across. Guideboats are fast. A guide once rowed a mile on Raquette Lake in 7 minutes.

Not that Adirondack guideboats were built for racing. They were developed by several generations of woodsmen who required a light boat that could be carried on a man's shoulders between lakes or around rapids. They also required a boat with generous carrying capacity: the guide, his client (the "Sport!"), enough gear and food for two weeks in the woods, perhaps a hunting dog and, hopefully a 200-pound buck on occasion. To do that job, the typical guideboat was 16 feet overall and double ended, with a beam of about 38 inches. Fully loaded, her freeboard would be 6 to 7 inches, and she would be rowed from the bow. A man (or woman) can row such a boat all day without fatigue (assuming, of course, no strong head wind), while a canoe with two paddlers would have a hard time covering as much water.

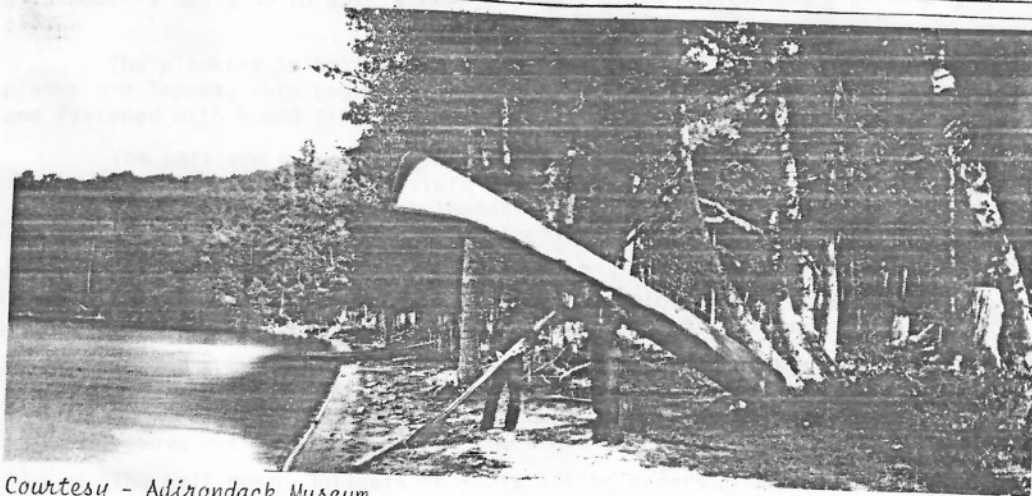
Why not the birchbark canoe for all those purposes? One answer is that by the mid-19th Century, when the guideboat was developed, the Indian and his canoe had about disappeared from the Adirondacks. Another reason may be simply that among the early settlers were carpenters from the New England coast with boat building skills. Pride and prejudice would keep them from copying the Indian canoe.

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The ASH BREEZE

The Traditional Small Craft Association
Newsletter

Vol. 1 No 4 December, 1978



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The 16-foot guideboat weighs 70 to 80 pounds with all equipment--seats, oars and carrying yoke. The planking is 3/16" pine or white cedar over natural crook spruce root ribs. Stem and stern are also natural crook, cut from spruce stumps.

With its relatively high stem and stern, and pronounced "sheer," the guideboat is designed to safely ride the chop of an Adirondack lake on a gusty day.

The planking is hollow planed to fit the curve of the ribs, and the planks are lapped, with paper-thin edges. The fit is smooth as antique inlay, and fastened with 4,000 tiny copper tacks and 1,500 brass screws.

The oars are generally maple, with a fixed oarlock so they cannot be feathered. This feature may disturb the competitive oarsman, but for a fisherman it's a great advantage. Your hands can be free for handling the rod and the windward oar will be out straight from the boat, acting as a rudder and stabilizer.

The seats are caned for lightness and comfort, and the stern seat is fitted with a back. Sometimes the center seat also has a back.

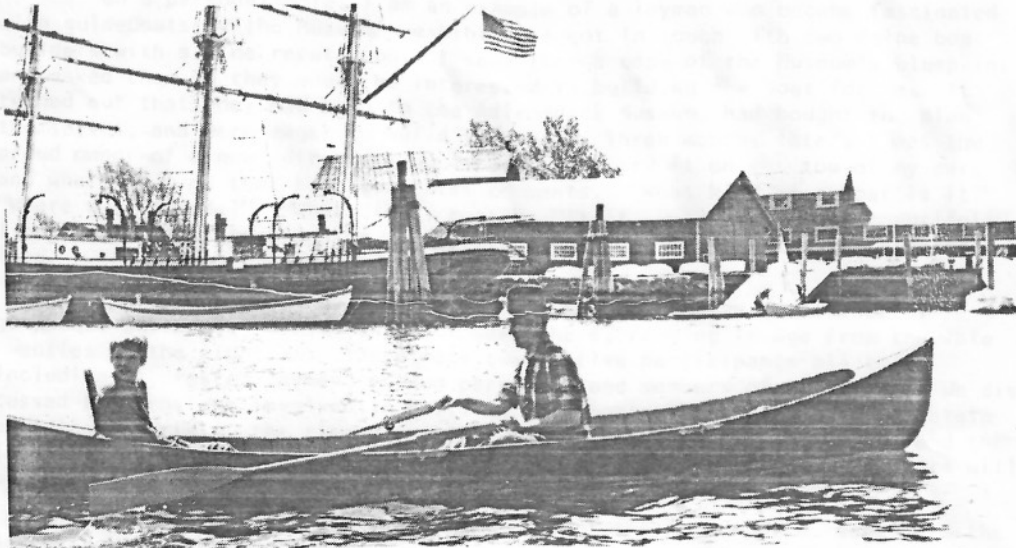
Toting a guideboat over rugged "carries" between lakes can be a sweaty business, but if you're in decent shape and don't overdo it, it's not so bad. The yoke places the weight on your shoulders, and the boat balances with the bow well above eye level so you can see where you're going.

The half dozen builders that are taking orders today count 300 hours of labor to build a guideboat, not including the grueling task of pulling spruce stumps and cutting the roots free. In the 1930's, John Blanchard of Raquette Lake sold his 13-foot model for \$75. Today the price would be thirty times that.

The Adirondack guideboat is a superb achievement of design and carpentry. It is elegant to the eye and a dream to row. Exploring the shoreline of a lake, with the bottom flashing by and the water hissing below his gunwales, gives the city dweller what he may need most--exercise, peace and beauty. (continued on page 4)



Michael Austin rowing a guideboat built in 1973



Sidney Whelan rowing an Adirondack guideboat

*Mary Anne Stets, photo
Mystic Seaport, Inc.*

The Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake is the place for the small craft enthusiast to be steeped in every aspect of the guideboat. The Museum specializes in the history of man's relationship to the Adirondacks. Until the advent of the automobile, travel by water was a principal factor in the development of the Adirondacks. Water travel provides the thrust for one of the Museum's most elaborate exhibits--the Callahan Memorial Boat Building. This building uses imaginative exhibition techniques and modern conservation apparatus, such as humidity control, in displaying representative small craft from the Northeast. Included are steam launches and other early powered boats, a white-hull skiff from New York harbor, a Maine salmon wherry, a New England dory, the remains of an 18th century batteau from Lake George, etc.

The core of the exhibit is the Adirondack Guideboat. Over a dozen guideboats are arranged around a mannikin of a guide carrying his boat. The history of each boat is there--including the builder and his accomplishments. One guideboat is mounted on the wall, with labels explaining the components of the boat. Also displayed are the working tools and building materials. The building techniques and methods are explained by means of a partially completed, full size guideboat, and a recording takes the visitor through the various steps of construction.

In addition to the boats on exhibit are another forty guideboats in storage at the Museum, and a reference library which includes most of the known writings on the subject--as well as plans and detailed drawings.

The Museum, in collaboration with Mystic Seaport, has published a blueprint of a 13-foot guideboat, which is sold at the Museum shop.

The Adirondack Museum attracts up to 90,000 visitors in its mid-June to mid-October season, and the boat building is one of the most popular exhibits. Some visitors are small craft builders. Others are laymen who enjoy recreational rowing.

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On a personal note, I am an example of a layman who became fascinated with guideboats by the Museum's exhibit. I got in touch with two Maine boat builders with a fine reputation. I sent them a copy of the Museum's blueprint and asked them if they would be interested in building the boat for me. It turned out that they had been to the Adirondack Museum, had bought the plan themselves, and were eager to build the boat. Three months later, I was the proud owner of a new Adirondack guideboat. I carry it on the top of my car, and wherever I go that boat generates comments. "What kind of a boat is it?" "Where was it made?" "What did it cost?" "It is tippy?" "How beautiful!" I get these comments stopping at traffic lights, at state parks, in parking lots.

In 1975, the Adirondack Museum sponsored a two-day conference of guideboat builders. Eleven builders were there, ranging in age from the late twenties to the eighties. There were twenty-five participants all told, including interested laymen, museum personnel and members of the press. We discussed the problems involved in building guideboats these days--how to obtain building materials, the time and skill involved, the market for boats, and the future of guideboat building. It was a most worthwhile meeting, and there will probably be additional meetings.

Here are a few miscellaneous efforts of the Museum with respect to the Adirondack guideboat:

1. The Museum has helped to sponsor prizes for the best restoration of guideboats, and also for the annual 46-mile race between Long Lake and Tupper Lake.

2. The Museum has published Kenneth Durant's Guide-Boat Days and Ways, and, in conjunction with his widow, are preparing to publish Durant's manuscript on the guideboat which will be a definitive work on the subject.

3. The Museum has displayed a guideboat at the National Boat Show in New York. It shared space with the Antique and Classic Boat Association, which displayed a St. Lawrence skiff and a mahogany powerboat. These were the only handcrafted wooden boats in a sea of fiberglass and the public's response was revealing: almost without exception they discernibly "melted" a bit when viewing the several wooden boats in that section.

For the future, part of the exhibits in the Boat Building will be altered so there will be a greater focus on Adirondack boats. In addition, they may install a guideboat building shop.

The Museum is proud of its role in stressing the guideboat as the most important artifact developed in the Adirondacks and is happy to have been a catalyst in reviving interest in the use and building of guideboats.

You may obtain a list of guideboat builders with hopefully current addresses by writing The Adirondack Museum, Blue Mountain Lake, New York, NY. 12812.

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Sidney S. Whelan, Jr. is a past Vice-President of TSCA and has been instrumental in drafting the Association's by-laws. He is presently working on the chapter formation by-laws. His past activities include Vice-President of the American Museum of Natural History. Sidney is the Assistant Director to the New York Community Trust (a charitable foundation) and an avid Adirondack guideboat enthusiast.

Avery Point Boathouse Activities:



Dan Nelson's Chesapeake Light Craft "Passagemaker" was completed to a high degree of finish and moved out to Dan's Garage for yet another coat of paint and varnish, or perhaps a cameo appearance back in the (warm) Boathouse for the final-final touches.

In a coordinated switch, Dan's boat went out and Steve Machesney's Welsford "Navigator" came in. First off, Steve took a look at the forward opening in the coaming, which water seems to find ("Green water over the Bow"). He goes out in the big waves. First tried was a squared off cross coaming piece. Then Phil Behney came in with the idea of curved front. Steve is thinking on it. Come by Friday evenings at 6 pm and join in the discussion...



Mystic Seaport Ship Modelers

Scribe Gene McNatt shared the current schedule per their recent March meeting:

The Tug Show and Train Show are now scheduled for June. Both shows will be held in the Mason Conference Room located on the west side of the Thompson Building. Schedule as follows: Show day hours are 10 am to 5 pm.

Saturday June 8th to Wednesday June 12th – Tug Show

Thursday June 13th swap out day – Tug Show removal, Train Show Set-up

Friday June 14th to Tuesday June 18th Train Show

The Current schedule for downstairs display of ship models in the John Gardner Boat Shop has the room available starting in early May.

Gene reminded members that the Ship Model Conference and Show at the Port-N-Starboard, Ocean Beach Park in New London will be held on Saturday April 27th. From 9 am to 3 pm.

The group meets the second Saturday of the month upstairs in the John Gardner Boat Shop. Techniques and progress on models is shared. Consider joining.

MysticSeaportShipModelers@gmail.com

Mystic Seaport Boat Livery:



Pete Culler's Good Little Skiff "Waldo Howland" got flipped using the overhead roller system. Waldo got a new cypress cross-planked bottom this year and a new paint job with colors selected by the Howland family. We Volunteers meet Thursdays & Saturdays.

This is the 3/7 Thursday crew fm L to Rt: Joe Williams, Jim Morrow, John Malmros, Steve Telsey, Matthew Stuart, Boathouse Supervisor Rosie DiMatteo, Tom Wunder and Terry Sofrin.

Upcoming at Mystic Seaport Museum:

- April 4th - 9:00 AM - Volunteer First Thursday Lecture
- April 9th and 10th - PIRATE DAYS
- April 19th - Member Preview Day for "Entwined" exhibit
- April 20th - "Entwined: Freedom, Sovereignty, and the Sea" Opens to the Public

One of the benefits of being a Volunteer at Mystic Seaport Museum is attending the monthly "First Thursday" gatherings. Here is an upcoming example:

WHO: All Mystic Seaport Volunteers and Staff are all invited to our April First Thursday lecture:

WHAT: "First Thursday" Gathering - Discussion about the upcoming Solar Eclipse with Brian Koehler, Supervisor of the Treworgy Planetarium - "The 2024 Total Solar Eclipse"

WHEN: Thursday, April 4th at 9:00am (Coffee and donuts available before the program starting at 8:45am)

WHERE: Masin Room (back deck of Thompson Building)

HOW: Contact Volunteer Services Coordinator Mary Koehler at mary.koehler@mysticseaport.org to volunteer.

View from the Side Deck:



In response to "What's in your Shop? we just finished a nautical beach chair whose back and seat slide together to take up less space in the boat. Napatree Point here we come!

OK, I showed you mine; you show me yours...what projects do you have this winter?

Oh, and while I have your attention, don't forget your dues: visit JGTSCA.org, print the form, fill it out and send it in with \$15.

Yes, we're not high tech but our

overhead is low...and don't forget National; they pay our event insurance plus send us the "Ash Breeze". Go to TSCA.net and electronically pay your \$35 - they are more high tech...

Please plan to attend our JGTSCA Quarterly Meeting. We'll have some fun sharpening tools and make some plans for Spring and Summer. Yes, they are coming; be patient. Speaking of Summer, it kicks off with the WoodenBoat Show and the JG Small Craft Workshop. Email us to volunteer to help at Smallcrafter@Gmail.com. We have a great group; come participate!

Fair Winds and Sharp Tools, Bill and Karen (drop us a line and tell us what you've been up to)