

JGTSCA



John Gardner Traditional Small Craft Association

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

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

Current Activities Winter Maintenance on Rowing Craft
at UCONN Avery Point Boat House Building 36

Next Meeting: Sunday, April 6th at 1:30 pm at UCONN Avery Point
Community Boat Building #36
1084 Shennecossett Road Groton, CT 06340

Rowing and Sailing gatherings occur during the three seasons with special programs and visits planned throughout the year. All are welcome.

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



THE STEAMSHIP SABINO, NOW OPERATING UNDER OPTIONAL ELECTRIC POWER, IS BEING HAULED OUT THROUGH THE WEEK OF MARCH 10TH FOR ROUTINE MAINTENANCE, BOTTOM PAINT, REPLACE THE STUFFING BOX, THE SHAFT AND SHAFT LOG WILL BE INSPECTED BY SEAPORT SHIPWRIGHTS AS WELL AS THE US COAST GUARD WILL CONDUCT HER BIENNIAL INSPECTION (PHOTO BY MSM)

Breaking News!

The latest news is that **Roger Barnes** from England and Douarnenez, France, President of the Dinghy Cruising Association and star of YouTube camp cruising videos plans to be at our John Gardner Small Craft Workshop during the WoodenBoat Show! He will also be a speaker at the WB Speaker's Series in the Masin Room up at the the north entrance after which Dinghy Cruising Association members will join us on Australia Beach, bring a boat and talk about it to anyone interested in becoming North American members. So start bingeing out on Roger Barnes's YouTube videos...

Supporting funds are being solicited through GoFundMe link: <https://gofund.me/4d4c914e>

What is the Dinghy Cruising Association? Glad you asked...

Our North-Central Member and Dinghy Cruising Assoc. Member John Gearing, answers that question, and more:

The **Dinghy Cruising Association (DCA)**, founded in England in 1955, describes itself as "The friendly club with a sense of adventure. For all sailors who use boats for more than just racing." In the States we tend to think of "dinghies" as very small boats used as tenders for large sail and motor craft. In the context of dinghy cruising, however, the term encompass sail & oar boats up to about 20' LOA. Small outboards are tolerated, and appreciated when the oars grow too heavy and a friendly tow is offered. The DCA's focus is on pleasure sailing in small boats, whether the design be traditional or modern. TSCA was founded to safeguard and preserve traditional designs and methods. These days the term "traditional" has been expanded a bit, to include designs embodying traditional lines while using more modern construction methods such as lapstrake plywood and epoxy. Thus, while the traditional small craft of the TSCA would almost certainly qualify as dinghies, not all DCA dinghies would be termed "traditional" per the tenets of the TSCA. In addition to using small craft, the construction and maintenance of wooden boats are of interest to many TSCA chapters. Some, like our John Gardner chapter, have a workshop where members meet to work on their own or on project boats, providing an environment for members to share their boatbuilding skills and knowledge.

The two groups hold some key interests in common. Both groups are keen to enjoy the use of small boats. DCA members arrange their own meet-ups, typically via the excellent members online forum, for casual sails and overnights. Members also take part in events organized by other organizations, such as the "raids" and festivals that are popular along the French coast. More adventurous members have been known to undertake expeditions, such as sailing across the North Sea to Norway. TSCA members take their boats out on the water for TSCA "casuals" and many participate in small craft festivals. TSCA-sanctioned events are covered by liability insurance for us organizers. In the DCA, each member is responsible for their own decision to sail, or not, and for the health and safety of themselves and their crew as are we at TSCA. With our shared interest in small craft, it seems as though there is quite an opportunity for "cross pollination" between the two groups in the form of knowledge shared and coordinated events.

Over the years the DCA has sprouted chapters across the UK and now has chapters in Ireland, France, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, the Southern and Eastern Baltic...and North America. In fact, the chapter outside of England with the most members is the North American Group. The Group has three chapters: Northeast, Wisconsin, and Pacific Northwest, with a Great Lakes Chapter in the offing. The regional secretary for North America is Mark Wisdom. Harald Hefel, from Pawcatuck, CT is the organizer and contact for the Northeast Chapter, which welcomes members from New England and Eastern Canada. The chapter typically holds several events, or rallies, during the year. In 2024 these included a Thimble Island Day Trip, a two-day Connecticut River cruise, and a Maine Island Trail rally. Potential rallies for 2025 (may) include New Year's Day row/paddle, Wickford, RI; Squam Lake, NH; Lake George, NY; Hermit Island, ME; a 3-day CT river cruise; and Richardson Lake, ME.

For those of us outside the UK who wish to receive the digital version of the DCA's journal, the annual membership is £30, which your credit card company will happily convert to \$US. For more information about the DCA, including a membership application, please visit:

www.dinghycruising.life

Local Small Craft Article: “Button Swan”

By way of introduction, new member Alan Schaeffer is a familiar face around Mystic Seaport who has long been fascinated by our regional small craft. Here he introduces us to himself and his small boat of which we plan to see more as he would like to work on it in our shop. (Ed)

by Alan Schaeffer

Here is some AI about Button Swan:

Button Swan was a 19th-century fisherman and boat builder whose legacy is celebrated at Mystic Seaport. Born in Newport in 1833 as William Henry Monroe, he was adopted by his uncle, Newport fisherman John Swan, and became known as Button Swan due to his diminutive size. He was renowned for his skills in fishing and boat building, particularly for designing and building the “Button Swan”, a catboat that became a significant part of maritime history.

The Button Swan, **built in 1875**, is a 148-year-old catboat that is now a permanent fixture in Mystic Seaport's collection. It is considered by many to be the oldest and best catboat that ever sailed the Narragansett Bay. The boat was rediscovered in a Wickford-area barn by Cyrus Perrin Brown, who donated it to Mystic Seaport, where it was carefully restored. This catboat is an eloquent memorial to Button Swan, showcasing his unique contributions to boat design and the rich maritime heritage of the Narragansett Bay area.

About my boat:

My boat was built by a western Pennsylvania builder in 1975, the same year Bob Baker made plans available through Mystic Seaport Museum. He built her with glued lapstrake plywood over sawn frames, with tight-laid floorboards and ceiling planks. There is more to say, but there's a start.

I got the boat in 2013 and sailed her for several years from a mooring on the Mystic River, right opposite Mystic Seaport Museum. However, I had to haul her and took her home for some problem solving:

She had a hanked-on cotton sail, which was not workable stowed on the boom while on a mooring. I did find a Beetle Cat sail, but I need to decide how best to hank it on.

I also think the rudder inadequate so will be building a new rudder and tiller.

I want to drill and epoxy some limber holes in the frames as this was never done by the builder, a fresh-water sailor and not as clear-thinking as I would have liked in some of his building choices.

She needs basic scrape and paint, as you might expect. While I don't think there is any significant rot, it is possible. (Refer to limber holes.)

There's a start on my project. I look forward to talking with interested TSCA members about my unique little boat.

One more thing; she is a drop-dead beautiful little boat that needs to get back to the water. I look forward to talking with you about Button Swan.

Thanks! Alan Schaeffer

Avery Point Boathouse News:

Member and JGTSCA Webmaster John Hacunda has introduced us to the New London Currach Rowers. Well, a few joined JGTSCA and plan on making a new set of Currach Oars (see last month's issue for a plan of their narrow, Viking-like oars).

They plan to be at the Boathouse tomorrow, Saturday, March 1st to get started with a shop orientation by Dan Nelson and Matt McKenzie. Stop by and say hello and lend your encouragement.



In Our Local Shops

Neighbor and retired 747 Pilot Ed Werner is getting ready to bend the transom for a nice Paul Gartside 17 ft. outboard runabout. He built a trap to correct curvature and cut the panels to near dimensions. He has the boat in frame, molds are up, keel and stem screwed and glued. Transom and ribbands are next.

Now to get a relatively warm day for glue-up...

Mystic Seaport Boat Livery

Boathouse Supervisor Rosie DiMatteo kept our crew of Volunteers busy with updates and repairs to the Livery fleet, but also included a few field trips to the Shipyard like the one to clamber all over the wooden Oyster Dragger “Double Eagle”, in for inspection/repairs. Sabino deck benches got scuffed and varnished under the eye of Capt. Liz Sistare. Photos:



ON THE LEFT: VOLUNTEERS GARY SHARPE AND PIERCE KEPPLER PAINT OUT THE INTERIOR OF A BEETLE CAT WHILE ON THE RIGHT: MAC COOPER PUTS THE FINAL TOUCHES ON A GARBOARD STRAKE SCARF FOR THE JOHN GARDNER BUILT “MORSEL”. BELOW: (L) STEVE TELSEY ON GOOD LITTLE SKIFF WALDO’S INNER STEM; (R) JIM MORROW & MATTHEW STUART ON SABINO’S BENCHES



Upcoming Mystic Seaport Museum Activities



2025 Adventure Series: Olympic Horizons

March 20 | 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Join Curator Pieter Roos for an engaging exploration of the rich history and tales woven into the boats of the Museum's American Watercraft Collection. In this program, Roos brings this world-class collection of historic vessels to life. Whether you're a lifelong enthusiast or new to the maritime world, this program offers a captivating journey through craftsmanship and the spirit of adventure.

Learn more and purchase tickets [here](#).



Winter Shipyard Tours

Every Friday through March 14 | 2:00–3:30 p.m.

Ever wondered what is behind the ropes in the Museum's Henry B. du Pont Preservation Shipyard? Join us this winter for small group guided tours of the Shipyard's machine shop and rigging loft, and interact with our skilled shipwrights as they describe the work they are doing on this winter's projects, including the *L. A. Dunton*, *Susan Constant*, and more. Purchase [tickets](#).



"USA Today names CT museum second-best open-air museum in the country. Here's where"– Catherine Messier, *Norwich Bulletin*

Mystic Seaport Museum was featured in USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards as one of the top maritime museums in the country! This recognition highlights our dedication to preserving and sharing America's maritime heritage. Visitors can explore historic ships, a recreated 19th-century seafaring village, and interactive exhibits that bring maritime history to life. With educational programs and special events throughout the year, Mystic Seaport Museum continues to be a must-visit destination for maritime enthusiasts.

Upcoming SEACLASS

Introduction to Coastal Navigation

March 15, March 29, and April 19 | 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Longitude by Lunars

March 22 and March 23 | 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. each day

Boating with Directions by Magnetic Compass

April 5 | 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

[Full SeaClass schedule here.](#)

Newfoundland Dog Draft Training

March 23 | 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Mystic Seaport Ship Modelers

The Mystic Seaport Ship Modelers meet monthly at 10 am the second Saturday of the month upstairs in the John Gardner Boat Shop. Current member projects are discussed with time set aside for a technical presentation. February’s technical presentation was Chris Wojtcuk describing his Tugboat in a Bottle (see photo) and his half hull model of the Emma C. Berry mounted on a backing board from the recent ongoing work on the actual boat.



The group exhibits models during the summer season downstairs in the John Gardner Building as well as in special shows in various venues around the Seaport campus like the recent Model Railroad Show. They are working towards having a dedicated exhibit space to build models while discussing them with Museum visitors. Come and bring a model to discuss. Ask for Bob Andrle or Chris Wojtcuk. Here is the new main email for the group: mysticseaportshipmodelers@gmail.com

The only hard requirement for being a MSSM club member is to have a valid Seaport Membership (this does not apply to people that only receive club emails).

From the Mailbag



This just in from Carl Kaufman: “Here’s a memo of history for you.. and maybe something of use to some JGTSCA member who is toying with model making: At Mystic Seaport I came across old copies of Yachting Magazine from 1952-53, showing how to build a half model of a sailboat boat, with pictures and text. The authors are Ber and Carl Kaufmann, my older brother and me. I recall that Yachting paid us the magnificent sum \$75 for the pair of articles. The model, mounted on a mahogany backboard, hangs on the wall in my Block Island house.”

BTW, word on the street is that Chesapeake Light Craft is developing a 36’ model of their Bevins skiff, suitable for pond sailing and we may be selected as Beta Testers to build one....Thanks for all you do, Carl.

Plus a note from Patsy McCook: “A perfect replacement has been found for Sid Whalen’s double paddle canoe for Sid’s granddaughter: a lightly used Hornbeck lightweight double paddle canoe” - Yes, it is from the Adirondacks <https://www.hornbeckboats.com>

Photos/Artwork

By Sharon Brown: "Pier at Sunset"



Remember Your Dues

Send \$15 to Ellie Czarnowski for LOCAL CHAPTER JOHN GARDNER TSCA dues:

Use the On Line Join & Renew form at www.JGTSCA.org click on "More" and "Join or Renew" and Mail in the form with your check to the following: JGTSCA Treasurer, Community Boat Building #36, UCONN Avery Point Campus, 1084 Shennecossett Road, Groton, CT 06340

And \$35 for NATIONAL TSCA MEMBERSHIP (remember, they pay our event Insurance): Join and Renew Online at www.tasca.net and receive a copy of the "Ash Breeze". Click on "Join and Renew" to either join on line or print a form and mail in with your check.

From the Side Deck

That's it for this issue, folks. Keep those cards & letters coming (and Articles, Artwork, etc.)

Anyone interested in a tour of the Seaport's new Small Craft Hall? Let us know. Bill & Karen