

# JGTSCA

John Gardner Chapter  
of  
Traditional Small Craft  
Association



Next meeting: Friday, January 8th  
at Avery Point Boathouse.

Potluck at 5:30 pm with Meeting to  
follow:

Election of Officers,  
Calendar for the Year and  
Work on Dory Build

### Welcome to John Gardner Traditional Small Craft Association

Visit Us At:

The Community Boathouse, Building #36  
at the University of Connecticut,  
Avery Point

or

<https://www.facebook.com/JGTSCA>  
[www.jgtscas.org](http://www.jgtscas.org)

We invite you to attend one of our  
meetings, go for a row, or get involved with  
our next boatbuilding project.

## Traditional Boat of the Month: Sea Bright Beach Skiff

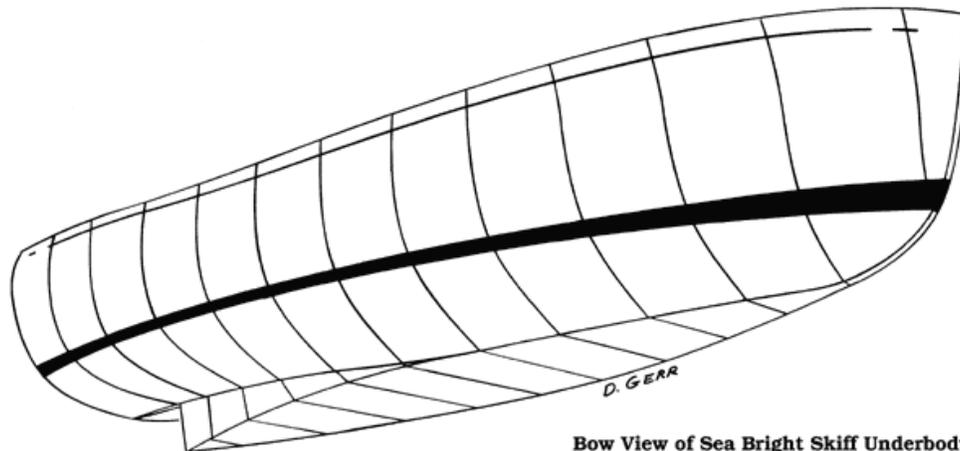


Photo of Jersey Beach Skiff under Sail - courtesy of Gig Harbor Boats

The Sea Bright Skiff is a wonderful boat: burdensome, seaworthy and easily beached. Its design evolved to leave and return to an open, sandy beach subject to substantial surf and winter storms. The town of Sea Bright is on an open coast similar to our Rhode Island beaches except that it is oriented north and south so you return in summer before an afternoon southwesterly and in winter before a northeaster. This requires a boat light enough for four men to grab a hold of and get up on the beach far enough to unload two men and a load of fish, then get up on a horse drawn wagon to trail on home.

They usually come in stern first with the bow in the air, pushed by the surf. Quite spectacular. Lifeguards still do it to this day in modified fiberglass versions with self bailing cockpits that drain through scuppers on the sides. Annual lifeguard competitions are quite competitive as they charge off the beach, haul in a "victim" and return through the surf.

Hauled up on the beach, the skiffs wait patiently on their narrow, flat bottoms, oars at the ready. The bottom boards are about one-third the width of the boat and come to a point on both ends. This is accomplished by tucking the garboards up under the second streak in a reverse chine for the later third of the length of the boat. To further complicate construction the garboard is rabbeted in all around from the stem, along the flat bottom board and into the sternpost. This helps hold things together when being banged about in the surf. All this ends below a pretty heart shaped transom. The transom has substantial freeboard and is tilted aft thirty plus degrees to help keep the surf out.



**Bow View of Sea Bright Skiff Underbody**

“Perspective drawing of underside of Sea Bright Skiff - photo courtesy of David Gerr”

From the above sketch it can be seen that the bottom board stays low and open all the way to the end of the boat. This was not lost on those rowing fisherman when make and break engines became available about the turn of the last century; they placed the engines low in the boat and ran the shafts out the stern through an enlarged stern post. The skiffs quickly became motorized. About the same time Prohibition came along and enterprising fisherman could pick up some spare cash bringing illicit beverages in from Rum Row off the entrance to New York harbor. Bill McCoy found things a bit hot so anchored his schooners just outside the three mile limit and relied on small craft to bring his uncut whiskey ashore.

A bit of an arms race ensued. By the early 20's the length of the skiffs increased to 28 feet powered by 60 hp Pierce Arrow engines making 15 mph empty. Boats out of Keyport soon increased to 42 feet powered by 190 hp Mianus engines that could do 22 knots loaded with 500 cases of liquor. Then war surplus Liberty aircraft engines became available and dropped into 28 to 32 foot skiffs that were fast but a bit difficult to maneuver. Meanwhile the Coast Guard built 40 footers powered by a pair of Gar Wood Liberties that would do 40 plus mph. The rum runners responded with a 50 footer with a pair of 400 hp Liberties that would haul 500 cases at a “service speed” of 35 mph. They peaked out with a 535 hp Viking engine that would put out 500 horsepower. These remained the fastest boats afloat until the WWII PT Boats came along.

But we are not interested in horsepower, are we. No of course not. So we will concentrate on oar and sail from the days of fishing for fish off the coast. A perfect day of fishing would be a beach launch into a calm dawn, a row out to the fishing shoals just off the coast, a successful day of hand lining and a nice sail home before an afternoon southwesterly sea breeze. The sail rig was easily set on an unstayed mast, usually a peak sprit rig with a balance jib tied to the top of the stem. We would steer with a sweep off the stern. We all know how easy it is to stow a sprit rig; just roll up the sail around the mast and sprit, both of which are shorter than the boat so all fits inside, balance job and all.

Since fishing season was mostly May to November, baring a sudden summer storm, that was pretty much the routine. The fish were brought in, cleaned and put on ice from ice houses dug into the beach and placed on fast boats to make it to New York's Fulton Fish Market and satisfy New York's burgeoning population's request for fish on Friday. That was the way life was for a long time until fish traps and pound boats came along, but that is another boat for another time.

I know what you are thinking. That Sea Bright Skiff would make an excellent oar and sail boat for expeditions like Maine's Small Reach Regatta. Row out to an island in the morning and sail back in the afternoon in time for happy hour. Member Mike Magee has just this in mind; see photos of his build later on in this newsletter. Perhaps we should take him up on his offer to visit some Saturday morning and view his new hull in person.

Meanwhile, think about the advisability of a small boat which evolved to carry two men, their fishing gear and 300 pounds of fresh fish that can be rowed and sailed in open waters. Consider how sailing would improve with the addition of a centerboard, rudder and tiller. A fine expedition boat to bring you home despite that sudden summer line squall. If cutting all those rabbets seems difficult, John Gardner has some suggestions involving false stems and covering boards in his detailed design analysis, Chapter 23 of "Volume 1 Building Classic Small Craft" and if you succumb to the lure of internal combustion, see his Chapter 9 of "Volume 2 Building Classic Small Craft". If the "easier maintainability" of fiberglass appeals to you, visit Gig Harbor Boat Works website [ghboats.com](http://ghboats.com) and see how well a West Coast boatbuilder constructs an East Coast design. Beautiful results.

Happy New Year and Fair Winds,  
Mr. Cleat

## Feedback Booth

A response from Charter Member Sid Whelan commenting on last month's article on Adirondack Guideboats. Points all well taken. Thank you Sid, for your valued comments and continued interest. Will pass on to Mr. Cleat."

Here are my comments, for the few pennies they are worth, none of which should detract from the appropriateness of your good article. So please don't take my comments as gospel.

The yoke is lashed to the accommodating slots in the gunwales, and then the boat is hoisted to the shoulders, rather than placing the yoke on your shoulders and then trying to bring the boat up to fit on the yoke.

The Guideboat paddles that I have seen have blades that taper slightly to the tip, rather than the beaver tail shape.

Planking is either clear white pine or northern white cedar, although clear, guideboat quality cedar is now next to impossible to find.

Planking easily shaped? 3/16th planking needs to be planed to accommodate the concave and convex curves of the ribs. And the garboard plank is close to

horizontal to the bottom board amidship, and then twists close to vertical as it fits to the rabbeted stem, without splitting! I believe this was easier to do with cedar.

Winding bevel? The feather edge laps or modified shiplap laps are planed by hand, then applied with a coat of white lead, (now not available, so they use a less toxic sealer). After that, holes are punched, inside and out of the planking for 3,000 quarter inch tapered copper tacks on a 16' boat, to be then tapped through the beveled plank edge, and clenched, inside and out. That's my understanding of the sequence, but I may be wrong about when a sealer is applied to the smooth lap planking. Also 600 brass screws fasten the ribs to the bottom board, from underneath.

A standard 16' Guideboat by the end of the 19th century weighed about 80 lbs., with the oars, seats and stern backrest lashed and tucked in for a carry.

Canoe quality birchbark was not readily available in the Adirondacks, so unless imported, the Indians and first white trappers, settlers used dugout pine or cedar logs instead of canoes.

Early guideboats had high tucked, wine glass ransoms, presumably influenced by whitehalls, but then evolved to double ended, as lighter, more efficient for room, etc.

The shape of the bottom board is generally described as elliptical, rather than oval. The bottom board, with the ribs (knees) stationed at intervals of a few inches, dictates the shape of the boat. John Blanchard of Raquette Lake, changed his designs occasionally, which necessitated a new shape for the bottom board. One of his boats that I've seen was no longer even fore and aft, narrower from midship aft than it was midship forward.

The Adirondack Museum employs a talented young woman named Allison Warner to build a Guideboat in the boat exhibit building. It takes her two years (3 days a week for perhaps two months) and then her boats are auctioned at the annual fundraising event at the museum. They sell for \$15,000 or more.

"The Adirondack Guideboat" by Kenneth and Helen Durant includes a foreword by John Gardner, and drawings with accompanying comments by JG.

" I've gone on too long, but I know you understand what fun it is to indulge oneself in a favorite subject.

Best Regards, Sid Whelan

From our Outgoing President:  
Ellie Czarnowski



Race Rock Light September 2015

Susan Tamulevich, Executive Director of the New London Maritime Society (NLMS), presented an informational slide show of the area lighthouses acquired by the Society, during our annual Holiday Dinner at the Custom House Maritime Museum in New London, CT. The NLMS now has three area lighthouses to promote and preserve in addition to the spectacular maritime artifacts housed in the Custom House museum. They have educational programs for school children and encourage visitors to the museum on Bank Street. They run boat tours to the lighthouses: New London Harbor Light, Ledge Light and Race Rock Light. Here is more information on their stewardship of the lighthouses and the tour boat information on their web page:

<http://www.nlmaritimesociety.org/Lighthouse-Stewardship.html>

It has been another successful year for the John Gardner chapter. We again hosted UConn Professor Syma Ebbin's marine sciences class for a barbeque after their annual clean-up of Pine Island in the spring. We had our first official regatta at the UConn campus beach this summer and multiple group rowing events during the year. Our succeeding president, Bill Rutherford, along with George Spragg, Andy Strode, Rob Pittaway, Bruce Cressor and John Symons completed the building of the Nina, a sturdy and colorful rowing and sailing boat. Karen Rutherford fit a donated sail to her and the club members took the maiden voyage during the regatta. Thanks to the lead of Phil Behney, all of the club dories were put through a round of maintenance and next year the club will be replacing our first dory, the Jane.

Best Wishes for a Safe and Healthy New Year,  
Ellie Czarnowski  
President, JGTSCA

John Gardner Chapter TSCA  
New London Custom House Museum  
Annual Membership Meeting  
December 6, 2015  
Draft Minutes

JGTSCA President Ellie Czarnowski called the Meeting to order at 1:10pm.

**Introduction of Members and Guests**

Ellie Czarnowski, Bill Rutherford, Peter Vermilya, Kate Nelson, Dan Nelson, Susan Tamulavich, John Hacunda, Ellen Hacunda, Larry McGee, Andy Strode, Judy Strode, Sherry Jenkins, Mary Rainy, John Symons, Bill Armitage, Jim Clark, George Spragg, Rob Pittaway, David Tang, Karen Rutherford, Axel Westerberg, Phil Behney, Phil Weston, Tom Clark and Dane Rochelle were present.

**1. Minutes for the November 06, 2015 meeting**

The Minutes for the 11/06/2015 Meeting, as published on the JGTSCA Website, were unanimously adopted.

[http://www.tsca.net/johngardner/minutes\\_nov15.htm](http://www.tsca.net/johngardner/minutes_nov15.htm)

**1. Treasurer's Report**

Deferred until the January Business meeting.

**1. Old Business**

**a. Shop Queue**

The queue is: Club dories, John Symons, Phil Behney, Dan Nelson, and Bill Rutherford.

**a. Nominations**

Captain Dan Nelson was nominated for Vice-President  
Ellie Czarnowski was nominated for Treasurer

**a. Replacement Dory**

Bill Armitage was authorized to purchase the plywood which will be used in constructing the replacement dory. Bill estimates the plywood will cost less than \$400.00.

**a. A second Club trailer**

George Spragg agreed to pick up Dane Rochelle's generous offer of a trailer to the club. If suitable, it will be used with the NINA build. If not suitable, Dane agreed it could be put up for sale at the club tag sale. Ron Reinhart also offered a trailer.

**1. New Business**

**a. Donations to the Custom House.**

The JGTSCA will give the Custom House Museum \$100.00 in grateful recognition of the use of its facilities for the JGTSCA 2015 Annual Meeting and Dinner.

In addition, members present voted \$100.00 for the purchase of a plank to be used in the construction of the planned Custom House Museum dock. The five-foot simulated wood plank

will be engraved with “John Gardner Chapter of the Traditional Small Craft Association”.

**a. Dory Rack**

Members present unanimously authorized Phil Behney to construct a rack on which to store the club dories at the Mystic Shipyard East facility. Construction will be done at the club house on Friday nights and then it will be moved to the Shipyard prior to the Solstice Row.

**1. 2015 Activities:**

**December**

December 20<sup>th</sup> – **The Winter Solstice Row**, followed by a meet at the **Harp and Hound in Mystic, CT.**

**1. Motion to Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was unanimously voted at 12:29pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Peter Vermilya, JGTSCA Secretary (still)

**Dues Notice: Our John Gardner Chapter Dues are Due - we follow the calendar year so please send in your \$15 for an Individual/Family Membership to:**

Community Boat Building, UCONN Avery Point Campus  
Attn: Ellie Czarnowski, Treasurer  
1084 Shennecossett Road  
Groton, CT 06340

We also encourage membership in our National Traditional Small Craft Association. These dues are due February 1st in the amount of \$20 for Individual/Family Membership payable to:

TSCA Membership  
PO Box 350  
Mystic, CT 06355

or on line at [www.TSCA.net/member\\_join.html](http://www.TSCA.net/member_join.html)  
Questions to John Weiss - [membership.TSCA@gmail.com](mailto:membership.TSCA@gmail.com) or 1-425-361-7758

National provides our insurance coverage for chapter activities, issues our Ash Breeze magazine and supports our annual meet at the WoodenBoat Show.

## Book Corner: Books on Knots

If you are like me, trying to instill some muscle memory and learn some new knots, you have numerous books about knots on your shelf. I buy them assuming that I can learn by osmosis, just by sitting near their shelf. I actually read some of them this summer and can offer the following observations:

### **“The Ashley Book of Knots” by Clifford Ashley.**

This is the Bible of knot-tying. I have a copy of the first edition which was printed the year before I was born, so I have been sitting next to it all my life and, of course, never read it. Not that I haven't tried. With over 7000 drawings and 3900 knots (I got that from the dust cover) it is a great reference book in case I mistakenly think I have invented a new knot while untangling mooring lines, but a bit dense to wade through unless looking for a specific knot, say a nice plat sinnet.....

**“Knots and Lines” by Paul and Arthur Snyder.** A thin, hardback volume, it looks very nice on my bookshelf. Originally printed in 1967 it was one of the first to use photography to explain knots so I use it as a resource when confused by the best of the hand drawn knot-tying illustrations in other books. It also explains activities like picking up a mooring, which is always exciting on our boat.....

**“What Knot” 2007 by Geoffrey Bedworth and Richard Hopkins.** A square format hardcover book with clear, color illustrations. Only drawback for me is that it is written in English, the King's English. A Fisherman's Knot becomes a Wrap-and-Tuck knot. Once I get past that, it is fine. I do like the section on tape/webbing. It has excellent photographs.

**“Knots” 2003 by Richard Hopkins,** flying solo without Geoffrey, is my favorite. I don't know why; perhaps it is the very clear hand-drawn illustrations which use different colors for different lines. It often gives multiple ways to tie a given knot. It divides the world into categories of knot: Camping, Climbing, Boating, Fishing as well as General, which helps focus. It is a small, square hard cover book that fits well in a traveling bag, which, with a six foot section of line, is cheap entertainment when on the road or sitting at anchor.

### **“The Complete Riggers Apprentice” 1998 and “Knots for Boaters” 1990, both by Brian Toss.**

The first is a hardcover, detailed compendium of means and methods as well as tying knots. The second is a small paperback focused on knots, bending and hitching for boaters. I enjoy Brian's bright, breezy style in both; they reflect his personality which comes across very well in his videos. The smaller book was previously issued as a Chapman Nautical Guide. The smaller book is fun to use; the larger book very informative. The hand signals on page 244, for example, are very clear, simple commands that we all should know and use.

### **“The Marlinspike Sailor” 1960 by Hervey Garrett Smith**

is a classic. It is jam packed with good advice as well as how-to. It is book to curl up with before the fire and read straight through or keep as a reference for specific knots or names of various “Taykles”. That and everything from bell ropes to wooden bilge pumps. I used it last year to tie fresh block mats, or “thump pads” for Beetle Cat main sheet blocks. Took a little doing, but worked out well.

There you have it; my opinions on someone else's hard work, illustrations and explanations. All are available from Larry Kelly at the Seaport Book Store. Give it a go. Get beyond the basic reef knot and amaze your friends with an Alpine Butterfly.....

## Around the Boatshops

**Peter Vermilya** is progressing with planking his Delaware Ducker; he welcomes quiet winter time in his shop. Carl Kaufman is setting up frames for his Maud and Emeline a flat bottomed Atkin skiff. Bill Meier continues rebuilding his 1920's launch and shop temperatures permit. Let us know how your individual projects are coming along and we will pass them on to the group.

**Mike Magee** has completed planking his South Jersey Beach Skiff; next step is flip it over and install interior frames, thwarts and trim. He is working from Chapelle's lines and offsets from a model from the late 1800's; plans are from the Smithsonian with a skeg keel, rather than the boxed Sea Bright model. His goal is to complete in time to make it to this year's Small Reach Regatta in Brooklin, Maine, the last week in July. (Photos Next Page)



Planking Complete



Out the Door

At our **Avery Point Boathouse**, scarfing the planking has commenced for the replacement Dory project. Bill Armitage demonstrated use of the West System Scarfing attachment to an interested group December 18th. Next step: cutting plank shapes from patterns.



Using the scarfing jig to cut the bevels.

At the **Seaport Boathouse** the Culler Butthead skiff "Skye" and Seaford Skiff Helen Packer" completed their paint and oil treatments and moved out under the cover of the Boat Shed. The Chasson dory skiff "Fly" soon joined them to make room for the Gardner Peapod and "Captain Hook" while work continued in the Gardner Boat Shop refastening Beetle Cat "Lil Babe" and repainting Beetle Cat "Elvira Tucker". Meanwhile, Rich Traskos sanded and freshly varnished sets of oars in the adjacent toy boat



Buck Lawton taping the peapod



Rich Trasko's oars

## Phil Behney Reports on the December 20th Solstice Row

We had lovely weather, a little colder than had been, but a great row to the Mystic Seaport where Ron and Leigh met us at the shipyard dock. John Hacunda, Larry Magee, Mary Pine, and myself were the rowers. Bill Armitage, Mary Rainy, Ron and Leigh joined us at the Harp and Hound afterwards. Here are some pics, I believe John has some, on Face Book as well.

Regards, Phil Behney



## View from the Side Deck:

The year's first thin flurry of snow is filtering through the air as I look across the Thames to the New London Light, standing white against the gray sky in its fresh coat of paint. We learned a lot about the three lights the New London Customs house has under their wing; I now have a new appreciation for what it takes to recondition and maintain these lighthouses.

The New Year has begun; we look forward to winter builds, spring refits, summer outings and fall

rows. And your TSCA Chapter is here to facilitate all those activities. If you have a pet project or activity please suggest it. We'll help make it happen. If you have a passion you would like to share, bring it to the group in the form of a program or lead an outing. Lots of varied activities out there; that is what makes our group so interesting.

Planning ahead, the Cape Cod Boatbuilders Show is the first weekend in February. Let's get a group together and go. The Catboat Association meets right here in Groton the second weekend in March and for those of you who like long car trips, the Maine Boatbuilders Show is in Portland, Maine the third weekend in March. Looking even further out, our National TSCA Meet is at the WoodenBoat Show the last weekend in June and the Maine TSCA sponsors the Small Reach Regatta the last week in July. Lots happening.

Closer to home, the Mystic Small Ships Modelers plan their model building show March 19th at the Seaport's Stillman Building as well as their Ship Model Show both on the land and in the water in front of the Visitor's Reception Center June 18th, the week before the WoodenBoat Show. Always fun to watch the RC models charge around the boat basin; some are pretty large and some, like the Monitor, well armed. They are also working on a group build of a three foot plus model of the tug Kingston, the one guarding the southern entrance. See Bob Andrie or Phil Tankard for information.

Speaking of exhibits, the Seaport will remain open winter weekends so you can see the Longitude exhibit before it leaves at the end of March as well as the new Whaling exhibit. There is a new activity center in the Mallory Building that is great fun for kids of all ages; our grandkids kept us busy there building, playing games and doing our own puppet shows. And the Smithsonian Series starts January 14th with a presentation on connecting the world with time.

Meanwhile, throw another log on the fire and enjoy this video about boatbuilder Ralph Stanley and boatbuilding in Maine. Ralph Stanley - An Eye for Wood. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCoQ0hHQUj8> Enjoy.

All the best for the New Year from our family to yours,  
Bill and Karen Rutherford