

JGTSCA

John Gardner Chapter
of
Traditional Small Craft
Association

Traditional Boat of the Month: The Bahama Dingy

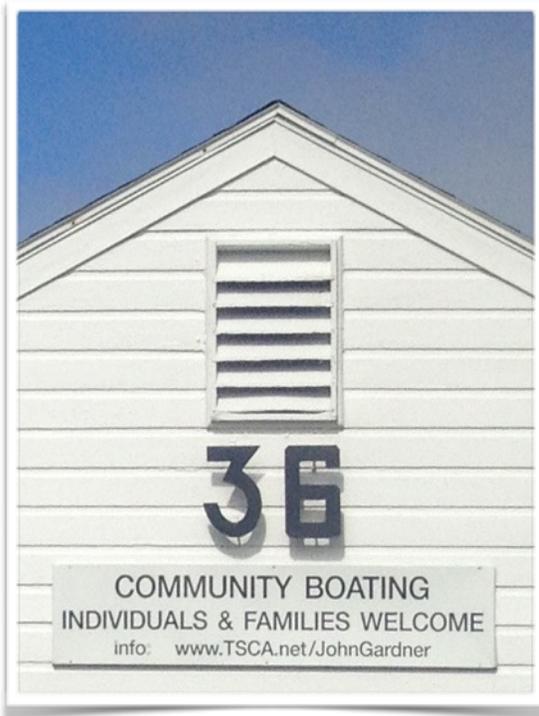


"Bahamian Dinghy "Peace 'n' Rice" Copyright Benjamin Mendlowitz"

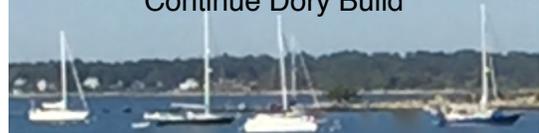
Look no further than WoodenBoat Calendar's "Miss January" for our Traditional Boat of the Month! A white hulled beauty under full leg-of-mutton sail with a pale blue interior which mirrors the darker blue of a tropical squall headed across the emerald green water, generating wind as it comes, giving the lucky boats person a fine ride. Just the thing for us winter-jaded Northeasterners. A bit of warm tropical water on which to sail in our dreams. If you do not have a WoodenBoat calendar affixed to your shop wall, hasten to www.woodenboatscalendar.com and dream along with the rest of us.

What is so special about these small 10 foot to 12 foot boats? How did they develop the way they did in the remote Bahamas? How would they do in our cooler, darker blue waters?

Because of limited agriculture in the Abacos, people cultivated garden plots on outer islands and fished in between. What they needed was a burdensome, shallow draft boat seaworthy enough to make passages between islands that could be handled by a single person, either rowing, sculling or sailing. Not that it would ever run aground, but it needed to be ruggedly built with some heft to carry between strokes heading into a steep chop. It also needed to be built of local wood



Next Meeting Friday February 12th
at Avery Point Boathouse
Potluck to start at 5:30 pm with
Meeting to follow
Agenda: Plan Outings for the Year,
Continue Dory Build



Welcome to John Gardner Traditional Small Craft Association. Visit us at the Community Boat House, Building #36 at the University of Connecticut Avery Point We invite you to attend one of our meetings, go for a row, or get involved with our next boatbuilding project.

www.jgtasca.org

<http://www.facebook.com/JGTSCA>

which was, and is, in short supply. The result was a very shapely hull with a shallow, replaceable skeg keel and a simple, unstayed mast which spread a low, easily reefable sail.

The shortage of wood lead to an innovative way of building the boat; one might almost say minimalist. The heavy ribs are built of knees harvested from Great Abaco Island, soaked for six months in salt water then hand cut to fit. The wood initially was ironwood, called locally "horseflesh" since it looked like salt pork after soaking (which the sailors called "Salt Horse"). Madeira (a local mahogany) or Dogwood was also used. Those woods are not readily available so Corkwood is now used which is lighter but grows in brackish swamps so is very salt tolerant. Caribbean pine was used for planks, but southern yellow pine is now used; it is not as resinous but turpentine and oils can be added.

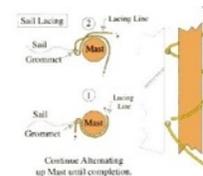
The minimalism comes in when assembling the boat. No molds are used. The builder relies on his "Eye" (called locally "by rack of eye"). He sets up the transom, shaped from experience, the stem, and connects them all with deadwood, in modern times Douglas fir. Next comes the judgement part as he shapes an amidships frame around which he wraps on a few ribbands. For a boat with a 10 foot keel, a sailing dinghy usually has a 4'-2" beam amidships and 3'-4" at the transom. A powered dinghy would have fuller sections aft. Adjustments are made, again from experience, as more ribbands are bent around and natural crooks selected to fit. Crooks take the shape of two lines meeting in a short, sharp turn which gives the dinghies Vee bottoms and relatively straight sides joined by tightly rounded chines, which of course makes for a very burdensome boat. Planking is carvel style.

The Sail is interestingly minimalistic as well. It is loose footed and full cut with a large roach at the foot. The halyard is attached to a short "banana shaped" headboard, perhaps a vestige gaff. The halyard is lead forward and tied off to a pin at the stem, acting as a forestay of sorts. The clew outhaul is adjustable to change the shape of the sail, bellying out when going downwind, tightening when going upwind. The sail has reef points but they are rarely used since the sail cloth used is

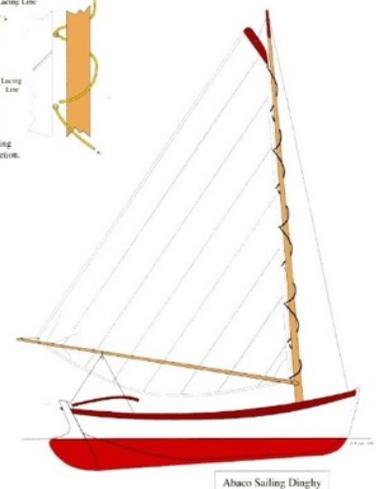
heavy canvas which bunches when reefed. Instead a Tricing line is often used which runs from the masthead, down under the foot of the sail, up the other side of the sail to a block at the masthead then down to the mast or boom. It is a handy way to lift the foot of the sail to see under when in harbors or to quickly shorten sail. The tack of the sail has a line attached which, when cleated downward, tightens the luff of the sail. Note the method of attaching the luff: its line is continuous and wraps in alternate directions as it climbs the mast. This makes for an easier way to quickly drop the sail as it loosens as it drops. This is a good idea for other boats as well; we use a similar system on our catboat in lieu of mast hoops.

All in all, this makes for a fine little boat that is burdensome, fleet and seaworthy. It would be a fun boat for lakes and bays, particularly ones with a bit of a chop. However, the shape is complex and because it has been built for so many years by eye, there are few plans available. *WoodenBoat* Issue #135 (March/April 1997) has an excellent article on the type as well as Winer Malone's construction method. Chapelle has a set of lines in his "American Small Sailing Craft" on page 227 but no offsets. Lance Lee's Apprentice Shop has photographs of traditional construction on their 'Apprenticing Land & Sea' website apprenticinglandandsea.com. The alternative, of course, is to cut some crooks, set up some deadwood, a stem and transom and string some ribbands the way the locals do it in the Abacos. Myself, I am planning to hop a flight to the Bahamas to do some on the ground (and sea) research.

Fair Winds,
Mr. Cleat



*"Drawing of
Abaco Dinghy and Sail
Lacing Technique
by Derek Lee,
courtesy of
Apprenticing
Land & Sea"*



We are very fortunate to have one of the founding members of the Traditional Small Craft Association in our Chapter. It was a treat to have Sid Whalen sit with us at a meeting last year, reading from his handwritten notes of that first meeting, describing the participants (including Pete Culler in his knee high rubber boots) and how they took on Coast Guard regulations. Sidney S. Whalen, Jr. of Old Lyme and New York City served four years in the Navy after which he went to law school, practiced trust and real estate law for eight years before moving into 30 plus years of working for non-profit organizations, including the Museum of Natural History and over 20 years on the Board of Trustees of the Adirondack Museum. We are fortunate to be able to reproduce here an excerpt of his book "Joyful Travels 1949 - 2012". This excerpt describes his trip to Seattle in 1979 which includes a visit to Dick Wagner's Center for Wooden Boats on Lake Union in central Seattle. We welcome this opportunity to share this bit of time travel and Sid's dry wit.

An Excerpt from "Joyful Travels 1949-2012"

by Sidney S. Whalen, Jr.

Seattle, to Attend a Community Foundation Meeting, May 1979

The meeting lasted most of the week, but when my portion was over I took two side trips to Anacortes (on Vidalgo Island) and the Center for Wooden Boats in central Seattle.

In Anacortes: Friday, I skipped the final half-day of the conference (my portion was over on Wednesday evening), and took a 6 AM bus to Anacortes on Vidalgo Island, south of Vancouver and 20 miles north of Seattle. I arrived at 8:30 to a good breakfast of pancakes at Susie's (lots of young, local people) and then visited Bob and Erica Pickett and their helper, Del.

The Picketts (Flounder Bay Boat Shop) specialize in boat quality lumber. Red cedar, Douglas fir SitkaSpruce, Port Orford cedar, red oak, white oak, etc. About 30-40 species altogether, including some tropical hardwoods such as

lignum vitae, mahogany (Honduras and Philippine) and iron bark. These are old growth, knot-free planks, up to 16-18 feet long! They ship all over, and perhaps 30% to Alaska for wooden fishing boats, which are still built and repaired in quantity there. This year they will ship 80-90 M board feet and have doubled their sales each year. They've been there for ten years and began specializing in lumber three years ago. They fill a need. The saw mills will now call them when they have a good log. A top quality old-growth log will yield 30% clear boat planking. If the tree is too old, some of the wood becomes too brittle, e.g., Douglas fir. So, for a fir the first-growth tree shouldn't be more than 200 years old. They also get blown-down logs from the Park Service on the Olympic Peninsula. But that's not easy. The logs are cut in situ, and helicopters bring them out.

The Picketts and Del took me to lunch and then we drove to the top of a hill (Town Park) in Anacortes. Some view - the San Juan Islands, Vancouver Island past the San Juan's, Olympic Mountains and the Cascades - all Puget Sound. The water is between 48 and 52 degrees with strong currents, so the boating is tricky and you don't last if you fall in. Advantages are that the winds are often right for sailing and fog is not much of a problem. Winter is mild because of the Japanese current. So, great for cruising.

Visited David Jackson's boat shop. Remodeling an old grocery store and building a 45 foot Maine-designed pilot schooner for delivery late summer. He has several young people working for him. Dave is in his late 20's. They were cutting out their frame patterns. He showed me a 20 foot double-ended Norwegian rowing boat he built for two young women who rowed to Alaska in it last year.

I bummed a ride back to Mt. Vernon on Route 5 (where you change busses for Anacortes) with a welder from a shipyard at Anacortes' Yard, which employs 75-100 people. It has been in business for two years and they build 70-90 foot steel fishing boats, fully equipped. They sell for \$3-4 million and have completed three in the last year. Currently they are building two more. My ride was with a native of Ohio who moved to the coast when he was four. He had a 22 year career in the USN (damage control and ship fitter). He has a

boat which he showed pictures of - taking them from the glove compartment of his Datsun pickup and balancing his beer in the wheel. He nets salmon at night from July to September. In the San Juan's there are problems surrounding the local Indians claiming the rights to half of all fish caught. Saw an Osprey at Anacortes and wandered around the huge canning cooperative docks. I watched a man and a boy rowing the Jackson-built Norwegian double-ender against a six-knot current. They did fine.

Traditional Small Craft at Lake Union: Saturday afternoon and evening in Seattle, Dick Wagner had a rowing and sailing meet on Lake Union followed by a potluck supper and slides. Dick is the owner of the Old Boathouse, one of a cluster floating on enormous red cedar logs anchored to the shore in the 1890's. He has 30-40 small craft - more sail than rowing - including three Minnesota-built Whitehalls. I took one out for a few hours. Lots of traffic through Lake Union, 95% pleasure. Some large boats under sail, many powerboats kicking up big wakes. I saw an eight oared shell and quite a few gaff-rigged and wooden sloops which added some character to the fiberglass and plastic. It was clear and cool with a breeze. Met Brookes Towne, formerly the assistant editor at National Fisherman. He gave an interesting talk about the restoration of two old boats; beautiful work by a tug skipper. He salvaged brass fittings, paneling, etc. from scrapped vessels. Also saw slides of a 1978 Port Townsend wooden boat regatta - 120 feet down to dinghies. The dinner spread was so elaborate that Wagner commented that the gathering appeared to be degenerating into a culinary competition. He had hoped for a rowing and sailing race but it never got going. Some salty types of all ages. Not many women. Dick has a 40 foot schooner for charter, built in the late 20's. Comfortable, cozy and full of character. "Sinbad". His friends worked hard on his engine and got it started, after hours.

I found it difficult to imagine a race of more than a few hundred yards on the lake. The traffic both on the lake and out to the Sound is continuous and heavy. Lake Union goes into Lake Washington to the East, which is a much larger body of fresh water. Lots of boating there, too.

Flying over the Cascades, one is struck with the clear-cutting of the forest. The cutting generally

leaves large sections uncut, but that makes the contrast even more marked and the cutting often exceeds 50% of a mountainside. The Picketts said that there is still lots of good lumber left - it's just the more difficult to reach (and more expensive to cut). What fantastic forests they are that are left! Around Anacortes I saw many fir that were 4 to 6 feet across, straight up, without a branch for 30 feet or more.

I didn't see one really meaningful statement on the preservation of the forest, only passing statements on forestry at the science center.

Thus ends Sid's travelog on his trip to Seattle. His next entry is about rowing a 16 foot guideboat while his son paddled a wood and canvas canoe across Blue Mountain Lake, a quarter mile carry and then down the Marion River to Raquette Lake. You'll have to ask him about that trip, the 28 birds he listed seeing in addition to 3 deer, 3 muskrats and one black bear. Especially the bear.....

Thanks to Sid for sharing his experiences with us.



Karen Rutherford and Dan Nelson volunteering at the Small Boat Shop, Mystic

Around the Boat Shops:

In **Home Shops**: **Peter Vermilya** is hanging planks on his Delaware Ducker, removing them, then working up his nerve to actually apply epoxy on his glued lap version. **Mike Magee** has flipped his Jersey skiff and is being amazed at how much time it takes to fit all the miscellaneous interior pieces. Being ready for this year's Small Reach Regatta is still his goal. **Carl Kaufman** is also hanging planks on his new build, the Maude and Emeline, a low-powered outboard Atkin skiff that he plans to use this summer in Block Island harbor. The rest of us are waiting for warmer weather for shops to warm up prior to spring 'putty and paint time'.

At our **Avery Point Community Boathouse** **Dan Nelson** is leading a team with **Bill Armitage's** support in building a replacement dory for our fleet. The topside panels have been scarfed and cut, then trimmed to lines, the transom cut out and beveled. Assembly cannot be far behind. With the dory up off the floor, **John Symons** brought his beautiful classic outboard skiff into the shop for a fresh coat of varnish. His goal is to clamp on the reconditioned '56 Johnson and take us all for a ride at our spring outing. I think he wants us to take him water skiing....

At the **Seaport Boathouse** your esteemed Publisher was talked into painting a whale on the new insulated interior doors to the Boathouse as well as sewing a draft-blocking "snake" for under the doors. **Andy Strode** wooded the Catspaw Dinghy "Sand"'s transom to prepare for many coats of varnish. Soon after, **Jeff Undercroffler** prepared "Sand"'s thwarts for fresh varnish and in the John Gardner Boat shop, Beetle Cat Elvira Tucker was fitted for a new cockpit cover. Meanwhile, next door at the Schooner "Brilliant" shop, volunteer **Jim Downs** contributed a new traveling tool tote complete with many coats of varnish and real gold leaf....



"Andy Strode and Jim McGuire Refinishing Sand's Transom",



"Jeff Undercroffler readying "Sand" for a Final Coat of Interior Varnish"



"New "Brilliant" Tool Tote by Jim Downs"

John Gardner Chapter TSCA
 UCONN Avery Point Club House
 Regular Business Meeting
 January 08 2016
 Draft Minutes

JGTSCA President Ellie Czarnowski called the Meeting to order at 6:12pm.

1. Introduction of Members and Guests

Ellie Czarnowski, Bill Rutherford, Peter Vermilya, Dan Nelson, John Hacunda, Larry McGee, Andy Strode, John Symons, Bill Armitage, Jim Clark, George Spragg, Rob Pittaway, Karen Rutherford, Phil Behney, Dane Rochelle, Sidney Whelan, Ron Reinhart, Steve Barton, Marissa Lacoursiere were present.

1. Minutes for the December 06, 2015 meeting

The Minutes for the 12/06/2015 Meeting, as published on the JGTSCA Website, were unanimously adopted.

<http://www.tsca.net/johngardner/about.htm>

2. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer John Symons reported that Income since the last meeting was \$30.00, consisting of dues from Bill Armitage and Axel Westerberg. Expenses totaled \$459.04, consisting of \$359.04 for the purchase of the plywood for the replacement dory and a \$100.00 donation to the New London Custom House Museum. The closing balance as of 01/08/2016 was \$4128.08.

The Treasurer's report was unanimously adopted.

3. Election of Officers

President Ellie Czarnowski called for further nominations from the floor for the offices of Vice President and Treasurer. There being none, the names of Dan Nelson for Vice President and Ellie Czarnowski for Treasurer remained unopposed. The Secretary cast a single vote for each and they were duly elected.

Officers for 2016:

President:	Bill Rutherford
Vice President:	Dan Nelson
Secretary:	Peter Vermilya
Treasurer:	Ellie Czarnowski
Past President:	Ellie Czarnowski.

At this point President Bill Rutherford took over as Chair of the Meeting.

Ellie Czarnowski was thanked for her excellent term as President for 2015.

4. Old Business

a. **Shop Queue**

The queue is: replacement Club dory, John Symons, Phil Behney, Dan Nelson, Bill Rutherford and Steve Barton. Bill Armitage said he would like to reserve time to work on an Annapolis wherry during the school spring break. He will not be in the workshop on the weekends, only during the day, Monday through Friday.

a. Boat rack for storing the dories at Mystic Shipyard East.

Phil Behney reported that George Spragg, Andy Strode and Rob Pittaway had disassembled the NINA building jig and that the parts will be used to construct the rack. The NINA is outside the clubhouse upside down on horses under a tarp.

b. Replacement Dory

During the 12/18 Friday meeting two sheets of 4x8 Okume plywood were ripped lengthwise and scarfed into two 16x2 foot pieces, each to be used for getting out the sides of the replacement dory. Bill Armitage led a demonstration on the use of the club's scarfing jig. Dan Nelson is lead builder on this project.

c. A second Club trailer

George Spragg has picked up the trailer generously offered by Dane Rochelle to the club.

d. Donations to the Custom House.

The Club will be donating \$100.00 for a plank to be placed in its name as part of the new Harbor Lighthouse dock. This donation was voted for at the December meeting.

e. Winter Solstice Row

Phil Behney reported a good turnout for the Solstice Row and subsequent meet-up at the Harp and Hound. The row went up to Mystic Seaport and returned back to the Mystic Shipyard East site.

2. New Business

a. 2016 Meeting dates:

Members present were in favor of continuing the Sunday and Friday meeting schedule as it was done in 2015.

Discussion included:

- A regatta at some time during the Summer
- No tag sale in June.
-

- Possible joint meeting with the Mystic Ship Modelers group
- A possible joint meeting with Girl Scouts, Sea Scouts or other youth groups possibly to include model boat kits based on the model boat kits produced by George and Marla Surgeant.
- Possible row to Mamacoke Island as early as April
- Schedule a “Show and Tell” for each Sunday Meeting

b. 2016 Dues Reminder

2016 Annual JGTSCA dues of \$15.00 are payable now. Download a .pdf form at <http://www.tsca.net/johngardner/join.htm> and mail to

John Gardner Chapter: TSCA
UConn, Avery Point Campus
1084 Shennecossett Road
Groton, CT 06340

Members wishing to join the National TSCA (strongly recommended!) should fill out the bottom portion of the form, detach it, and send it, with a separate check, to

TSCA Secretary (Membership)
Traditional Small Craft Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 350
Mystic, CT 06355

c. Newsletter

Bill Rutherford said that he and Karen had just published the January Newsletter. Members present were unanimous in their appreciation of their efforts. Bill called for other authors to participate. Karen said that images should be submitted at “medium” quality or 300 dpi.

d. Shop Orientation

Bill Rutherford said he would conduct an orientation for the major shop stationary tools immediately following this meeting.

a. Oar Leathering

Phil Behney will arrange so that Rob Pittaway can see those JGTSCA oars that need re-leathering. Rob will then order supplies so that he can do a “Show and Tell” on leathering at a Sunday Meeting.

b. Shop space for SeaLegs

John Hacunda requested that members who were aware of possible shop space that could be used by SeaLegs (see 10/2014 Minutes) to please get in touch with Dick Lathrop, Director.

2. 2016 Activities:

January

01/15, 22, 29: Regular *Friday* meetings at 5:30pm at the Avery Point Clubhouse.

February

02/07, 12, 19, 26 Regular *Friday* Meetings at 5:30pm at the Avery Point Clubhouse.
The 02/07 Meeting will be a Business Meeting with a potluck prior.

March

03/06 a *Sunday* Business Meeting at 1:30 with a potluck prior.
03/11, 18, 25 Regular *Friday* Meetings at 5:30pm.

3. Motion to Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was unanimously voted at 6:53pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Vermilya, JGTSCA Secretary





Karen and Jim McGuire Feeding the "Snake"



View from the Side Deck:

Today it is clear as I look out over the Mighty Thames; we dodged the bullet. The big snowstorm went south and north; all we got was a dusting of a foot of snow. On the same day of January last year we got plastered.....

Inside the shop I can hear a belt sander trimming a piece of plywood to a predetermined pencil line and voices of the dory crew as they plan assembly. It is good to have a boat build underway this winter. We may have more to come...rumor has it that Captain Dan has ordered his Southwester Dory from Chesapeake Light Craft. We'll keep a lookout for the truck.

It has been warm after the snow (up in the 40's!) so we are thinking of Spring. Lots to do. The first Fish and Chips of the season at the Holy Ghost Club in Stonington on February 5th (Lent is early this year). Eat Local: support your local fisherman. Also starting on Friday the 5th and continuing through Sunday the 7th is the Cape Cod Boat Builder's show. Let's get a carload together and check out the latest Beetle Cats. And in between on Saturday the 6th, there is Bluegrass at 5 pm at LaGrua Center in Stonington.

Who says there is nothing happening around here in winter? The Coast Guard Band has a free concert at the Academy at 2 pm on Feb 14th and the Seaport has an Adventure Series program on Stellwagen Bank on Thursday, Feb 18th at 7:30 pm; sure to be some whale pictures there. Looking ahead to March, remember the Catboat Association meeting the second weekend at the Marriott in Groton and the Maine Boatbuilder's show the third weekend in Portland, Maine.

As the logs burn in the fireplace and you drowsily read through that pile of books you saved for winter, send us your reviews. If you are filling out your boating logs from summer outings, send us words and photos. Not that we are desperate but we will welcome anything remotely nautical.

Meanwhile, let's plan some outings together, dust off those old charts and scout out some new launch ramps.

Fair Winds and Light Snows,

Bill and Karen Rutherford

Remember-Time to Pay Your Dues