

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

Installing fully adjustable rowing positions in Chapter Dories
at UCONN Avery Point Boat house Building 36

Next Meeting: In Person Meetings will resume as Feasible
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>

National: www.TSCA.net

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:

Our in-person monthly meetings are on hold awaiting the latest COVID storm to blow over. Our January 6th meeting was canceled due to two storms, the new COVID and old fashioned snow. President Brian Cooper let us know by email, his preferred method of communication. Stay tuned to find out about February's and subsequent meetings and gatherings. Make sure your dues are up to date to receive these and other emails. If you have an activity or event you would like to lead, email Brian at CooperBD@aol.com. He will check the calendar and send out an email to the membership soliciting interest and create a separate email list for the event. That will simplify communications as well as easily advise the specific group of individuals interested in the event of any updates or changes.

Brian's Jan. 6th email further advised that members are still able to visit the Avery Point Boathouse. UCONN COVID precautions are available at <https://covid.uconn.edu/campus-guidelines/>. Students are scheduled to return to Campus January 31st. Masking will be required outside buildings where a 6 ft distance cannot be maintained, Masks are required when indoors with the following exceptions: for those working alone in an enclosed space, such as an office, lab, or while seated in a cubicle with walls that are five feet tall or higher. When eating indoors, 6 ft physical distancing must be observed.

The White Dory Story: The First Solo Row

We launched the White Dory on 7 November 2021 to glorious fanfare and wonderful community support. The next week, though, I stole some time from work and took her out solo to start building my relationship with her. Just the two of us, a warm fall day, and one another's foibles and quirks to balance out.



I put her in at a pretty rough and tumble dirt ramp on the Mystic River, upstream from Mystic Seaport Museum, and headed upstream. Right away, the sweet rowing qualities I began to experience on her launch day became more apparent. Little drag, easy to get moving, keeps momentum well, responsive to subtle unequal pulling pressures on each of the oars—in all of these things, White Dory showed me the quality of her lineage. This was a fast, easily worked, but stable and maneuverable rowing vessel. As she glided upstream past reed covered banks and fall-colored shores, the oncoming current and foul breeze rather than impeding us, seemed to pull her forward faster. It was though she had her reins loosed, and she was running like the thoroughbred workhorse (if there is such a thing—I'm a sailor, not a horse person) that she was.

In front of an old mill that was now offices, I turned her around, and started to ride the current back downstream past the poor souls stuck at work on such a beautiful day. I wanted to play



with the sculling notch on her tombstone transom, so I gingerly stood up, shifted an oar into the crook, and just used it as a rudder to guide us along with the running water. She responded well to the steering oar trailing astern—indeed, John Gardner indicates that Fred Dion always intended her to be steer only with an oar, and the rudder drawing included in *The Dory Book* Gardner himself had cobbled together from other similar boats just to make readers happy. Standing in the stern sheets, it was clear that *White Dory* needed no rudder—the oar was fine. It was also clear I needed to learn to scull: I swear I could feel her wanting me to scull her along the river as generations of fishermen had done with her predecessors. As we glided downstream, I added that skill to my list of summer to-dos.

Eventually, I returned to the rowing station, and put my back into it again. We broke out of a narrow stretch of the river into Mystic River's North Basin. I found the main line of the running current, now fueled by an ebbing tide as well as the river runoff, and we shot out into more open waters. Here, the wind began clocking around us as gusts bounced off the shore or cascaded down the shoreside draws. The dory's high stem and stern, sure enough, got knocked about a bit, but nothing that a little finesse with the next pull of the oars couldn't fix. We shot past the museum's waterfront towards the drawbridge downtown. The buildings' lengthening shadows, however, suddenly reminded me I was quickly running out of daylight—as one does early in early November—and I hauled her back around to fight the current and light winds separating us from the ramp.

It proved not much of a fight. *White Dory* herself, again gleeful at the prospect of bucking wind and tide, would have galloped ahead even without my effort, or so it seemed. But I put my back into it again—giving her as much as she was giving me—and we cruised along up river.

Those who know the Mystic River know that there is a nice back eddy that forms with an ebbing tide beginning at the shiplift and running north past the finger piers, the floats, and out to Lighthouse Point. It's a good eddy to know about, as it will keep you out of the significant current that runs in the channel half-way through the tides. With this back eddy, the two of us shot along, even outpacing a young kid's boundless energy who tried to race us on shore until his dad kept him from careening off the bulkhead and into the drink. We cut through, with only a little extra effort, the current raging past Lighthouse Point, and caught another back eddy, that begins abeam of the training ship *Joseph Conrad*, that helped us along towards the museum's north floats. Still hugging the eastern shore of the river, we were able to get back to the ramp as the sun dipped down to just kiss the trees. Driving home, I felt like a man reborn: this was a good boat—I knew that as I worked on her. But I had no idea she was this good of a boat. I was giddy.



But how to put that excitement on hold for the winter? That was killing me. I put White Dory “away for the winter several times,” but only to pull her out for another opportunistic row as the scheduling gods allowed it. Then my friend John called me and said he would be down from Maine and was wondering if we could get together. John was another small boat guy—he had been sailing small boats his entire life—and I knew that his visit, if the weather permitted, would give me a chance to do something I didn’t dream I’d get to until spring: take White Dory sailing.

I frantically dragged out the sailing rig—also “put away for winter”—moved the living room furniture out of the way, and spread out her gorgeously-made leg of mutton sail. It was pretty clear from the dimensions and the cut that Gambrel sailmakers in Camden had made their magnificent sail to Gardner’s published plan: a triangular sail laced to the boom and mast, complete with bolt-ropes, proper cringles, and with panels laid out

traditionally parallel to the leech. The only issues were the hole the mice had chewed through it, and a spot where the stitching was beginning to go. I had planned to repair it properly over the winter, but I had also thought there were many more holes and damage to address. Not so: just three holes and the chafed stitching. Again invoking the “epoxy threshold” mantra we had developed for her refitting—does whatever it was I planned to do make sense on a boat chinked with epoxy and putty?—I grabbed some sail tape and in half an hour, had all fixed up enough for John and I to take her for a fall sail.

For this we went to Barn Island between Watch Hill and Stonington, and thankfully, the weather did cooperate. The late November winds were light but steady enough, with lots of sun and more warm temperatures. She was a breeze to rig--backstay and the sheet and we were ready to go—and we glided out into Little Narragansett Bay. John took the helm first, as I wanted to see how the rig strained, and soon had her going nicely. Despite the light winds and weight aboard, she gave us a steady knot and a half over ground. John and I changed places, and to improve her trim, I made him cram his more lithe carcass further forward and alongside the centerboard trunk. Better balanced now, and with a little more breeze, she scooted! She

sailed as well as she rowed, and with my arm hanging off her long tiller, I could feel her racing dory genes coming back to life.

Still, I found a few things I wasn't entirely thrilled about. Without a jib, she couldn't point for beans. And while Gardner drew up plans for a jib, it seemed to me that it would add complexity to the rig and shift the center of effort further forward. I wasn't sure that would yield a well-balanced set, and frankly, I didn't want the hassle of tending a job every time I tacked. I also didn't like the added time—as little as it was—to rig the jib at the ramp, for in my book, every minute I spend on the ramp rigging a boat is a waste of my life. Most importantly, though, I didn't like the laced main. As well made as it was, and it was very well made, the lacing itself did not allow the sail to come down easily, though there are lacing patterns that make it easier. Traditionally, a line ran from the outer end of the boom to the masthead allowing for the whole thing to be bundled up against the mast, but that was a lot of weight high up. So there were things about her rig I just didn't care for.

Luckily, while refitting the hull, I had inherited the spars of another Dion Dory, whose accompanying hull's apotheosis into a garden planter, alas, meant the rig was now orphaned. So sticks were not a problem. But on those sticks I wanted a rig that I could set quick and dump quick, but one that also that also gave me reefing options.



I looked around the internet drooling at the gorgeous small boats whose designs had come into the market in recent years. It became clear to me, though, that the first question I needed to wrestle with was where I wanted the center of effort. My fellow John Gardner TSCA member, Carl Kaufmann, shared with me his wealth of experience and told me that old timers preferred the CE to be a little aft of the center of lateral resistance, as the CLR tends to move forward when in a breeze. I'm pretty sure I felt that was true from my short sail with John. This meant that a lot of sloop rigs would merely replicate the problem I currently had: why bother, then. Gaff rigs, while more appealing to me for their saltiness, required slightly more complicated rigs, sadly. My first boat had a single sprit rig, but I was never really happy with the tension of the luff and how her loose footing led for underperforming runs down wind.

Then I stumbled onto lug rigs. First, I found them gorgeous. I had

always loved Bretagne sailing vessels, and when I came across Francois Vivier's opus, I knew I would likely find something that could work. His popular Ilur had the standing lug I wanted, and combined with Roger Barnes' videos of his cruising the Brittany coasts, I could see the rig in action. But I feared Ilur's rig would not fit a dory—the hulls were very different and I feared mismatching the rig to the hull. Then I found Vivier's Youkou-Lili. Here was a dory inspired by Swampscott dories like my own, but with a standing lug rig that would fit my spars, and that offered three reefing options. Youkou was a little longer than the White Dory—18 vs 17 feet LOA—but what caught my eye were the angles and dimensional ratios Vivier brought to his sail plan. Unlike American lug rigs, which I found to be too timid, set too high on the mast (which does make sense) or just plain odd, Vivier's sails gorgeously filled the hulls, and brought together beautifully corner angles and edge lengths. Soon, this mesainier inspired rig grabbed my heart as robustly as White Dory had. I bought and downloaded some plans, and got to work adapting the Vivier's rig aesthetics to the particulars of the White Dory.



I couldn't just replicate Vivier's sail shrunk down to my boat. When I drew up those plans, the resulting sail had less sail area than the leg of mutton, with a CE too far aft. Another morning with graph paper, dividers, and a compass yielded me nothing, too. Then I just looked at what had caught my eye in the first place, the overall look of the thing, and approaching a new sail from this purely aesthetic approach yielded far better results. I'll spare the details as, frankly, I'm not sure I can recall exactly how a flurry of sketches turned into a rough sail plan by lunchtime that cold December Saturday. But it did, and based on the sketches of sails I made trying to capture Vivier's overall aesthetic balance of his rig, I came up with one of my own.

Stay tuned for the further adventures of the White Dory - (Ed)

Winter is a time for dreaming and planning...

With snow on the way, Matt McKenzie's White Dory is salted away for the Winter, but dreaming and planning goes on....this just in from Matt:

Cruising ventures I'm dreaming about but have no realistic idea of their feasibility:

- Stonington Spring Shakedown Cruise: Barn Island to Napatree to Stonington, and then back
- Bristol, RI to Prudence Island
- Southern CT River run, with or without a night at Selden Neck: Salmon River Ramp to Hamburg Cove, with someone maybe running us back to get the trailers, or just do a round trip.
- The John Gardner Classic (if one does not already exist): Avery Point/Bayberry Lane/Peruzotti Park Ballfield to Mystic Seaport and back.
- I am also researching three camp cruising trips north this summer, and would welcome anyone interested and with itinerary and destination ideas. My current possible destinations are:
 - Squam Lake, NH (if I get a campsite—it would be limited to 5 (3 openings currently remain) other people, for a total of six.
 - Sasanoa River run from Booth Bay area to Bath, lunch, and then back. Not sure about accommodations, and the tides will dictate the day (catch a fair tide to Bath, lunch, then catch a fair tide back).

Most of this will likely not happen—but maybe a few can if folks are interested...

The Solstice Row

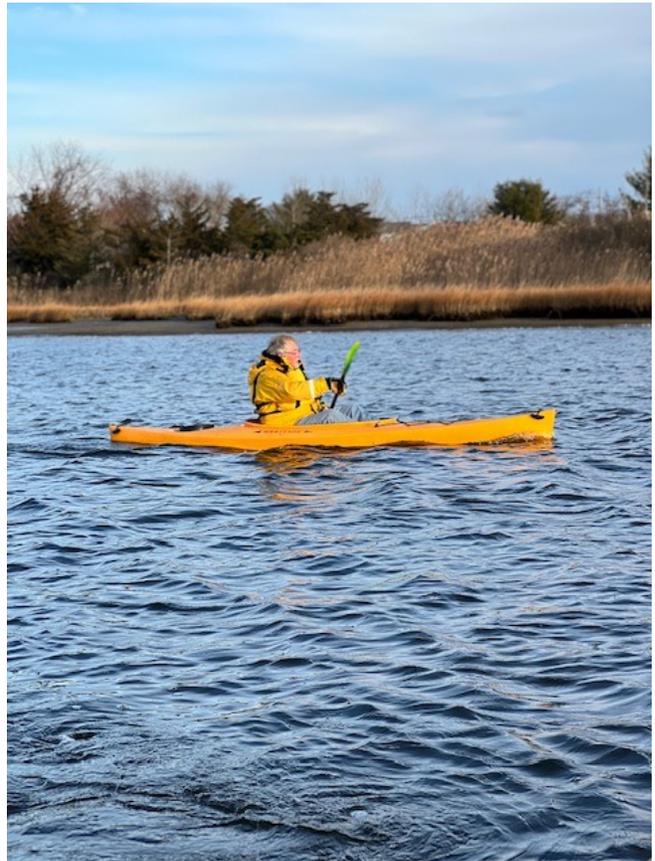
It was Cold. It was Windy. But, this was the Winter Solstice and that meant that it was time for our annual row. Weather would not stop us. On December 19th four brave souls launched from the Mystic Shipyard East and tradition was upheld. Photos follow:



THE ROWERS L TO R: TIM GORDISH, PHIL BEHNEY, RON REINHART AND MATT MCKENZIE



LAUNCHING THROUGH THE REEDS



RON REINHART OUT IN THE OPEN



PHIL BEHNEY AND TIM GORDISH JUST GETTING WARMED UP

Boathouse Cleanup – Jan 23, 2022

Matt McKenzie and Brian Cooper 12:00 – 2:30

Cleaned up the back of the shop. Left one large piece of cardboard – got rid of small pieces.



Room for another boat to come into the shop.





Cookie reported that the key (attaches pulley wheel and motor shaft) flew off of the sander. Matt figured out how to install the key and we put a new belt on the sander. Works fine now.



Work for another day – cleanup/organize chemical pile.
Not sure why we have multiple containers of the same material.



Not sure what happens to this wood pile. If its like this the next time we'll get rid of the scrap.



Last minute check before we left – the fridge. The pile of black gunk is frozen soda which exploded out of the coke can. Another project for next time. I think we should shut the fridge off during cold (freezing) weather. Also, fridge should be emptied and cleaned monthly. I'm not sure why people leave stuff in the fridge.



Remember your Dues for 2022:

\$15 to Ellie Czarnowski for LOCAL CHAPTER JOHN GARDNER TSCA dues: Join and Renew Online www.JGTSCA.org or Mail to the following:

JGTSCA Treasurer

Community Boat Building #36

UConn Avery Point Campus

1084 Shennecossett Road, Groton, CT 06340

\$25 for NATIONAL TSCA MEMBERSHIP (remember, they pay our event Insurance) Join and Renew Online at www.tsca.net and receive a copy of the "Ash Breeze".

From the Side Deck:

As the wind blows chill and a blizzard is predicted on Saturday, we hunker down for the Winter, but that does not stop us from planning projects and activities for the coming fairer seasons. Enjoy your Shop Time and, should opportunity present, jot down your thoughts and share some ideas with us. We look forward to keeping in touch. All the Best, Bill & Karen