

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

New Dory Build as well as Winter Maintenance on Rowing Craft
at UCONN Avery Point Boat House Building 36

Next Meeting: In Person Meetings as Opportunities Arise
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.jgtsc.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.

Coming Events:

- "Student Shop Hours" at our UCONN Avery Point Community Boathouse during Spring Semester **Tuesdays and Thursdays**, 11:30-2pm Email Matt McKenzie to confirm no real work has not gotten in the way: matthew.mckenzie@uconn.edu
- "Friday Night Work/Community Sessions" at our UCONN Avery Point Community Boathouse **Fridays** 5 pm to 7 pm: Come checkout the Nahant Dory Build and assist setting the next pair of planks.
- "Horseshoe Crabs, How 350 Million Year Old Sea Creatures Are Vital to Our Survival" Tuesday, **March 21st** at 7:30 pm Online. See last item link below for more information.
- "Narragansett Bay Railway & Navigation Company" Narrow Gauge On30 modular model railroad **March 30th - April 2nd** daily 10 am - 4 pm in the John Gardner Boat Shop Annex, Mystic Seaport Museum presented by the Mystic Seaport Shop Modelers.
- "The \$100 Super Yacht" presented to the Mystic River Historical Society by Captain Geoffrey Jones and the Topsail Schooner "Alvei" at the Mystic Congregational Church Wednesday, **April 12th**. Refreshments at 7 pm, Program at 7:30. Free/Donations.
- "Ensuring the Future Viability of Connecticut's Natural Oyster Beds" Tuesday, **April 18th** at 7:30 pm Online. Visit UCONN Marine Sciences website for information on this and other lectures: <https://marinesciences.uconn.edu/lectures>

How to Sail a Boat

Process Essay

Elizabeth Rutherford 4/27/98

So you find yourself in the middle of a lake floating around in a wooden apparatus that your friend has let you borrow. It's called a sailboat, yet you don't seem to be "sailing" at the moment. In fact you have been spinning slowly round in the same spot for an hour now and somehow you get the idea that maybe you are doing something wrong. Well if you find yourself in this extreme position, maybe you should have read the "How to" instructions first.

First of all, you need the essential component to go sailing and that is wind. Wind is that invisible force that whistles past your ears and blows your lucky hat off. You could be sitting in one of those fancy America's Cup boats and you still would be stuck in the same spot for hours if you don't have the wind to power your boat. Wind is tricky though because it can be too fast or too slow. A good strong breeze is usually the best kind for sailing. If it gets too crazy you may have a harder time controlling the boat. More advanced sailors have techniques they use in heavy winds, but most of them will stay away from a hurricane if they haven't been too effected by the sun.

A sailor may find him or herself in the midst of a great wind and then suddenly the wind is dead and the sailor is stuck in the middle of nowhere. I have fond memories of these moments. My sister and I are huddled in the bow sipping apple juice boxes, while my dad is rowing our big sailboat toward the shore that is not exactly in eye sight. He seems to be muttering something under his breath like, "Karen, I think its time". We all know what this means. Dad has decided to break down and buy a motor for our

“wooden boat”. By doing this we are going against the “wooden boat” code and relying on another power source besides wind. It was a pivotal point in my life and sailing has not been the same since.

Now for those who still rely solely on the wind, there is a series of withdrawal phases that the sailor goes through. First the steady moving back and forth of the rudder that soon becomes a frantic motion. The sailor is determined to keep the boat moving and feels this motion will actually help. Next is the defeat mode where the sailor sits with a dazed and frazzled look trying to will the wind back with “windy” thoughts. Following this stage is the reality stage, in which the sailor either falls asleep and takes advantage of the peace or gets out the ship’s paddle and starts paddling grumbling the whole way as the boat slowly but surely makes it back to shore. The later of which is obviously the less experienced of the two.

So once there is a good steady wind, other components are also important. Most importantly is the sail. The sail can be made out of just about any material. My dad used to sail with bed sheets sewn together by his mother and they worked just fine. Although most sailors prefer a heavy canvas that is sown by tough burly men with big needles and a thick thread, while singing sea shanties and drinking beer. Although, my mom made one on our living room floor with a sewing machine and that worked just fine. There are many types of sails: main sail, jib, topsail, and parachute sail. If your boat has the main sail you are fine, for the others are just used to make the boat go faster.

Now earlier, special techniques were referred to for controlling the boat in high winds. Tying in a reef is one of these special techniques. This is done when white caps are seen on the water or when the sailor can no longer see due to storm conditions. This

is a simple yet complicated process, which requires lowering the sail, about a foot or two, in the midst of chaos and tying it down a bit so you get less sail area. This is usually the time in which the crew needs to be on their toes. Although no one should ever be afraid to sail a boat for there is a safety for any situation. This technique is called "Let out the Main". When this command is heard, the line that holds the sail in close to the boat must be let go of. This stops the boat completely. Pretty simple, yet many beginning sailors forget this simple step and their boat will go toppling over. Another technique includes turning the bow of the boat toward the direction of the wind and the boat will be immediately under control. This technique is a bit more challenging, for the sailor must find out where the wind is coming from.

Now this is a trick that is customized to each sailor's own personal traditions. I was taught to lick my finger and hold it in the air. The side that is cold is where the wind is coming from. Experienced sailors can just hear where the wind is coming from. Some people have said "The hell with traditions" and buy themselves a windsock or "tell ties" that are attached to the sail. Personally, I still prefer licking my finger.

Next in line of importance are the centerboard, tiller and rudder. I would first like to take the time to warn you that sailors are very big on lingo. They pride in the fancy words they have learned that confuse non-sailor types. They will be very offended if you refer to the lines as ropes, the bow as the front, the boom as the big swinging thing, the tiller as the steerer and the mast as the tall thing. It is also important to understand the words for directions such as fore, aft, starboard and port. My grandma made socks for my dad that help him remember port and starboard. Although I can teach you a trick so

you never get confused again. Port has four letters and so does left; therefore they are the same thing. The rest I'm sure you can figure out from there.

Now the rudder is in the aft or back of the boat, in the water and is controlled by the tiller. Here is another thing that is backwards. If you want to go right, you move the tiller to the left and vice versa. This may get confusing if you are accustomed to driving a car or riding a bike etc.

The centerboard is also pretty tricky. You need to remember to put it down each time you go sailing or the boat will not turn. I have often found myself stuck on the shore across the lake because I forgot to put the centerboard down. Now this may seem like not such a bad experience, but the thing is that this is a very small lake with older people who sit on their porches and watch your every move and if you make a mistake you'll never live it down.

[These are the main components on the body of the boat, next we move to the rigging, which is the most complicated part] The mast, boom and gaff control and hold up the sail. The mast is the tall thing that is vertical to the boat. It is very heavy and my dad's face turns red when he lifts it into the boat. It is my job to crawl underneath and practice my direction terminology to get the mast quickly into its slot down below. Next is the boom, the most dangerous piece of machinery on the boat besides the foghorn, which has loud decibels that could hurt your ears if held too close. The boom is attached to the mast and lies horizontally. Safety precautions for the boom will be discussed later. Next is the Gaff, which is only used in some boats, as a way to lift the sail up the mast and give it good shape. These three pieces are controlled by a pulley system. A peak halyard, a throat halyard and two lazy Jacks and a topping lift.

To raise the sail takes a great deal of coordination. First the topping lift is used to lift up the boom to make lifting the sail easier (lazy jacks may also fill this position), next the throat and peak halyards are lifted together and the throat is tied off and the peak is pulled up the rest of the way. This is quite an exciting time for the sailor, for if all goes well, they have done everything right and will be leaving the dock in no time. This goal is reached usually after you have tried many times before to get the sail up and something has gone wrong each time.

At this point, the boom safety rules should be discussed. Now I have seen the amount of damage the boom can do with my own eyes. Take for example the day I was sailing with my dad. He was walking on the deck and I decided that the boat should turn without using the proper terms. The boom swung across and knocked my dad into the water...without a life jacket! I finally recognized he was in distress and my first reaction was to turn back around to pick him up. This had the boom swing around again and hit him in the head as I flew by attempting to be the hero. At this point my dad motioned for me to sail away from him and he opted to swim in the twenty feet to shore. If I had just used the words "Coming about", "Jibe HO" or "Duck!", none of this silliness would have happened.

So I leave you with the three biggest keys to a successful sail. Flexibility- anything can happen, Patience- sometimes the wind just doesn't want to blow and most importantly- know your terminology!

98
Excellent
paper!
what else
I saw

Our Feature Article

So there you have it, an essay written 25 years ago, most of which remains true today. Many of you have met my daughter Liz and her family at Small Craft Workshops over the years. Feel free to share your sailing tips when next you see her, which will probably be under sail.

In closing, we offer this photo of us after crossing the finish line at St. Michaels Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival to share that all is not chaos, all the time....



Results of our latest Gathering:

We met the afternoon of January 26th at the Avery Point Boathouse. President Brian Cooper led the meeting wherein we roughed out our usual schedule of rows, workshops and gatherings for the year. Ellie reported that we are solvent. Phil reported that the Dorries are in good shape. Matt obviously has lots going on in the Shop and improvements are being made. Prior to and after the meeting Aidan Davies introduced us to his Nahant Dory project (see the "Shop Notes" section for details). Future projects include Dan Nelson's planned CLC Passagemaker Dory build and Ian Bradley's Canoe Yawl. Bill Rutherford gave a pitch for help on the John Gardner Small Craft Workshop at this year's WoodenBoat Show.

Shop Notes



AIDAN DAVIES MAKES SHAVINGS AS HE BEVELS THE BOTTOM BOARD OF HIS NAHANT DORY

Aidan offered this short write-up about what he's been doing in the shop: "I have been working on a 17' Nahant Dory build these past few months. Since October, I have learned so much about woodworking and met many knowledgeable people in the world of boat building. Matthew McKenzie and I have been learning as we go, making many mistakes that will inevitably be filled with thickened epoxy. However, as Matt often says, our 100th boat will be better than our first.

This build is also acting as my Capstone project for my majors; American Studies and Maritime Studies. I want to put myself in the shoes of a traditional small craft builder, using hand tools as much as possible and avoiding plywood. This project also focuses on the importance of hands-on experiential learning.

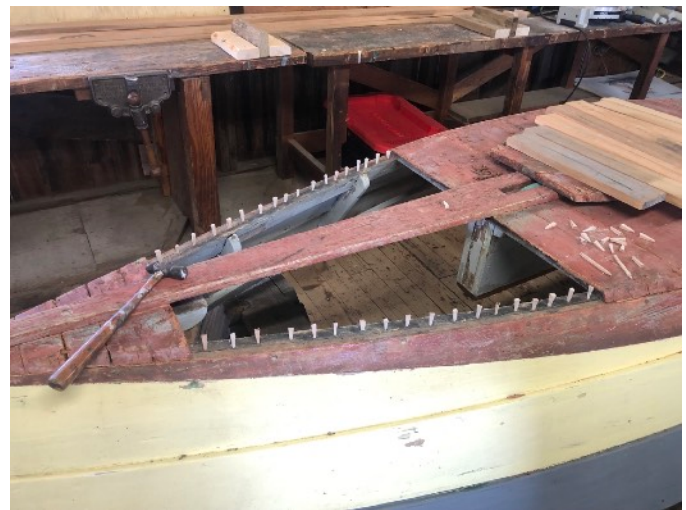
I want to emphasize that I want everyone involved in the chapter to work on the build as they please. I want to learn as much as I can. Aidan"

Matt McKenzie adds this note:” I hosted a few students from Kent Boarding School (Litchfield Co., Connecticut) who found themselves washed ashore in the Mystic area for a long weekend. I showed them the dory, set them on transferring lines around square stock, and they helped me lay on the starboard garboard batten. They also helped shunt the strongback over a few feet to make room for another build if we need it come spring. Good kids, they were, good with tools, respectful—and very interested in the process and how we look at boatbuilding.”

Thanks Aidan and Matt: Keep up the good work! As for the rest of us, this is an opportunity so stop by Friday afternoon/evenings and become involved.

Mystic Seaport Museum Activities:

The Boat Livery is pleased to report six rowing and two sailing boats are completed, covered and stored under the Claggett Boat Shed, ready to splash. Two Beetle Cats are very close to completion in the John Gardner Small Boat Shop. Two more are in process in the Australia Boat Shop awaiting delivery of fresh canvas for decks. Now on to more complex projects: fresh centerboard cases for two dories in the Livery Boat shop and a bottom replacement for Good Little Skiff “Waldo Howland” in the White Boat Shop (see photo). The Village and Shipyard are now open to visitors; stop by and see for yourself. Even better, join the Volunteers and learn while doing.



“SWEET NAILS’ - OAK PEGS - FILL OLD SCREW HOLES PRIOR TO INSTALLING NEW BOTTOM PLANKS

Upcoming Classes and Workshops: (see <https://www.mysticseaport.org/calendar/>)

Sharpening Wood Carving Tools: Saturday, 10 am and 2 pm April 1st and again April 9th

Introduction to Coastal Navigation: Saturday, 9 am-5pm April 8,15, and 22nd (3 day duration)

Incise Letter Carving: Sunday, 2 pm April 16th and 10 am and 2 pm April 22nd

Women’s Sailing: Tuesdays April 18-May 25th 5:30 pm-7:30 pm

Adult Beginner Sailing: Thursdays 5:30 pm-7:30 pm April 20-May 25th

Gilding Wood Carvings: 10am and 2 pm April 30th

Boating with Tides and Tidal Currents: 9am-5pm May 6th

And come see **the latest exhibit** of over 30 photographs by Corey Wheeler Forrest, a third generation commercial fishermom & fishdealer working out of Sakonnet Point, Rhode Island, now on view inside the Museum’s historic Meeting House, **“Fish & Forrest”**

Mystic Seaport Ship Modelers



This from Gene McNatt: We had a successful model Tugboat Show last weekend. The Masin Room was an awesome place to be with the photo of the village on the wall and the views out over the Mystic River. There were 46 models on display. Over the four days of the show we counted 510 visitors. I think that was a great showing for our first official Model Show. Thank you to all the individuals that helped out from preparing their models, bringing them, setting up, talking with all our visitors and cleaning up at the end."

And this video from leader Bob

Andrle is full of details: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FS4gXmje844>

Remember your Dues for 2023:

\$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 and mail us the magazine the "Ash Breeze") Join and Renew Online at www.tsca.net and receive a copy of the "Ash Breeze".

From the Mailbag:

One of our treasured fables was corrected by an email from our founding President, Russ Smith: "Hello Bill, I have to correct some of the information in your recent E-mail to Mr DeHaan, The boat that we patterned the Avery Point Dories after was not "washed up on the beach", but bought by me for \$50.00 from someone in Niantic that claimed someone in Noank built it. It was not a Gloucester Light Gull, it was longer, wider and deeper. Rob Pittaway and Bill Armitage added more flair and rocker as the original was flatter. 2nd very important clarification is that Ledyard Rowin' is still being run by me in Gales Ferry supported by the Ledyard Parks and Rec. only through their quarterly advertising and sign-up system. Running NOT ran! Thanks for the recognition. I just wanted to clarify a few important key points. Russell

This Month's Art:

by Sharon Brown



**THE LAST OF WINTER'S SNOW AND
THE FIRST OF SPRING'S SNOWDROPS**



CROCUS ALONG A MORNING WALK

The Latest from National:

Attached to this issue's transmittal email are Minutes from recent National TSCA Council Meetings as well as our first ever National Chapter Representatives Meeting. We meet the third Wednesday of every month and all members are welcome to attend. See me for Link.

From the Side Deck:

The View from the Side Deck today is sunny with a bit of wind, actually a lot of wind, and it's only just a bit over 30 degrees, but you can sense a bit of Spring in the air. Or maybe that's just a bit of wishful thinking. As we ease into Spring be thinking of June's John Gardner Small Craft Workshop. Visit both our local and our National Events websites for photos and details. Our theme will be "Boats in the Seaport's Small Craft Hall" as we celebrate final plans and start of construction to revitalize Rossi Mill and open it to the public. Have a boat traditionally built to plans or one of similar shape in modern materials? Please plan to bring it and share its story.

Of course we will have all the usual activities, rows, sails and shared advice. June 23-25th, concurrent with the WoodenBoat Show with all its presentations, activities and demonstrations. mark your calendars now. We look forward to your involvement.

In meantime, continue to share your thoughts, activities and what's going on in your workshop and what you see on your travels. Nothing like Daylight Savings Time to make one optimistic about the Summer. Fair Winds, Bill & Karen Rutherford