

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

Spiffing up JGTSCA Dorys & "Button Swan"

Fridays 3:30 - 7:00 pm at UCONN Avery Point Boat House Building 36

**Next Meeting: On an early Sunday in July 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.jgtsc.org>



OUR CHAPTER PRESIDENT IAN BRADLEY'S FRESHLY RECONDITIONED CULLER SKIFF ALL READY FOR SUMMER. A BEAUTIFUL JOB AND A BIG THANKS TO KEVIN RATHBONE FOR PASSING IT ON TO IAN. COME SEE IT AT THE JOHN GARDNER SMALL CRAFT WORKSHOP @ WB SHOW JUNE 27-29TH.

Upcoming Events:

CT Trails Day Local Activities Sunday, June 8th at 9 am: Our Larissa Graham with Maggie Cozens and Megan Granato are leading a family friendly, dog friendly nature walk and **a day of family fun at Bluff Point State Park and Coastal Preserve**, 55 Depot Road, Groton, CT. 06340. Look for the tent set up at the trailhead near the parking lot. They will provide all the information you need to choose your own adventure. Bring your hiking boots and/or bikes to explore the park at your own pace. Sponsors include the Town of Groton, GO Groton, CT Sea Grant and the Connecticut Reserve. <https://trailsday.org/events/trails-day-family-fun/>

Other nearby events include: **An earlier morning walk at Bluff Point (3.6 miles)** from 8 am to 10 am down to the Bluffs and return on the main loop trail. detailed trail map at <https://maps.groton-ct.gov/apps/HikingTrails/> **An Educational Walk (3 miles) led by the Mystic River Historical Society** through the historic Pequot Woods in Mystic and **The Groton Cross Town Trail Hike (4 miles) with GOSA (Groton Open Space)**, a one-way hike starting at Beebe Pond through 2 State Parks 2 Town-owned Preserves and 2 Local Land Trust Properties. **Details to register at <https://trailsday.org/events/groton>**

Friday Evenings at our Avery Point Boathouse from 3:30 pm to 7 pm: Work on “Button Swan” and help maintain the Club Dories - get them ready for the Small Craft Workshop in June. Come when you can and stay as long as you like. All assistance is welcome!

The John Gardner Small Craft Workshop/WoodenBoat Show June 27 - 29th: Author and YouTube small boat sailor Roger Barnes will be joining us. Roger will be a featured Speaker in the WoodenBoat Show Speaker’s Series. TSCA Member Ben Fuller will be assisting in an after-talk presentation showing the setup for his Camp Cruiser “Ran-Tan” on the lawn outside after which they will join us at Australia Beach and participate in our Workshop. Not to be missed! Registration is now open at <https://secure.mysticseaport.org/29883/29885>

To Sign up: Go to mysticseaport.org, select Menu, under Visit, select Calendar, arrow forward to June, go to June 27th, select Small Craft Workshop, read down to “Choose from Available Items” and select Small Craft Workshop (3 days) \$25 to \$45, scroll down to Adult (18+), click on Quantity and enter the number “1”, then scroll down and insert your name, email and phone number, then click “add to cart”. Repeat for each member of your group. **Signing up to overnight on the “Conrad” is one of the options.**

To Launch Boats: We’ll be launching and retrieving small boats from Australia Beach inside the Seaport both before the 9 am opening (make sure you are off the property by 9 am) and after 5 pm Friday, Sat. & Sunday. Get your entrance tickets early to show Security at the gate. We use the gate next to the South entrance building. If you have a big boat that requires a forklift launch please advise Sarah Clement of the Seaport Shipyard well in advance. There are Public Ramps north of I-95 off River Road in Mystic (steep) and south of downtown Mystic near Daniel Packer Inn (congested). **Trailer parking:** Mystic Middle School, 204 Mistuxet Ave.

Car parking is in the Seaport lot. The southern lot is closer to where we will be at Australia Beach. **Car toppers** launch at any time at the end of Islam Street immediately south of the Seaport property. **Australia Beach is the easiest way;** there are usually a few people around to help lift off a boat. We plan on having a couple of JGTSCA Dories at Australia Beach for folks to use. If any issues, give us a call. See you at the workshop.

Catboat Christmas Miracle

By Matt McKenzie

My new catboat, a used 14-foot Fisher Cat built by Howard Boats in Barnstable, Massachusetts, looked good: sound decks, solid spars, hull in decent shape, trail in good kit. The quick, nimble gaff-rigged day-sailer even came with bench seat cushions, which is a first for this small boater. She had classic lines, bronze and bright rigging, but built in fiberglass—a perfect combination of tradition and convenience. I named her *Truancy*.

The trouble came when I tried to step the 18-foot, four-inch diameter solid spruce mast. Lifting the heel above the deck was no problem for me, nor was gently lowering it through the mast partners and setting the heel on the keel below the foredeck. But finding the mast key's proper position proved impossible. Leaning the mast forward and aft, to port and to starboard, all in the hopes the tenon at the bottom of the stick would magically fall into its receiving mortice, had me sweating, swearing, and after a few long minutes, shaking. This was not going to work if I wanted to trailer my beautiful *Truancy* to a ramp for a solo sail.

Going inside to warm up from the December cold, I grabbed a pad of paper and began sketching out a solution. First idea: a pair of 16-foot 2x4 sheer legs angling aft from my Jeep's bumper to just over the mast partners, guyed off to the roof rack, from which would hang a gun tackle. With a hauling strop just above the balance point, I could hoist the spar from the cat boat's cockpit. I could also use the main sheet block to run the line forward to me under the fore deck once I guided the heel through the partners. And if needed, I could cam cleat the hauling line to free up two hands. Perfect! After hounding a former schooner engineer friend of mine about my idea—he had mounted something similar to his truck in the 1970s—he rolled his eyes, said, “Sure, what the hell could go wrong?” and I went into the holidays with a plan in hand. My Christmas present from Santa: inspiration!

I wanted some hardware fabricated to anchor the feet of the sheer legs to where the bumper met the Jeep body, so I called my friend Doug, who could fabricate anything with metal. When I told him the purpose of my request, I felt like the Grinch had come to my little Christmas celebration.

“Brother, I’m giving that idea a hard NO.”

“It will be fine; I do this all the time.”

“No—I won’t make those for you. Why don’t I make a hinge?”

Well, I had thought about a tabernacle before, and had called Geoff at Marshall Catboats to ask about their system. They had tabernacled a Handy Cat 14's mast a few years ago, but the project proved very expensive, and he didn't feel it was a good value for customers. And, to be honest, I was not thrilled about cutting up *Truancy's* original mast. So, I had set the idea aside, and pressed on with the sheer leg approach. Doug would not budge, however. He was not going to be “complicit” in my janky scheme (which became the short-hand name for the approach, “The Janky Scheme”). He had no interest in seeing me, my boat, or my Jeep mauled by an 18-foot, 75-pound spar swinging around in the air, suspended from a pair of two-by-fours flexing under the strain. My assurances of the stability gained by two guy lines failed to move him. And, to be fair, he does stuff like this for a living, so likely drew upon a wealth of

experience in his refusal (I did object to his use of term “complicit”—he did not care). And so, with Christmas cheer dashed, I put the plans aside and turned to other pressing issues.

A few days later, on Boxing Day, Doug called me from the road and asked if I had any ideas for a hinge system. I hadn’t thought about it.

“When I get back, bring me the mast and I will make something up for you.”

“Let’s do this next winter: I don’t want to cut up the original mast, so I will have to lay-up a new one. That will be a good project for next year.”

“No, let’s get this done now—you will want to be in your boat this summer.”

So, I made some calls to local lumber yards looking for 16-foot lengths of clear, two-by-six spruce, and came up empty. I called a few boat builder friends to see if they had stock I could buy from them—nothing. Then, in a fit of desperation, I put emails out to other small-boat people asking if anyone had a four-inch by 18-foot spar lying about. Why not? Hail Mary.

Now, over history, specific regions attract a critical mass of talents and expertise pertaining to one peculiar activity or another. New Bedford became a center for Yankee whaling; Stonington, Connecticut a center for Antarctic sealing; Boston, Pacific Northwest sea otter pelt trading. The list of particular places filled with people tied to peculiar activities is endless.

Well, coastal New England, right now, appears to be such a place: small boat building, repair, and sailing. Within an hour, another dinghy cruising friend, Bill Rutherford (of course!), replied, that yes indeed, he did have a solid, four-inch by 17-foot catboat mast in his garage he would be more than happy to give me. Not only that, he recalled a *Wooden Boat Magazine* article from the 1990s detailing plans for a knife-blade tabernacle for a four-inch diameter mast. And, it also just so happened, he had a set of the stainless-steel plates called for in that article rattling around under the seat of his Jeep. The price: “Take me for a sailboat ride when you’re done with the project.” Doug was stunned when he heard I found a mast within a day: “How the hell did you . . . ? We’ll get it done next week.”

It was a Catboat Christmas Miracle: where else in the world but along New England’s shores could one find, within an hour, a ready-made catboat mast waiting for a new home?

Earth Day Report

Earth Day Open House: Ellie Cznarowski put on a spread of luncheon treats at our Community Boathouse, UConn’s Syma Ebbin organized an array of display tables in Avery Point’s Library staffed by knowledgeable environmental experts with handouts (I scored a map of local Coastal Access Points) while Dan Nelson, Matt McKenzie and Alan Schaeffer introduced people to the boathouse and its myriad projects. New Member Joe Bozza stopped in to share plans for his “Alaska” build and may have become entangled in Alan’s “Button Swan” project. The Earth smiled.



Button Swan and Dory Rehab

at Avery Point Community Boathouse



Alan Schaeffer is making great progress on his "Button Swan". Using a right angle drill he added new limber holes between frame spaces and moved his spars into the shop for a fresh finish. Come by and give a hand,



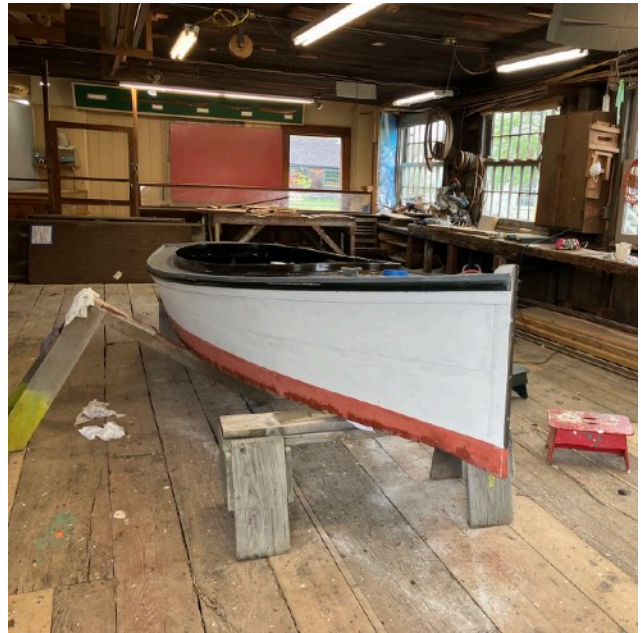
Dan Nelson, John Hacunda and your editor took advantage of last Friday's beautiful Spring weather to move one of the JGTSCA Dories outside, sand bottom and exterior then add some epoxy to the bare spots (these are, after all, plywood replicas...). Next: a quick sand and paint. Yes, traditional Rust-oleum Hunter Green. Dan and I will be away this coming Friday so, if a couple folks could please come by and help John...Usual times are 3:30 pm to 5:30 +/-.

Become a Member/Re-up your Dues:

For Membership sign-up send \$15 to Ellie Czarnowski for LOCAL CHAPTER JOHN GARDNER TSCA dues: Find the Form at www.JGTSCA.org and Mail to the following: JGTSCA Treasurer, Community Boat Building #36, UCONN Avery Point Campus, 1084 Shennecossett Road, Groton, CT 06340

NATIONAL TSCA: Our John Gardner Chapter does not require National TSCA membership but we strongly encourage it. National TSCA pays for the insurance that covers all of our shop and on-the-water activities and events like the John Gardner Small Craft Workshop that attracts many visitors. Our chapter has a large number of National members. Please consider becoming a National member if you're not already. It's still only \$35/year and you'll receive the "Ash Breeze", our quarterly boating journal, and help pay our for our insurance. Visit our website at <https://TSCA.net>

Mystic Seaport Boat Livery - Opens this Weekend!



MAC COOPER AND PIERCE KEPPLER ROLL & TIP CHASE BOAT "GIDEON MANCHESTER" WITH THE LARGE (35 FT) SHARPIE IN THE BACKGROUND. INSIDE THE JOHN GARDNER SMALL BOAT SHOP, THE SMALL SHARPIE "WT" GETS READY TO REENTER THE WATER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS.



"GIDEON" ALL SPIFFED UP W/ FRESH BOTTOM PAINT AND PIERCE KEPPLER ADDS HIS SHEW & BURNHAM ROWING BOAT TO THE FLEET W/ FELLOW VOLUNTEERS: (L-R) JIM MORROW, MATTHEW STUART, MAC COOPER, SUPERVISOR ROSIE DIMATTEO, PIERCE, GARY SHARPE, TOM WUNDER, GENE CAPUTO, IAN CRAWFORD, LARRY TYTLA, JOHN MALMROS, STEVE TELSEY (BR PHOTO)

Mystic Seaport Museum Activities

[Monstrous: Whaling and Its Colossal Impact Opens Soon](#)

Opens May 24 in Collins Gallery

This powerful new exhibition explores the sheer scale—physical, economic, and human—of the nation’s whaling industry and its legacy. Hundreds of striking artifacts from the Museum’s renowned whaling collections—tools, photographs, ship models, documents, hefty iron try pots, harpoons, darting guns, and blubber hooks—tell the story of the extraordinary lengths commercial whalers went to in harvesting oil-rich blubber and spermaceti. The exhibition is paired with artist Jos Sances's *Or, The Whale*, a monumental 51-foot mural composed of 119 scratchboard panels that together represent a life-sized sperm whale, immersing viewers in a visual journey through three centuries of American industrialism. Learn [more](#).

[SeaClass: New Digital Learning Series](#)

Premieres June 4

Introducing the digital series that will inspire curious minds, near and far, through episodes specially curated by our museum experts. This season immerses us in the 19th-century whaling industry. Through an exploration of stories and artifacts from our collections, we'll take you on a journey to learn the impact of whaling then and now. Learn [more](#).

[Brilliant Adult Sails are Back!](#)

Register now for September and October

After a major nine-month-long maintenance project, *Brilliant* is ready for another great season! In addition to our beloved teen trips this summer, we are excited to welcome adult sailors aboard for a lineup of unforgettable voyages this fall, including day sails and two extended trips. Register for day sails in Fishers Island Sound; sail in the Antique and Classic Boat Rendezvous parade; voyage to the Chesapeake Bay, sailing non-stop from Mystic; or race 126 miles in the Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race!

Learn more and register [here](#).

Upcoming Events

[SEACLASS](#)

[Open-hearth Cooking: Eating from the Sea](#)

May 29 | 6:00–9:00 p.m.

[Ice Cream](#)

June 8 | 6:00–8:00 p.m.

[Full SeaClass schedule here.](#)

[Newfoundland Dog Water Rescue Training](#)

May 31 and June 8 | 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

[WoodenBoat Show](#)

June 27–29 | 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Mystic Seaport Ship Modelers

This just in from MSSM Leader Bob Andrlé: “About a dozen or so of us worked to set up this season's MSSM ship model display in the John Gardner room last Friday afternoon and Saturday morning--thanks all and good work! We basically have most everything in order with about 50 models already in the room, and have already been open for business. Ken was manning the room all day today and it was quite busy with visitors already. Our goal was to be fully ready by Memorial Day Weekend, so we hope to have even more ship models in the room by Saturday. Note the upcoming encore Train Show on June 12th - 15th in the Seaport's Masin Room.

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 presentations.

From the Mailbag

Ben Ellcome's New London Community Boatworks debut website: <https://www.nlcboatworks.org> Note upcoming “Jellyfish” build at NL Maritime Museum. Ben gave an excellent presentation at our JGTSCA January meeting.

Comments: Ahoy Ben, “I applaud your efforts to get this organization up and going. I am looking forward to being involved in some projects and seeing the young builder's skills develop. This is a very good thing your organization is doing for the community. Congratulations!” **Ian Bradley, JGTSCA President**

An early May note from **Pierce Kepple**: “On Mother's Day I snuck over to the small boathouse, baled out the 12' Shew & Burnham then took her for a **quick row before a Mother's Day** Breakfast date. As I got into a beginner's rowing rhythm I was overtaken by a whaleboat featuring six rowers and a helmsman. I watched peacefully as they powered by me. What a delightful time on the Mystic River. All the best, Pierce”

From **Liz Blackwell**, who will be here with family to help out at the **JG Small Craft Workshop**: a photograph of **National TSCA President Pete Peters** and team readying the prototype 36' model of a Joe Youcha **Bevin's Skiff free sailing Pond Boat**. Pete and team will be here for the JG SCWorkshop with sample plans, kits and demos off Australia Beach. Come try one out. See you at the JGTSCA tent



And to wrap up this issue: from home builder **John Hennings**: a photo after successfully cutting his new PT 11 Nesting Dinghy in half; a successful surgery ...

That's it for this issue folks. Keep those cards and letters commin' Bill & Karen Rutherford at smallcrafter@gmail.com