
Mainsheet

Newsletter of the Delaware River Chapter, TSCA

April, 2007

Next Meeting: April 10 at 7:30 P.M. at the Red Dragon will be the Annual Bid and Buy Auction.

Be sure to bring all the stuff that is cluttering up your basement and your shop. Last year's auction exceeded all previous records for good stuff and for profits for the local. This is an important source of revenue for the club, so support our bottom line with lots of good stuff and a generous checkbook. The meeting would normally be on April 3, but this year the Red Dragon has scheduled something else that day. Our enthusiasm at the auction can be such that they wanted us to meet in an otherwise empty clubhouse. Here is the Tom Jones rowboat generously donated:

While we are on the subject of excellent meetings, March 6, Mike and Harold made a presentation on the history and the building of MacGregor Canoes. Andy and Jenny were supposed to participate, but Andy got sick with the flu and had to miss.



Here is Harold's canoe a-building. This picture gives you some idea of the level of craftsmanship in the finished canoe, and Harold gave equal attention to his presentation. His work shows evidence of great attention to detail. It is his second boat. The first is a lovely, green Glen L 15 sloop Harold sails on Union Lake. Since finishing the MacGregor, he built a Pigmy kayak that he finished and launched before winter really set in. This is quite a string for a one person shop. Here is my memory of Harold's lecture.

Some of the reasons I chose the MacGregor were the size and the challenge of a different kind of project from the Glen L 15. A big advantage of Ian Oughtred designs is that he has written a comprehensive book, CLINKER PLYWOOD BOATBUILDING MANUAL, available from WoodenBoat, that exhaustively documents this kind of construction. As Ian says "A canoe hull is a complex project, but light materials are so easy to handle the project is nearer to modelmaking than boatbuilding. The strakes bend gently in a skinny boat, and there is no lofting necessary."

I started with 4 mm Sapele for the hull and 3 mm for the decks. This I ordered from Harbor Sales. I built a substantial ladder strongback and made the mold by laying the plans on my moldstock and pricking through the paper with a pin. I then flipped each plan over to make the mirror image and ensure bilateral symmetry. Lofting wasn't necessary because she was easy to check for fairness with a batten once the molds were set up on the strongback. With such a popular design I could depend on the accuracy of the plans. Some fairing of the molds was necessary as the skeleton took shape, but not much.

I laminated the mahogany inner and outer stems together with clingfilm between so there was little shaping to do once they were in place on the boat. First, the inner keel was mounted on the molds and shaped for smooth landing of the garboards. Both the inner keel and the inner stems were covered by the garboards and planks, no rolling bevel. Tapered gains were required at both ends so the planks would lie smooth on the inner 4 stems.

I scarphed the plywood plankstock into 16 foot by 2 foot lengths. While scarphing on the boat is possible when a builder is single handed and lacks shop space, it wasn't really necessary in a boat when all planks were less than 16 feet and required only one scarf. I cut the individual planks from the stock so that the scarphs weren't lined up longitudinally, but were arranged along the hull. First, I made hardboard patterns of each plank. This pattern was laid on the planking stock and cut with a saber saw, then planed down to the mark with a Japanese Shinto rasp.



Once the first plank was shaped, I used it as a pattern for the same plank on the other side of the boat cutting that plank out with a router and a pattern bit. This insured that my laps were the same on both sides as long as the plank bevels were equal on both sides.

The basic shape of the garboard was determined by measuring the same percentage of the girth at each station. While the sheerstrake is the most important plank, visually, the garboard provides an important foundation for the lining off pattern. The ratio of the width of all the other six planks is determined by shape of the garboard.

My first problem was that, when I first cut the pattern, I didn't notice that it didn't fully land on the forward and aftermost stations. This meant that the garboard planks weren't the right shape and had to be persuaded to stay on those two molds. A pneumatic nailer at the molds helped to persuade the planks to find their proper home. At both ends of the planks, tapered rabbits or gains were required so the planks lapped smooth on the stems. These were almost the only area where fastenings were not removed once the glue had set.

I made plywood U shaped clamps out of 3/8 ply and then made hardwood wedges for securing the plank laps. Storebought clamps aren't long enough even when the planks are this narrow. Lots of these were needed to hang each plank. First, three or four are loosely positioned, the wedges just tight enough to keep the plank in place. Check all around to make sure the plank is correctly placed. Then fit all the clamps and wedges in the same way, then push the wedges home. Be sure clamps and wedges are clear of the inner edge so it will be easier to clean up the glue.



Once I had finished the hull itself, I was ready to turn it rightside up, being careful to keep her hull aligned in the process. I had been careful about cleaning up glue as I hung each plank, rags and mineral spirits on the outside, scrapers and heatguns on the inside. This was tricky, because the molds aren't very far apart. It was hard to get under the strongback and catch all the drips, especially near the molds. This diligence paid off when it came to sanding time, but, even in such a small boat, there was still lots of smoothing involved before she was ready for paint and varnish. I'm a bit of a perfectionist, and at this stage, that paid off.

There is lots of paint and varnish on the way, but the final appearance is no good without thorough preparation. I used masking tape and good paints, lots of coats.

Although there was still a long way to go, the hull itself was rightside up and complete. Now, it really looked like a boat. I made up chocks from the mold patterns and mounted them on trestles. Then it was wales and rubbing strakes to complete the hull. Before the deck went on I had to paint at least the ends of the interior. Once the deck is in place, it is too late to go back.

Both Andy and Mike had insisted that hollow spars were important to keep the rig as light as possible, and that bird's mouth masts were fun to make. So I built a spar lathe, using the head from a garage sale lathe head that could be slowed way down, and a tail end guide that I made out of skateboard wheels. Masts are long and narrow, a support is necessary to prevent whip when turning and smoothing, even at a low speed. At first trials, the wheels were too hard and squeezed channels into the mast staves, but then, once I lined the wheels with inertube rubber, and the lathe worked better.



Pictures on the laptop; lathe wheels on the table.

I cambered the deckbeams according to the plan. Hanging knees support the carlings and washboards. The cockpit combing was such a tight bend in a thirty inch wide canoe that I had to laminate it out of two layers of hardwood. I copied two bulkheads off the molds fore and aft of the cockpit and glued them into place to make two watertight compartments. Rather than complicate the deck with hatches, I cut hatches in these bulkheads, saving the

cutout to be made into the hatches. Although Andy left his floorboards loose, secured with turnbuckles, I screwed mine down to the floors for longitudinal support.

The design calls for a leeboard system that attaches the head of the weighted leeboard to floor of the cockpit with a single penant. The theory is that the sailor can reach over and transfer the leeboard to the other side at every tack. Going through the eyes of the wind is a busy time in a narrow canoe, so, on Andy's recommendation, I chose to pivot the leeboard on a single bolt passing through the strengthened sheerstrake. A single board serves on both tacks as long as the boat sails flat, and it still can be rotated up out of the way when grounding. Andy and Jenny sail as a couple. Mostly sailing alone, I am now looking at adding a leeboard on the other side. This way, I can lower the windward leeboard before the tack, and then, once she is settled on the new tack, raise the other leeboard. This system keeps the canoe more stable at all times, but still keeps drag to a minimum.

I am very pleased with this project. It was a total change from my first boat and made an exquisite boat that is fun to sail and good to look at.

(Fearing such a thing as too much canoe, I will save the history portion for a later edition.)

Coast Guard Auxiliary Boating Safety Course:

Bright and early on March 3, thirteen members showed up at the Red Dragon for the Boating Safety Course. There were four presenters led by Commander Daniel Tinney who used videos to lead us carefully through the material.



Are they giving off any steam?

You can see our stalwarts, more familiar with a chisel or blockplane than with a pencil and paper grinding their way through the test. The good news is that everybody passed the exam. Now, you are safe to sail with the TSCA. It wasn't all theory, either. Here, Wendy and Peter are coached in knot tying.



This license will be required by all sailors operating powered boats in New Jersey waters, but there are a couple of grace years before some of us older members are grandfathered into the system. There were lots of good reminders to keep us up on safety, both boating and trailering.

Wooden Boat Factory:

Geoff McKonly has generously offered shopspace at the Wooden Boat Factory for our winter boatbuilding project.



Tom has been concerned for some time that the torque from the big rig has been working the laid deck of the Tuckup, so we are using the time on Thursday nights to put a new plywood deck on the MARION BREWINGTON.

We were able to strip off the old deck and found very little rot in the old beams, so the project promises not to be more extensive than we had feared.

We were able to save the cockpit coaming and the guard rails when pulling the old deck up, but the carlings will have to be replaced.

Tom, Frank, Ned, Rick, Wendy, and Peter waded into the destruction phase of the project and were pleased with the result. Now, comes the fitting part of the project, so please keep your Thursday nights open through April. We must keep her at her best if she is to maintain her position of World Champion Tuckup. Thank you, Geoff, for your

generous offer. We promise to give generously to the WBF when it comes to contribution time.

A New Water Trail:

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) held its first meeting in January to organize local constituents for a tidal water trail on the lower Delaware River. Chuck and Marilyn represented the Delaware River TSCA Chapter. Other attendees included representatives of Ridley Township, Philadelphia Canoe Club, Delaware River Greenway Partnership, PA Boating Association, NOAA, and various local groups. The PEC has established water trails in other Pennsylvania locations and is starting with a new staff in Philadelphia. Currently Paul Racette of the PECPA is developing a survey for river users to gather information from recreational boaters about access points, places of interest to develop a Trail guide map. You can reach him at pracette@pecpa.org or 215 592 7020.

The final result will be a River Trail Map Guide, an interactive website and signage. Paul's team hopes to establish more boat launch facilities. Later, PEC will recruit volunteers to be river stewards and monitor water quality. The PEC website will provide ongoing public information as plans develop. There will be another general meeting in the spring.

March Meeting:

Gary Holmes was at the March Meeting. Here he is last summer in his cold molded big melonseed with his fair crew.



The blue cast comes from water in the camera, but you get the idea of his boat and the Chinese lug rig.

Assateague:

A reminder that Dave Soltesz is planning a trip to the Assateague Island Federal Seashore on April 21. Camp at the Bayside Campground and haul the boats on the beach just north of the Campsite. Dave is an old hand at the seashore. Launch at Old Ferry Landing and sail your heart

out in a beautifully protected bay just inside Assateague Barrier Island. Soulinvictus@comcast.net



Doug, Phil, Mike at Newport Bay last November

Other Clubs:

The Eastern Shore TSCA recently hosted a presentation on Howard Chapelle at the Ruark Boatworks, Cambridge. Guest speaker Ed Theiler, formerly an orthopedic surgeon from Philadelphia, spoke.

Through a series of events, he found author, and master watercraft designer Howard Chapelle's books and models and tried to learn all he could about his works. In his research, Mr. Thayer found a dissertation by JoAnne King, once a student at George Washington University. "Her dissertation is the only thing that comes close to a biography on Howard Chapelle," he said.

Howard Irving Chapelle was born in Toland, Massachusetts in February 1901. He spent his summers in New Haven, Connecticut. Spending much time on the water, Mr. Chapelle became interested in small boats and boat design. He dropped out of school and spent the next ten years apprenticing with boatbuilders through the 1920's, learning all about boatyards and boat construction. In 1931, Mr. Chapelle started his own company with several offices, following the idea, "If it looks right, it is right" in boatbuilding. His father gave him his first boat, SWEEPSKATES.

Chapelle moved to the Eastern Shore and met James B. Richardson, a late 20th Century Chesapeake Bay boatbuilder. Mr. Richardson and Mr. Chapelle often worked together and argued together, but they admired each other. Mr. Chapelle wrote many books on the art of watercraft design, *The History of the American Sailing Navy*, *the National Watercraft Collection*, *Chesapeake Bay Sailing Skiffs*, *American Small Sailing Craft*, *Boatbuilding*, *The Search for Speed Under Sail*, and *Bark and Skin Boats of North America*.

For Sale:

Kevin Brennan wants to sell his seventeen foot sharpie ketch, a veteran of several outings to Tyce's Shoal. There was a nice writeup in the latest *Messing About in Boats* .(410) 666 8958.

Tom Shephard is selling a plywood Bluejay, complete with trailer. 856 691 4053.

Members:

Carl Weissinger has made a fast start to his latest project since he sold JOLLY CODGER to me. He is strip-planking a 13 ½ foot Melonseed. At this time he has finished planking the hull and is planning to start fiberglassing the outside. He has already started building the hollow spars.

Spring has come, although there is a cold little wind this morning. April 13, 14, 15 is the Western Gulf Coast TSCA meeting in Cortez, Florida. John Guidera and I are driving down in convoy, Bill and Karen Rutherford, and Greg DeCowsky are flying down.



Earlier convoy

Thanks to David Lucas and Roger Allen, there should be quite a convocation of melonseeds both at Cortez and at Cedar Key, May 4. On second thought, maybe that is a picnic of melonseeds. We will be carrying Greg's folding boat down with us.

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