

SUMMER 2015

Rivers West News

Inspiring the crafting and use of low-impact boats

President's Corner



Fellow Members,

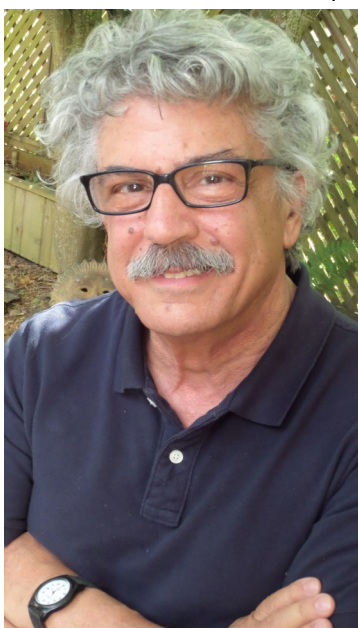
Can one ask for any better boating weather than what we've experienced recently? Will the sunny days, warm air, clear skies and blue water lure you out on our local waterways? Will this perfect boating weather

encourage our erstwhile boat builders to a faster completion of their dream boat? Shall we all pack up the car with family, food, dog and boat (of course!) and head out for a day of boating and picnicking? I say we all should be out of the house and take advantage of the many rivers, bays and lakes in the Pacific Northwest to do what our club is all about: boating.

As for boating, our third annual Hagg Lake Messabout is coming up. On Sunday, June 28, we meet again at the Sain picnic area for boating, free food and drinks and best of all, having a great time with many friends. Our new members should make a special effort to attend this event as it does offer an enjoyable place to meet our legendary boat builders and see their craft. If you ask politely, you may have an opportunity to try out their boats. With the weather as it is, I can envision a great turnout for one of RiversWest's best outdoor events.

I do encourage all of our members to organize a messabout during the summer months. It doesn't have to be as elaborate as the club's sponsored event at Hagg Lake. It can be as simple as meeting at a place on a certain day for a good paddle, row or sail. Make it a pot luck or just bring your own lunch. The idea is to have many more days on the water where club members can meet and share a good time. To make this happen, just send an email notice to John Bouwsma and he'll send out a "global" email to all members. Give him the date, time and place to meet...simple.

Jim Litton has done a major downsize and because of that has donated many valuable and useful tools to our club. These include a milling machine, metal lathe, wood lathe, a Delta Unisaw, a big Hitachi resaw, a three-inch industrial belt grinder, a small



Sal DiGrande, President

bench grinder, a jointer and a large router mounted in the extension of the table saw.

We're not sure just how many of these tools we'll keep, but if any are sold, the funds generated will be a good addition to our bank account. Jim has been a longtime member of RiversWest and has served as past President. Thank you, Jim, for your generous donation.

Our workshops have been a great success. Under the leadership and professionalism of Randy Torgerson, our classes and workshops in maritime skills are better attended and have expanded to include some very interesting topics, such as scale model making, casting, steam bending and birds mouth spars. Thank you, Randy, for the great job you're doing.

Chuck Stuckey continues to do a superb job of managing our Family Boat Build, to be held on July 11 and 12. We expect a full complement of 12 families working together to build their own 12-foot wooden boat, the Salt Bay Skiff. Imagine a family working together as a team on a project that creates a boat the whole family can enjoy. Better yet, after only working two days, the boat will be ready to launch and row on the Willamette River.

Catlin Gabel students will also be building this Salt Bay Skiff two weeks after the Family Boat Build. This will bring a total of four boats built with this school for the year. If they continue with this program, they will soon have a flotilla for regattas and messabouts!

Our Book Club has met and discussed three books to date. We always seem to have some very interesting books to study and discuss. I especially enjoyed our lively discussion over Tristan Jones's book "The Steady Trade: A Boyhood at Sea." It appears that this book, billed as a biography, may be better suited as a fictional novel. Why? Do some research, read the book and be prepared for some very remarkable revelations.

Happy Boating!

Sal DiGrande



Catlin Gabel School Boat Build**Russ Smith**

This spring, RiversWest was invited to join a group of students at the Catlin Gabel School in Portland to build two Salt Bay Skiffs. RiversWest members created kits for each boat in advance. Chuck Stuckey and four club members guided the students as they assembled the kits using the same methods as is done for the annual July RiversWest Family Boat Build.

Club members Art Wilson, Michael Carrico, John Bousma and I met at the Catlin Gabel School woodshop to start the build in March. Many of the students were not familiar with some of the tools and procedures, but with instruction from club members and Ric Fry, the school shop instructor, they learned very quickly. All were very involved and willing to work diligently to accomplish their daily goals. Some of the students made digital recordings of the work on iPads while others were working.

Personally, it was a very good experience to see young people anxious to learn new skills, not afraid to get a little glue on their gloves or do some hard tasks without any complaints.

Their parents and teachers at the school should be very proud of their finished project. I know I was.

**RiversWest Small Craft Center****Open House - First and Third Saturdays**

Our boat shop is open to visitors on the first and third Saturday of every month. Stop by in the morning and have a free cup of coffee and a donut. Take the opportunity to meet the members who are a friendly group of boating enthusiasts. We will take you on a tour of our facility which includes our wood shop; boat building spaces, which are available for members to rent; and our livery of boats. You can even browse through our extensive lending library, including our collection of WoodenBoat Magazines.

**Boat Shop**

Our boat shop has the necessary equipment you need to build your boat. Many members who are building their boats at home take advantage of our complete wood shop, saving the cost of renting or purchasing their own tools. Fellow members provide free advice and helping hands when you need it.

**Bay Rentals**

Our boat shop is configured with bays that members can use for restoring or building their dream boat. Available for rent on a monthly basis, these bays, 10 x 23 feet, offer a dedicated workspace with light, electrical power and immediate access to our wood shop. And best of all, there are plenty of friendly and experienced craftsmen available to offer advice on the techniques of building a boat.



When you're a member of RiversWest, you don't need to be a shipwright, own a shop full of tools or have a large space at home to build your dream boat. We have it all.

riverswest.org



5th Annual Family Boat Build & Wooden Boat Festival**John Whitehouse****Family Boat Build Weekend, July 11-12**

The 5th Family Boat Build weekend, sponsored by **RiversWest Small Craft Center** and the **Willamette Sailing Club**, begins Saturday, July 11th. It takes place at the Willamette Sailing Club, next to Willamette Park, on the banks of the Willamette River. A dozen families and teams will each build their own Salt Bay Skiff, with mentoring from expert wooden boat builders from RiversWest. On Saturday morning, teams will receive their kits and supplies, and commence building.

On Sunday, July 12th, the Portland Wooden Boat Festival opens and celebrates the final day of the Family Boat Build. By late afternoon, a parade of finished boats will end at the river's edge. The group launching will be well worth watching.

**A Call for Wooden Boats**

Also on Sunday, the festival will have a display of wooden boats from local boat builders and owners. Space is available on the grounds for canoes, kayaks and boats on trailers, as well as dock space for larger vessels. There is no charge to display a boat, but you must be registered before the event.

To enter your boat, send an email to johnwhitehouse1@msn.com.

Thoughts On Varnishing**Steve Najjar**

Several newsletters ago, Sal DiGrande was lamenting about dust on his varnished boat. The ideal place to varnish is in a "clean room."

I remember seeing a tent dedicated to varnishing cherished Whitehalls and Wherrys at the South End of Dolphin Rowing Club in San Francisco. For the rest of us, we can only do the best we can.

Here are a few things that I do in an attempt to create a dust-free environment for painting or varnishing.

- One or two days prior to varnishing, get out all paint or varnishing stuff and set it up: Paint or varnish, thinner, brushes, containers, tack rags, gloves, mask. Be sure to cover them.
- Using an air hose or the exhaust end of a shop vac, blow the dust off of everything near the boat. Remember, anything you touch with dust on it while painting or varnishing WILL end up on the boat.
- After it settles (or the next day), sweep up the dust. If possible, use a garden mister with water to knock the dust out of the air.
- Again, let things settle. Do nothing else in your shop!
- Later, or the next day, do a final wipe with a tack cloth on the parts to be painted or varnished. Change your clothes, put on a hat and your mask, and go at it.



Visiting the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum

Mark Ramsby

The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum is home to a collection of Chesapeake Bay artifacts and exhibitions, and a large collection of Chesapeake Bay vessels. Located on a point in the Chesapeake, it covers 18 acres and contains its collection in 35 buildings on the campus. The Museum offers year-round educational seminars and workshops, and offers tours of the bay in historic craft.

Getting There:

It's an easy drive from either Washington, DC or Baltimore. A little more than an hour from Baltimore Washington International airport, passing through lush farmland, you arrive in St. Michaels, a delightful little village on the Eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay.

The Boat Shop:

Stepping through the gates of the museum, the first thing you see is the boat shop, where two replica skiffs and a fleet of kayaks are under construction.

All but one of these boats are destined for the rental fleet, with the final skiff being a commissioned boat. Most of the work here is done by a staff of shipwrights assisted by a boat building apprenticeship program.

Directly behind the boat shop is a woodworking shop where a shipwright is building a new cabin door for "Martha," a Hooper's Island Dovetail Boat built in 1934. The original door was too deteriorated to repair.



Chesapeake Bay Museum (cont.)

The Boats:

The boats of the Chesapeake have been shaped by the bay. Most were workboats intended for oystering, crabbing and fishing. These boats have evolved for use in these shallow, protected waters. Shallow "V" bottoms and hard chines provide good initial stability for hauling nets over the side.

Martha is an exceptional example of a Hooper's Island Boat. At 43' in length and just 8'3" beam, she slips through the bay efficiently. Martha was a working boat and probably used for tonging oysters or trotlining for crab, but the handsome "Dove Tail" stern design (also referred to as "Duck Tail" or Drake Tail") was derived from the racing boats of the time. She was named for the owner's daughter, as "wives may change but mothers and daughters are known to be safe namesakes."



Mark Ramsby



Joining Martha are the boats of the Floating Fleet. This fleet is varied and distributed along the docks of the museum. One of the crown jewels is the 51' Skipjack, "Rosie Parks." Skipjacks are boats used primarily

for harvesting oysters. They are shallow "V" hulls with hard chines and fitted with a centerboard rather than a keel. The boats have a low freeboard to allow easy hauling of oyster dredges and nets over the side.

Pass by the 1879 Hooper Strait Lighthouse and across a manicured lawn to the small boat shed. This building houses many smaller Chesapeake boats. These boats are largely unrestored. While some of these vessels are decaying, others are in remarkably sound condition, just needing caulking and a coat of paint to ply the Chesapeake once more.



There are several examples of Tilghmann canoes in the shed. These are not canoes as normally thought of, but sailing vessels made of multiple logs shaped in the dugout method. Multiple pine logs were pinned

together, shaped and hollowed to produce hulls that were typically more than 30' in length. The beam was dependent upon the size logs that were available and the number of logs used. Planks were added to the bow and stern sections to complete the hull. They are referred to as "three log" or "five log" canoes, indicating how many logs were joined to form the hull. This construction method was a way to form a hull with the limited skills of the labor force and lack of access to saws and skilled sawyers for making planks.

This article describes just a fraction of what is available at CBMM. When in the DC area, this is a great day trip for the boat builder. \$12 buys you a two-day pass.

More Information: : <http://cbmm.org>

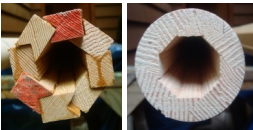


RiversWest Maritime Skills - Upcoming Fall Workshops**Randal Torgerson****Wooden Block Plane: Sept. 26-27, 2015**

Students will either build a wooden smoothing plane or a low angle block plane with an iron (blade) to match. You will work with O1 tool steel to make the plane iron, which we will heat treat. You will complete

one plane in class and you may purchase a kit for the second plane that you will complete at home. Randy Torgerson and Michael Simmons will lead the workshop.

The cost of the Wooden Block Plane workshop is \$30 for members, \$40 for non-members and a material cost of \$30 for a total of \$60 for members and \$70 for non-members. An additional plane kit is \$10. The minimum number of students is 2 and the maximum is 6. The workshop will run from 9:00 AM until 3:30 PM on Saturday, September 26th and Sunday, September 27th.

Birds Mouth Spars: Oct. 10-11, 2015

Students and instructor will build a hollow wood mizzen mast for the Hall Templeton using the Bird's Mouth method. We will work cooperatively, switching tasks to give everyone an opportunity to learn a task.

The first day will get us from raw stock to a glued up mast. On the second day, we will go from an eight sided mast to round (or as far as time allows). Craig Bryant will lead the workshop.

The cost of the Birds Mouth Spars workshop is \$30 for members; \$40 for non-members. The material cost is \$10 for a total of \$40 for members and \$50 for non-members. The minimum number of students is 2 and a maximum is 4. The workshop will run from 9:00 AM until 3:30 PM on Saturday, October 10th and Sunday, October 11th.

Sharpening: Nov. 14, 2015

RiversWest has added a Sharpening workshop in the fall on November 14th, 2015. The sharpening workshop will be led by John Bouwsma, Michael Simmons and Randy Torgerson. Six different sharpening stations will be set up. In the morning, students will have a short introduction to each sharpening system. In the afternoon, students will be able to expand their skills by sharpening their own tools.

The cost of the sharpening workshop is \$30 for members and a material cost of \$10 for a total of \$40. We are not signing up non-members at this time. The minimum number of students is 2 and the maximum is 6. The workshop will run from 9:30 AM until 3:30 PM on Saturday, Nov. 14. Students are encouraged to bring their plane irons, chisels and other tools that need sharpening.

RiversWest News wants to hear about your projects and adventures

As RiversWest members, you are our readership and our storytellers. Most of us joined the RiversWest Small Craft Center because we love small boats. We want to learn more about how to build them, repair them, get the most performance out of them and where it's fun to use them.

September's Autumn issue will be a wonderful opportunity to share your maritime and woodworking knowledge or

summer adventures with the rest of us. Start planning your story now for the September 15th deadline.

You have a lot to tell us and we want to print your story!

Submit a few paragraphs and some supportive pictures, and we'll do the rest.

Stu Whitcomb, Editor
email to: stuna2000@yahoo.com



RiversWest Maritime Skills - Spring Workshops Report

John Bouwsma

I attended two Maritime Skills Workshops recently. The first was for building a wooden spokeshave, using the methods and design of John Wilson. The second was making a set of Pete Culler oars. Both workshops were very well thought out and well documented, and everyone did a great job on their projects. Similar techniques were used in both, though on a different scale.



In the Spokeshave Workshop, led by Mike Simmons, we were given a small piece of wood and a short section of O2 tool steel. We cut the overall shape of the blade out of the tool steel, then beveled it for the blade just short of being sharp, drilled and tapped for screws to hold them in place, and then heat treated them in our kiln for an hour. After heat treating we did the final sharpening. Then we moved on to the wooden handles. Patterns had been provided for cutting the profiles, both from the top and the side. Once these were rough cut we used rasps, files and the belt sander to smooth and refine the curves. When we were satisfied with the handles we oiled them and mounted the blades. Mine cuts very cleanly, and will be a great addition to my tool set!

The oars were much more complicated, and we spent two days in the workshop. The big trick to making a good set of oars is to get the layout right before doing any cutting. The instructions, both written

and verbal, provided by Randy Torgerson, were clear and concise, and he circulated while we were doing it to prevent any tragic mistakes.

This was followed by bandsawing the profile and the taper on the blades of the oars, then lots and lots of hand planing and shaping with a spokeshave. We had previously made spar gauges to help us plane the square looms to 8 sides, then we planed them round from there. When the oars were shaped the way we wanted them we sanded to make them smooth. Randy had some very helpful tricks to assist with the sanding.



The following weekend Mike Simmons did a demonstration of installing leathers on the oars, which protects them from wearing in the oarlocks and gives them a very boaty, finished look.

Third Annual RIVERSWEST HAGG LAKE MESSABOUT *Sunday, June 28th, 2015*



"Our Third Annual Hagg Lake Messabout is coming up on Sunday, June 28. We'll meet again at the Sain picnic area for boating, free food and drinks and best of all, having a great time with many friends. Our new members should make a special effort to attend this event as it does offer an enjoyable place to meet our legendary boat builders and see their craft. If you ask politely, you may have an opportunity to try out their boats. With the weather as it is, I can envision a great turnout for one of RiversWest's best outdoor events."

From the President's Corner



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**RiversWest Small Craft Center Inc.
P.O. Box 13782, Portland, OR 97213
Membership Form**

RiversWest is a non-profit membership organization whose mission is to encourage personal involvement in the construction of small recreational wooden craft and their accessories.

Membership Benefits:

Members receive the RiversWest newsletter
Access to RiversWest boat shop and space rentals
Invitation to all RiversWest boating and social functions
Right to vote for officers and board members
Discounts at Crosscut Hardwood

Please return the following with your check to the address above,
or sign up online at riverswest.org

New member Renewing member Change of information Additional donation

Name

Address

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Youth (17 and under) \$30 General Membership \$50
Donations: \$50 \$100 \$250 Other \$_____

Annual dues and donations to RiversWest qualify for tax deductions. Ask your tax advisor.



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