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The Official Newsletter of the American Schooner Association

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## A Conversation with Erin Short from Tall Ships America

~ By *Richard Sherman*

Earlier this week, I had a chance to chat with Erin Short, Director of the TALL SHIPS CHALLENGE® Race Series.

Those who attended the American Schooner Association's

annual meeting in February may remember meeting her in Mystic. I thought this would be a good time to learn more about Tall Ships America and the Challenge series in particular.

~ Erin, tell us a little bit about your career, and your work with the TALL SHIPS CHALLENGE® series?

It is funny, I have never thought of it as a career, but I guess it is. I truly love what I do. I started with Tall Ships America in April 2006, which honestly, seems like yesterday. After graduating from the University of Colorado, I worked in Denver for a few years, but I missed the ocean so I moved back to Rhode Island. After college, I worked at Nordstrom's for a while, but realized I didn't want to be inside, and did not want to work for a corporation. So, I started to look around for a non-profit job and Tall Ships America was recruiting a Race Assistant. And so, I applied for the job. As it turns out, they really needed help with merchandising for their upcoming TALL SHIPS CHALLENGE® series. I think my diversity of experiences—from retail sales with Nordstrom to my knowledge of sailing, from my writing ability to prior work in event planning—helped me get the job even though I had never seen a tall ship.



~ When did you become Director, and what does that entail?

I've been Director of TALL SHIPS CHALLENGE® Race Series for two years now. It is really just a department of one, but I get to work with summer interns most years. The job involves constant planning. I like to say that we throw everything up in the air, and then start juggling it. Due to the pandemic, this year's events have been pushed to the summer of 2021. So next year, we will have, for the first time since it began in 2001, two TALL SHIPS CHALLENGE® series. In the spring, we will visit the Gulf Coast, while the postponed 2020 Atlantic Coast events will occur during the summer.

We are working on TALL SHIPS CHALLENGE® events all the way out to 2026 right now. Specifically, I work on everything from helping member ships prepare for the Challenge, to contract negotiations with ports, to ensuring permits are properly filed with the Coast Guard. During the pandemic, it is important to maintain our relationships with these groups and so we are communicating regularly with them, as well as investing time in marketing programs and public relations.

~ You mentioned planning out to 2026, what is the upcoming schedule for the TALL SHIPS CHALLENGE® series?

As I mentioned, we will be in the Gulf Coast in the spring of 2021 and then the Atlantic Coast during the summer. Then we will return to the Great Lakes in 2022, and I am actively working on the specific ports. In 2023, we will be return to the Atlantic Coast, and then either in 2024 or 2025 we are considering a return to the west coast. The last time we were there was 2014. In 2026, our country will celebrate its 250th

anniversary, so we are considering a lot of options but certainly expect New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore to be a part of that year's events.

~ Is there anything new on the horizon?

Well, yes, we are preparing to launch our monthly podcast called "A Barque, A Brig, and A Schooner Walk into a Bar." We already have our trailer up, which you can find on iTunes or any major podcast sites. During the podcast, I interview sailors about their tall ship experiences and the first full episode will be available on May 15th. We have also taken this year to re-envision the TALL SHIPS CHALLENGE® Race Series so it evolves and remain fresh. It's a work in progress, and the pandemic has created real experiences and new ways for events to be held so we will be incorporating this learning into our thinking about the Series for the future.

~ Tell us how the TALL SHIPS CHALLENGE® Series fits with the overall mission of Tall Ships America.

Tall Ships America aims to encourage character building, promote sail training, and support adventure and education under sail. We are a 501c3 organization, supported wholly by the 100-plus vessels who are our members. The series is the most public event of Tall Ships America, with millions of people visiting the ships each year. The series provides the highest visibility for the tall ships and sail training, so it lets the general public know what our fleet is all about.

Tall Ships America also connects trainees with our member ships who offer a wide-variety of sail-training programs. We award a number of scholarships to individuals accepted into sail-training programs aboard those ships. There are a lot of different options available to the trainee. The programs range from hour-long sails and multi-day trips, to 14-month round-the-

world journeys on a ship like **Picton Castle**, and even 45-day Antarctic excursions. We estimate that our members work with thousands of trainees each year. During this quarantine period, we are also updating and reviewing guidelines for sail-training programs in an effort to standardize some elements of training.

I want to also mention that Tall Ships America has developed new programs to support the long-term health of the maritime industry. At our annual conference in February, we introduced our new "Work Force Development" initiative and created a one-year, experiential learning program for the next generation of tall ship sailors. And we formed the "Rising Professional Mariner Group" to help young maritime professionals connect and share-knowledge. We expect to expand this group so that it encompasses mentorship programs as well.

~ Erin, thanks so much for your time. Do you have any closing thoughts?

The pandemic is scary, and has created a lot of uncertainty for everyone. Our ships are not sailing right now, so we've had regional meetings every two weeks via Zoom to stay in touch with our members. I have to say, the resilience and creativity of our members have been astonishing. It is remarkable to see the events they have been offering online: virtual tours, education, lectures, webinars, cocktail hours—just really incredible creativity. As sailors, it has been really inspiring to see our members pivot so quickly and so we are very hopeful about the future of Tall Ships and all our programs.

Erin Short is Director of TALL SHIPS CHALLENGE® Race Series. She can be reached via email at [erin@tallshipsamerica.org](mailto:erin@tallshipsamerica.org).

## Schooner Half Moon comes to Mystic Seaport

The 43' **schooner Half Moon** has been donated to Mystic Seaport Museum. The Alden-designed schooner was built by Harvey Gamage in 1926 and was most recently owned by Dwight Collins of Noroton, CT. The schooner had undergone a major refit just prior to being donated, and is now part of the museum's active charter fleet. For more information about chartering this magnificent vessel, contact [chris.gasiorek@mysticseaport.org](mailto:chris.gasiorek@mysticseaport.org)



## Schooner Roseway is in the Yard!

On Friday, the **schooner Roseway** began the final leg of her month-long transit from St. Croix, USVI to Gloucester, MA.

Check out [this video](#) for a beautiful birds-eye view of crew arrived in Gloucester just in time for a spring snowstorm—much different from the tropical weather they left behind in sunny St. Croix.

[World Ocean School](#)'s beloved 137-foot ship had made it onto the rails at Gloucester Marine Railways, the oldest shipyard in America. On Monday morning, the **Roseway** crew lined her up just in time for high tide, when a skilled and determined team maneuvered her onto her blocks and then safely onto the hard.

The ship said good-bye for now (and a big thank you!) to some of its hard-working crew members, who have returned home to hug their families and take a nice hot shower. A small team will stay with **Roseway** in Gloucester and practice social distancing to keep themselves and their neighbors safe.



By now, **Roseway** has officially begun her annual yard period. In the coming weeks, crew members will treat **Roseway** to some focused maintenance. They plan to replace the cutlass bearing and generators and install a new waste tank, in addition to numerous smaller projects. The projected splash date is scheduled for May 11.

If you are interested in supporting any of these projects from afar, you can reach out to World Ocean School at [info@worldoceanschool.org](mailto:info@worldoceanschool.org).



Want to follow **Roseway** during her remaining time in the yard? Visit the World Ocean School [Ship's Log](#) for further updates.

**“I got the tide out of my boat, but I couldn't get it out of my head.”**

**An interview with author, writer, entrepreneur, and sailor, Jonathan White**

~ *By Richard Sherman*

Jonathan White's award-winning second book, *Tides*, is an engaging and well-researched biography that covers not just the science of tides, but how it affects the lives of people and communities around the world. He spent more than 10 years researching his book, and traveled to five continents. I recently lent it to a long-time friend and my sailing buddy, Michael. He returned it to me two days later, explaining that he hadn't finished it yet, but needed to buy a copy for himself.

I caught up with Jonathan via phone in mid-January to discuss *Tides*, his years as owner and caretaker of **Crusader**, a 65' halibut schooner, the founding and operation of his non-profit *Resource Institute*, and his next book.

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Jonathan, congratulations on your book *Tides*, it is an outstanding read. I enjoyed it immensely, and I am sure our members will as well. Jonathan, congratulations on your book *Tides*, it is an outstanding read. I enjoyed it immensely, and I am sure our members will as well. However, this is your second book, the first, *Talking on the Water* came out of your experience with the *Resource Institute*. I'd like to spend time chatting about these books, as well as the experiences that led to the publication of *Tides*.

**~In your latest book you show how tides impact human lives around the world, but the tide also had a direct, and profound impact on your life. In August, 1990, your 65' schooner, Crusader, ran aground in Kalinin Bay, Alaska at high tide. Tell us about this experience, how you were able to save the boat and have her underway within 24 hours of running aground.**

First, let me share a little background on **Crusader**. She's a workboat, a halibut schooner, and was built in 1923 in Tacoma, WA. I bought her in 1980 down in Tillamook, Oregon. She had a lot of character, but leaked about 150 gallons per day, and was almost stuck to the bottom of the bay. I was only 25 at the time but wanted to start a school and have people come and share experiences, and explore the wilder areas of the Pacific Northwest coast. So I started the *Resource Institute*, which I ran on **Crusader** for 11 years. We did writing and photography seminars, whale research, studied Northwest Native American art, and anthropology. We had Paul Winter, the saxophonist, onboard who taught music and I remember we played music as **Crusader** floated in Glacier Bay.

But as it relates to your question, I remember sailing that August into Kalinin Bay on a beautiful day. There was a gale warning in the forecast, which I knew from the VHF radio. Kalinin Bay has significant tides, typically 12 to 14 feet, while other parts of Alaska can have tides of 25 feet. After a nice dinner, we checked our anchors, and finally went to bed. At around 4am, I woke up and noticed we had dragged anchor across the bay and were aground. I immediately checked the tide charts and realized we were aground at high tide. I contacted the Coast Guard almost immediately, and sent the participants and crew ashore. They were later picked up by some fishermen, and taken about four hours to Sitka while Lela Hilton and I stayed behind to see what we could do to save the boat. The Coast Guard dropped off two high-powered gas-powered pumps, but flew off with other distress calls up the coast with the gale. As the tide went out, *Crusader* listed over onto her chines. Seventy-two tons were stuck in the mud, and she eventually opened up to the incoming sea. By mid-morning, the incoming tide had filled the cabins with chest-deep water, the engine had been submerged and the batteries toppled, provisions were floating and we were swimming through the cabins. It was a mess. The writer, Richard Nelson was onboard teaching a seminar during that trip, and we posted him on shore with a rifle to protect the participants because we had seen evidence of grizzly bears. Eventually, with the high-powered pumps and the incoming tide, **Crusader** finally bounced up late in the morning, but she was still filled with water. Until she righted, I thought the boat was gone. In fact, there was a time when I really wanted her to be gone because I knew how much work it would take to bring her back. There was a time when I was really done with it. And then she popped back up. In the ensuing hours, we continued to pump out the water, and began to methodically put the boat back together. Once the engine was no longer submerged, I pulled all the injectors, drained the oil pans, added fresh oil, ran fresh water through the system and rewired all the batteries. I think it took me five or six hours through the night to flush the engine and to get the diesel started. And then we went through the boat and checked all the systems. We sailed under our own power back to Sitka that next morning. When we got there, we had a team of about 25-30 crew strip the boat. We had people fly in from Seattle with electrical equipment and had a pressure washer to clean everything out, and completely rewired the boat in the next 24 hours or so to get ready for the next seminar which began the following day. I did not go out with

**Crusader** on that next seminar. I untied the lines and watched the boat sail away and went to bed for 36 hours. It was an amazing experience and not one I would like to repeat. It was one of those life experiences that enriches us in seen and unseen ways.

**~Running aground is not a unique experience, but traveling to five continents and spending 10 years doing research to write a book on tides is unique. How did the experience in Kalinin Bay trigger you to write *Tides*?**

I was always interested in tides but didn't really know how they worked. I have been a writer since college, when I published an article in the *Christian Science Monitor* at 18 years old. Although writing was never a full-time occupation, it has been a common thread in everything I've done. I grew up on the California coast, surfing, diving, and sailing, and so it seems I always had a tide chart in my back pocket. I am now living in the Pacific Northwest where we have large tides, and they govern a lot of our lives—where we sail and when we sail, when we walk the intertidal zone and collect clams and the like. After the experience with **Crusader**, I realized I got the tide out of the boat, but I couldn't get it out of my head. So, I started to do some research. It was that experience in Kalinin Bay that pushed me to learn how this phenomenon really works. I was just fascinated, I had no idea how complex, interesting, mythological and poetic the whole thing was. So, I wrote an article on tides for *Orion* magazine (1995). In the following years, I got married and had a child and settled on Orca's Island (Washington) and continued to dabble in the subject until around 2000, when I committed to write the book. This started another 15 years of writing and research, which peaked with an intensive effort from 2011 to 2017.

**~Tell us a little more about *Crusader* and where she is now.**

I bought the boat in 1980 and ran my non-profit, *Resource Institute* out of Seattle aboard her for 11 years. I took her up to Orca's Island after I left the *Resource Institute* and eventually sold **Crusader** in 1993 to a family in Seattle who raised their kids on the boat. She really didn't get underway after that, she was just a floating home. The owner was a metal worker and modified the boat to raise their family and to my knowledge, they are still on that boat. She's not underway but still living a vibrant life.

**~As terrestrial people we look to the sun to set the cadence to our days, but in your research, you show how the tides still set the schedules for many people around the world. What is the most unique way you learned that the tides have affected specific people, families, or communities?**

Wow, there are a lot of ways, and I was constantly surprised and delighted to discover the role of tides in our lives and in very deep and meaningful ways. One of the memorable moments was visiting Mont St. Michel in France. After two years of petitioning the monks, I got permission to interview them. So I chose the largest tide of the year. After a silent lunch with them, I got to interview those four monks. It was a really moving time. I had sent my questions in advance, and they told me they'd never been asked those questions and never even considered them. They said it was really special for them to think about the relationship between their spirituality and the tides. Mont St. Michel has a 48-foot tide, the largest in mainland Europe. The monastery was built in the fifth century and the tide completely wraps the island on which the monastery is built. I attended some of the religious sessions at the very top of the monastery earlier that morning. What was interesting to me was the monks saw the tides as a spiritual experience, as something that was a demonstration of God's power. They said that the people who come—some four million visit each year—are really pilgrims that don't know they are pilgrims. The tourists come to see the phenomenon, but once they experience it, they are so moved that they are one step closer to God. I thought that perspective was just remarkable and it rings true with my own experience with the tides. The tides are evidence of the stirrings of the sun and moon, enacted every day right in front of us. The original title of my book was *Water's*

*Desire*, which spoke to the long-distance dance between the oceans and the heavens. The tides are evidence of the universe's brilliance and longing for union.

**~Renewable energy is increasingly in the headlines, how do you see tidal power and its influence going forward?**

I am very involved in ocean conversation and started my research as a skeptic. There are five to 10 locations identified as potential tide power generation sites where I live in the San Juan Islands. But I completely turned around, and now I am an advocate of it. If the tide generation equipment is placed carefully, with the appropriate kind of power and needs, and proximity to those needs, then I think it is a viable energy source for us. It's not a silver bullet. I don't think it can single-handedly solve our addiction to petroleum products, but along with other green energy—solar, wind, geothermal—I think it is a piece of the pie. In fact, I'm going to a meeting later today with our local power supply company to look at some potential sites here in the islands. This is a small island community where I live, somewhere around 35,000 people, and we have great tides. There are about a half dozen tidal rapid areas where we can put tidal power generation devices into the channels where the water is deep enough to not have a negative impact on the environment or marine mammals. Tidal power could potentially supply 50-75% of our power needs in the island community where I live.

**~Let's talk about the *Resource Institute* which you founded in your mid-20s. What was the vision you had for this non-profit education program?**

I studied theater in college and I actually went to Poland to study with theater director Jerzy Grotowski, who was well-known for bringing people together. He saw the rehearsal process—the things that the cast and crew discovered in those moments—was more valuable than the production itself. From this experience, I developed an interest in what happens when people come together, the power of people exploring and discovering who they are, and the artistic and creative expression of what it is like to be a human being in the world today. So I have in my background not just theater, but also an intense interest in people and education, and exploring what is possible for human culture in terms of spirituality, creativity, and getting along with each other. That was the impetus for me wanting to do education on the boat. Out of college, I had built a small boat, but I eventually sold it because it got too solitary. In the early 1980's I move up to Seattle and started the *Resource Institute* which was really a combination of my early theater experiences and my boating experiences, and my desire to explore the wilderness of the northwest coast. Bringing all those things together was appealing to me.

**~A rather wide variety of subjects were taught onboard *Crusader* with the *Resource Institute*—how did you select which classes you would offer, and what can you tell us about your boat and the sea as a classroom for not just learning seamanship and navigation, but the humanities as well?**

In a lot of cases, the classes we offered were related to the environment where **Crusader's** sailed. For example, we did photography onboard and explored the wildlife of the northwest and Alaska. We had Roger Payne—attributed with having discovered the songs of the humpback whales—onboard for 10 days studying the whales in southeast Alaska. We studied Northwest Native American culture and mythology. All those things were related to the environment we were in. And then there were tangential subjects, like poetry, writing, and music, where we used the environment as inspiration. Gary Snyder, who is a famous California nature poet, spent time on the **Crusader** [and is interviewed in Jonathan's first book *Talking on the Water*]. It was about the ocean, the wilderness, the character of the wooden boat—any one of these things is significant. People would come out and spend 10 days with us—many of whom had never been on a boat before—but who came for the instructor and they suddenly found themselves on a big old wooden boat. It is a life-changing experience for people. Up in Alaska, there are things you see every

day that you have never seen before: orcas, large mountain glaciers, grizzly bears, salmon, and breaching humpback whales. It blows your mind. When you place people in an environment like that, it really opens you up as your whole world gets whittled down to the very immediate experience of boat and water, mountain and sea.

**~As a teacher myself, I've realized you can learn a lot from teaching. What are the lessons you can share from your experience with the *Resource Institute* and what did you learn from those who participated in your seminars?**

I certainly learned a lot from those years on **Crusader** and from taking care of a big old wooden boat. A lot of times—just because she was a big, old clunky boat—I felt like I was the only thing keeping her from the bottom of the ocean. I think we stretched the potential of **Crusader**—we traveled so far with her, and pushed her hard with a lot of people onboard. It was so much work and it was partly why I quit, even though I loved the boat all the way until the end. But as any Schooner owner knows, it's a full-time job. I would wake up at night wondering how the boat was doing. Even when I wasn't on her, I wanted to go and check and make sure everything was alright. And so I learned a lot just from the boat.

I also learned a lot from the people who came on the boat. They came from all walks of life with different perspectives. Their surprise and delight to see what they saw up in Alaska and along the Northwest coast—it was remarkable to see it through fresh eyes every time we went out.

And I learned a lot from the presenters who came, who were knowledgeable and generous, these people who had dedicated their whole lives to their passions.

**~After college you built a 26' sloop, Lanowa and sailed her in the Caribbean for a few years. What did you learn from building a boat?**

As a shipwright carpenter, I have a tremendous appreciation for working with wood—the whole process from harvesting trees to using them in boat building. Last year, I went to Kentucky to a selectively-harvested white oak forest and we chose a lovely white oak tree that was to be used for frames in a boat. We cut it down and pulled it out in sections using horses, and I followed that all the way to the mill and onto the boat. It was a thrilling process to see and appreciate that whole arc of experience of a boat, of a tree making its way all the way to the sea. A lot of these skills—like steam bending frames—are really old-time skills that take a long time to learn. There is no way around it. You have to put in the time. I love that involvement — with the hands and the head, and working with other people.

**~What are you working on now?**

I am working on a book that is essentially a re-enactment of John Steinbeck and marine-biologist Ed Ricketts' 1940 trip down to Baja Mexico. The book *Log From the Sea of Cortez* came out of that trip. The boat they chartered, the **Western Flyer**, a 77' wooden purse seiner, was built in the 1930's either in the same yard or very near the same yard that built **Crusader**. The **Western Flyer** was found on the bottom of a river near my home in 2015 and is currently being restored in Port Townsend. When it came up from the bottom, it was worth nothing — less than nothing, really. But because of its history, it was worth everything. A man who had been inspired by the *Log* when he was young bought the **Western Flyer** for a million dollars. The restoration will cost him over three million dollars. For my re-enactment, I bought a 37' sailboat in Monterey last year, and last fall sailed down the outer coast and up to La Paz (Mexico). I'll use that boat for research and writing over the next couple years.

Having read your last two books, I can tell you I am definitely excited to read your next book. Thanks for your time, Jonathan, and I wish you continued success.

*Tides* is published by Trinity University Press and is available for purchase at Barnes & Noble and Amazon at the links below.

- Barnes & Noble: <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/tides-jonathan-white/1124079750?ean=9781595348517#/>
- Amazon.com: [https://smile.amazon.com/Tides-Science-Spirit-Jonathan-White/dp/1595348514/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crid=1Y8V5986CSGBY&keywords=tides+by+jonathan+white&qid=1579738755&srefix=tides+by+jo%2Caps%2C152&sr=8-1](https://smile.amazon.com/Tides-Science-Spirit-Jonathan-White/dp/1595348514/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1Y8V5986CSGBY&keywords=tides+by+jonathan+white&qid=1579738755&srefix=tides+by+jo%2Caps%2C152&sr=8-1)

## The Progress of Schooner Perception, Traverse City, MI

**Schooner Perception's** mission is to provide tuition-free sailing adventures for Gold and Blue Star Teens, Veterans, and Veterans' families. We want to do more than just say, "Thank you for your service," or "We appreciate your sacrifice." We also serve grieving and ill teens, and any teens who could benefit from our programs.

Our **schooner Perception**, is Herreschoff-designed, built in New Zealand and launched in 1985 where she sailed for several years before being sold to an architect from Martha's Vineyard. In 2017 our nonprofit, Michigan Challenge Traditional Sail Training, bought her. She is now in Traverse City, Michigan where we do sail training programs for teens. She is undergoing restoration and refitting by some talented volunteers, and we hope to be able to continue our programs this summer.

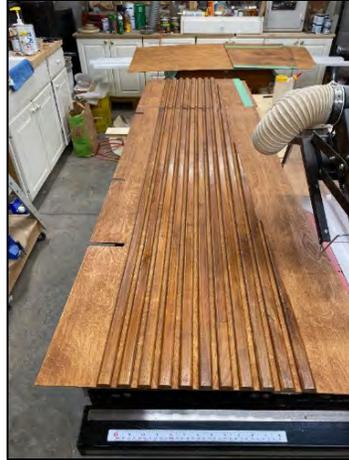


Work has been steady throughout the winter.

Here are a few shots of our volunteers' accomplishments. Larry fits the wheel on **Perception** to see how it would look with its new adornments. Back in his shop, he clamps the pieces together. It will be almost too beautiful to use! Denny, Vinny, and Tom O'Brien worked on a new bulkhead, sole, and toilet base for the head. New toilet coming soon! Denny is working on the teak trim for the head. Our teen Gold Star girls thought our old head was "icky."

Larry has been working hard to increase the number of bunks on **Perception**. Larry has completed the wall (technically known as the floor) next to the new bunks. All teak. Denny's companionway ladder is complete and this is a prototype of the new blocks for **Perception** that Larry has designed.





For more information, contact: Barbara Horning, Secretary  
Michigan Challenge Traditional Sail Training [bhorning59@gmail.com](mailto:bhorning59@gmail.com)

Newsletter link: <https://us17.campaign-archive.com/?u=a20ea47410bffe88d5189c1b4&id=78b2ac20d1>

## Blasphemy or Salvation?

~By Susan Gateley

Back in 2005 Sailing magazine published my account of buying an elderly small schooner on eBay. I concluded it with a blithe remark about renovating our little ship “over several seasons”. Well, by 2009 she still wasn’t renovated. And it was pretty apparent that our beloved **Sara B** with her rotted deck beams and iron sick planks and frames was way beyond renovation. We’re talking restoration, here - a jack up the bell and slide a new hull under it job.



We had purchased this very leaky vessel on eBay in 2004 and had labored long and hard to keep her afloat through the years replacing planks, refastening floors, sistering ribs, and jamming a case of caulk in her deck seams along with hundreds of pricey stainless screws caulking cotton, oakum, and other arcane materials to bolster the old girl’s “memory”. Alas, entropy was getting the upper hand, and **Sara B’s** memory, like ours, was increasingly dubious. It was decision time.

No one wanted to scrap her. But how to save her was another question. A professional rebuild estimate of 225,000 dollars exceeded our budget by two orders of magnitude. Then we had coffee with a boat carpenter who informed us that he was using something he called the Vaitses method on his own 24’ wooden sloop. We decided to follow suit.

A few years after we bought **Sara B**, my spouse set up a legal frame work for a schooner co-op. By the time we began the Big Cover Up we had about a half dozen ‘associates’ who contributed time and or money to the boat’s upkeep. Their help was invaluable as they spent six successive weekends applying a heavy lay up of glass and resin that was mechanically fastened to the boat and then contributed many more hours of fairing and painting.

We did the two-year job inside a pole barn on our property. Preparing and moving the boat for the task is a whole another article. And before the heavy lay up of six to ten layers of fiberglass cloth and resin could be applied to her hull, everything had to be stripped off- deck hardware, chain plates, underwater fittings and the rudder propeller shaft and bearing and various bits of rotten wood were replaced. We also shifted the internal lead ballast to an external keel. That conversion, too, is another article! By lowering the ballast, we were able to reduce it by 400 pounds compensating for the additional weight of the glass job.

Winter came and shut the job down. But with spring's longer days and temperatures moderate enough to cure resin, we mustered the crew and began transferring two fifty-five-gallon drums of resin and a dozen rolls of fabric to the surface of the boat. Pretty soon the shop smelled of resin, the house smelled of resin, the neighborhood smelled of resin, the cat smelled of resin and all the **Sara B** associates who came to help smelled of resin. One of them told us a year later he still started to itch every time he thought about the job.

Because we started before it got too hot, we didn't have too many disastrous resin batches gelling and 'kicking off' as we wrestled the slippery panels of fabric into place. There were frustrations of chasing persistent bubbles with the roller, dripping on each other, cockeyed strips of fabric and at least two pairs of eyeglasses were replaced after it was over thanks to spattered resin. A person describing a similar job on a fifty-footer said you find out who your friends really are when you throw a fiber glassing party.

After the first two layers of resin were partially cured a total of 6000, 1" stainless staples, one every three inches, were installed with an air gun stapler. Two barrels of wax free polyester resin and the added weight of six to ten layers of glass matt, roving, resin, plus two layers of meranti plywood on the deck ran 1800 pounds. She floated almost exactly on her design waterline upon launch. Others have pointed out that the lack of waterlogged wood largely compensates for the added weight of the glass fiber and resin reinforcement. The fifty-foot **schooner Mistress** done by Skip Joest and launched in 2006 actually lost 3000 pounds with her Vaitses job plus new interior.

The job was far from over after the sticky smelly messy hull glassing process. We spent several hundred hours of grinding, sanding, puttying and fairing and on details such as creating and glassing in a fiberglass tube for the shaft, installing a new nearly dripless stuffing box, fabricating a new thru hull fitting for the engine's dry exhaust, building a new toe rail, and glassing under keel blocks and support pads etc.

So how long will the job last? It depends. Inevitably, water will find its way below decks and into the bilge from open hatches, windows, leaky water pumps, or by other means. We contemplated ways of sealing the interior and concluded the best approach was that advocated by Mr. Vaitses, being to leave it as is for ease of inspection. Ventilation and periodic preservative applications along with preventing water intrusion with sumps and catchment basins hopefully will stave off the inevitable for a decade or two or three. I was told by the resin salesman that similar cover-ups done to Nova Scotia inshore fishing boats were expected to last twenty years at a quarter of the cost of a traditional re-build. I have personally inspected two boats with twenty plus year old jobs that both looked good.

The Alden designed **schooner Liberty**, a 1924 Malabar VII design, was given a Vaitses job nearly thirty years ago, back in 1985 by her owner and was still sailing in 2012. And this spring I talked to a professional boat builder who had done a Vaitses job for a museum boat that was subject to Coast Guard approval as a subchapter T passenger carrying operation. So, with a by-the-book job and reasonable care a thirty years' service life seems quite possible.

Did we do the right thing? Some wooden boat traditionalists would say not. This view holds that we destroyed the aesthetic value of an object of great beauty and utility by encasing her hull in plastic. But it's exactly that utility that

has been so much a part of **Sara B's** overall appeal to us. Not only is the sweet lined old gaffer pleasing to look at - once again she is also highly functional (and worm proof). The combination of practicality and beauty drew us to her in the first place when we saw her on eBay in 2004. Being able to sail our grand old boat again and enjoy her for another ten years was, in our view, worth it.

For photos and more information on **Sara B's** Vaitses rebuild visit her website at [sarab.brownroad.com](http://sarab.brownroad.com)

## The Ida May Project

~ *Project insight submitted by Jack Hoyt*



Our organization is the Christeen Oyster Sloop Preservation Corp, the not-for-profit that restored the 1883 oyster sloop **Christeen**. Our mission is to preserve the Oyster Bay's maritime heritage by involving the community in traditional boatbuilding. Our current effort is the Ida May Project, the construction of a replica of the **Ida May**; a wooden mechanized oyster dredge, originally built in Bayville, NY in 1925, that played an important role in the history and evolution of aquaculture in Oyster Bay. Once the Ida May is launched, she'll join **Christeen** at the not-for-profit Waterfront Center (WFC), taking the public out on the water for marine and maritime education and recreation

This construction of a model of the Ida May oyster harvesting boat is the second project of the Christeen Corp. whose mission is to preserve Oyster Bay's maritime heritage



by involving the community in traditional boatbuilding. The keel was laid on December 9, 2011.

**THE PAST:** The original **Ida May**, built in 1925, worked on the waters of Oyster Bay for 75 years and was historically significant because she was one of the first oyster dredges to be powered by an engine as opposed to a sail.

**THE PRESENT:** The Project is also unique because construction is mostly by volunteers. Under the direction of a local shipwright, a core group of engineers, carpenters, and businessmen are making the Project a priority in their lives. Most are retired and enjoy the challenges and complexity of building a boat by hand. They also appreciate the camaraderie of working in a group to contribute to something worthwhile and enduring. Financially, much of the Ida May Project has also come from volunteers. Many businesses and organizations have kindly donated their cash, goods, services or discounts to this Project.

**THE FUTURE:** When she is complete, the **Ida May** will take the public out on Oyster Bay to enjoy and learn about its ecology and maritime history

## Mistakes I Made for the Deck of an Atkin Wooden Schooner

~ By Jim deReynier



**Background:** The **Betsy-K** was the last William Atkin schooner design in 1957- built in the same year. The 32.7” x 9.6’ x 4.3’, solid Sitka Spruce masts and spars, Alaskan Yellow Cedar deck, 1-3/8” thick by 2.25” and deck beams, are cut from white oak frames, keel, etc. and white cedar planking. Sailed in the Chesapeake to Maine.

I became the indentured servant in 2000.

**Mistake 1 - Falling in love with Alaskan Yellow Cedar (AKC):** In summer of 2000 I had the boat refastened below the water line with silicone copper screws leaving in the iron nails. During this time, I sanded the deck, installed needed bungs and stained with the standard deck solution of pine tar, linseed oil, japan drier, and varnish. The boat looked fabulous. The AKC, more formally known as Nootka Cypress, came out yellowish brown - just like the picture in the woodbook, “The Complete Plates American Woods 1888-1913, 1928” by Romeyn Beck Hough. Alaskan Yellow Cedar is far more rot resistant than Doug Fir but the latter is somewhat stronger-thus used on fishing vessels. My love for the wood increased the more I learned about its beauty for sailboats and its scarcity.

It’s known that 95% of the AKC logs go to Japan (there was even a Washington DC Lobby involved.) They use it like we use Doug fir but to them it has a religious significance. It grows along the Alaskan rain forest; the logs are 4-6’ diameter by 100-120’ long - they are larger if you backpack through Olympic National Park. My fixation increased each backpacking trip we took to the Northwest. I would stop at several sawmills and asked about AYC sources. They would usually tell me about the preferred treatment that AYC unprocessed logs got when exported to Japan. Finally, an Australian importer gave me the name of a small mill on one of the Alaskan islands that supplied me for several years.



**Mistake 2 - I can learn caulking:** Six months after using the traditional deck solution, the deck started turning splotchy black from pollution. Over the several years I tried several solutions but mainly used Cetol and various anti-rust paints. But the bungs kept popping up. When water gets into a deck with iron nails, the iron rot will force the bungs up. At some point I decided to re-caulk the whole deck. Although I did plenty of research (I have maybe 20 years of “Wooden Boat” magazine on CD), but the information was obsolete. Most marine caulk can handle side movement but not 3-dimensional. In the bottom of the V-slot between the AYC 1-3/8” thick by 2.25” deck boards, I laid in a 3M-product design for this application. A few years too late, Nat Benjamin, of Gannon & Benjamin Marine RXR on Martha’s Vineyard, told me that I had made 2 major mistakes: A) The 3M tape was taken off the market the year before I used it because of the problems I had using it – thus explaining why I had a hard time finding it. B) I should have used tie rods throughout the boat because I probably expanded the deck, which 10 years later was confirmed. In summary, caulking is an art learned only from a Master. Thus, explains why during the 1800’s, Caulkers moved from the South in February to Maine by summer time.



**Mistake 3 - Thinking that if I replaced the iron nails with oak dowels and fiberglass, I would save the AYC deck:** The deck was still leaking. My wife had several tarps she would lay up when it would be a rainy day of sailing. I finally decided

that over the next 2 winter lay ups, I would pull the boat and have a pro replace the two garboards plus a few boards above plus replace the stem and scarf in several hood ends for the planks (another story). During these winter dry dock days, I drilled out the 1200 plus iron deck nails. I used a tool from [Unscrew-ums@ttools.com](mailto:Unscrew-ums@ttools.com) that cuts off the nail head and usually grabbed the shank to pull out. At this point, I did not know the condition of the AYC deck beams (approx. 2" x 2.5") I drove oak dowels, coated with G/Flex epoxy into the deck and the deck beams.

This solved most the leaking for a few years. Had I known the extent of the nail rot in the deck beams I would have realized that the G/Flex epoxy would not solve the problem long term.



**The Final Fix:** In 2015-2016 I decided that if I did not overhaul the deck someone would get hurt and all the other investment would go down the drain. Up front I decided not to do a plank deck even though I had the AYC source. There are so few master caulkers so that I decided not to run the risk. The deck beams were made from bald cypress –laminated and the decking was 2 layers of ½" African Mahogany plywood and 2 layers of fiberglass. Other work included replacing the 3" floor timbers (where the original builder used red oak!) and most of the below the waterline white oak frames. The boat is so solid now that I get bored during the winter with no projects other than trying to do a complete wiring diagram.

**What Would I have Done Differently?:** During the current Covid-19 lock down I have been reading some 1950's Yachting magazines. The April 1955 issue has an article "Decks and their Upkeep" stimulates my mind about what I should have done.

- The research in the beginning did not involve talking to experienced shipwrights. Several parts of deck had 1/8" or more rings around the bungs indicating serious nail rot but I had no idea of how serious and what a long-term solution would be. When I bought the boat Ed McClave of [MP&G LLC](http://MP&G LLC) in Mystic, CN did a complete survey which outlined the necessary projects that I ended up doing over the next 20 years, but until I sold my manufacturing company I had neither the time nor the capital.
- Iron nail rot is caused by FRESH water. I should have been sprinkling salt year-round and not just in the bilge during the winter.
- The above article suggested painting the deck. Painting might have gotten me least 3 seasons, wider variety of technologies, easier patch work and I could have learned to caulk with tar.
- During the 2-year overhaul I learned to work with tar. I took out about 300 lbs. of cement-that had long ago broken away from the planking and keel. The main shipwright was a fan of using hot tar. It is dangerous but is far more effective than using cement. I added more inside lead weights to offset the cement weight.

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## Restoration of Colvin “Tamarack” Schooner **Del Viento**

~ *By Mark Hall*



In 1975, Ed Bray, a pilot for Canadian Air, contracted with Greenwich Yachts in Sidney, British Columbia, to build **Del Viento**. She is a Thomas Colvin designed “Tamarack” schooner, 34-feet on deck, 10-foot beam, drawing 4 feet with about a 9-ton displacement. The design is based on an 1850’s coasting schooner, but designed for steel or aluminum construction. Greenwich built a lot of larger boats and had recently ordered a large supply of ¼ aluminum plate, so **Del Viento** was built heavier than designed (originally 3/16” plate).

Ed and his son a well-known architect)



Patrick (now naval) completed the schooner with his wife Julie down the coast and across to the Marquesas. Shortly after returning aboard for 17 years, she was put

back on the hard at his brother-in-law’s farm. They sailed for a few years in B.C. until Ed retired. They sailed west coast to Baja California and the Sea of Cortez, then Marquesas, Tahiti, and Hawaii before returning to B.C. returning they sailed again to the Sea of Cortez and lived years. In 1999, when Ed had some health issues, they **Viento** back to B.C. But after a few more years of sailing,



Nine years later, I found **Del Viento**. Although my wife Susan was not too excited by the prospect of a dirty old boat, I convinced her that aluminum doesn’t rust and it would be a great improvement over the other boats we’d owned. When I retired in 2011, we transported **Del Viento** to Ladd’s Marine in Stockton, California to prepare for the next adventure in life. After getting the masts in, painting, and removing the old Saab engine, we launched, only to find she did leak and I had a lot of explaining to do to the spouse! Back on the hard we found corrosion holes underneath the concrete poured over the lead ballast. Thus, began an 18-month saga of gutting the boat, removing the concrete and lead, foam insulation, and finding and welding up all the holes. Needless to say, I gained a new education in metallurgy, air tools, corrosion protection, and many other aspects of restoration.

Almost all of the work was done by myself (as Susan had signed on to sail in warm climes, not do boatbuilding.) Nearly everything was redone. **Del Viento** had relatively spartan accommodations (which also means simple) and I kept to that philosophy. We launched in December 2012 with a lot still to do. After sailing the San Joaquin delta in 2013, in 2014 we sailed for the first time in the Great American Schooner Race in San Francisco Bay, and in December moved **Del Viento** to Oakland. We participated in activities at the Presidio Yacht Club in Horseshoe Bay, were part of the schooner race the next year, and enjoyed the bay area experience.

In October of 2015, we departed San Francisco and sailed to San Diego where we joined the Baja Ha-Ha sailing down to Cabo San Lucas with 140 other boats. Surprisingly we placed first in our division (no spinnakers) although we were last in for each leg. I guess we got credit for being one of the few boats that sailed each leg, and the only one with a fisherman sail.

After a fun three weeks in San Jose del Cabo, we bashed back to Morro Bay (oldest daughter had a new baby.) On the bash, we only spent about 8 hours hove to, and in one exciting 40-minute period (at night, of course) we lost the

main sheet, followed by the fore topping block. When we finally limped into Ensenada, Susan was ready to take the bus home. However, after a week's stay in a motel and lots of margaritas, Susan was all better. We arrived back in Morro Bay in mid-December after a rough rounding of Point Conception, but the last day was an idyllic sail with dolphins, perfect winds, and calm seas

In 2016 we sailed for the first time in the America's Schooner Race sponsored by the Silver Gate Yacht Club in San Diego. In 2017 we missed this race as we couldn't launch in time from Port San Luis where we were painting and replacing the standing rigging. But we made this race again the next year. In October of 2018 (after returning from my 50<sup>th</sup> USCGA class reunion) we departed again for Mexico, arriving mid-December in La Paz. In the spring we sailed further up into the Sea of Cortez, leaving the boat in Guaymas, Sonora. We have been able to return and sail in the Sea several times, but were prevented by the current pandemic for our last planned trip this April.

**Del Viento** although built of aluminum and having all aluminum spars made of ¼ inch walled pipe is a very traditional rig. There is a large variety of wood rope and wire stropped blocks (of which I made many.) In the 2017 refit I put on headsail winches, as well as roller furling for the headsails. The mast hoops are made from one-inch cutoffs from 8-inch PVC pipe and are working well. The new standing rigging is ¼ inch Dyneema®, parceled and served like the wire they replaced. I only replaced them because the insurance company couldn't understand how galvanized wire is well protected by proper care. Because the main mast is one length of pipe, the triatic stay goes from the top of the main to the top of the fore, allowing the fisherman to be tacked. With the roller furling, I can now handle most sail maneuvers even when the wife is below.

**Del Viento** is in the best condition she has been since I've owned her, and we can't wait to be back to sailing. I'm in my mid-seventies, so I not sure how long this is going to last. And that is the fun of it all.

Mark Hall (The Rev. Canon), Chaplain, Lt. Col, USAFR, ret., retired Canon to the Ordinary, Diocese of San Joaquin, and currently priest-in-charge, St. Paul's, Cambria.



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will be again held again at the  
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**More details to follow  
later in the year.**

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Working on a summer project? Let us know about it. Traveling to exotic (or not so exotic) locales – virtually? Tell us your story. Have updates about any museums or organizations you may be associated with? Send them along! Remember an interesting experience you had?

*Share it with us!*

Articles should be around 700 words, plain text or a MS Word document and all photos in JPEG format