



San Diego Ship Modelers' Guild

1492 N. Harbor Drive

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May 2006

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME XXX, NO.5

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Newsletter

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Established in
1972 by

Bob Wright and
Russ Merrill

San Diego Ship
Modelers' Guild is
affiliated with and
supports the
Maritime Museum
of San Diego



April 12, 2006 Minutes

Robert Hewitt opened the meeting. Because there were no guests or new members he then asked Ron Hollod for his purser's report. The balance as of 28 February was \$<redacted>. With expenses and income (membership renewals), the balance as of March 31 was \$<redacted>. Ron was asked to provide a count of the current membership. He agreed to do so at the next meeting. Chuck Seiler then gave the editor's report for Bob Crawford.

Regarding the model shop renovation, several people showed up for the working party the weekend March 11/12 on the BERKLEY. Ron Hollod and Bob McPhail reattached the reduced sized table top. Don Bienvenue did a great job cleaning out the closet. Dick Camfield organized the drawers full of miscellaneous items. Ernie Andrew and Lew Johnson helped clean out the shop. Bob Crawford rebuilt the drawers and wood holder. Ron Render and Robert Hewitt sorted the numerous wood pieces. The double sliding windows for the shop have been ordered and the cost including installation came to \$500. It was voted on and approved to pay for this expense.

Robert Hewitt discussed the San Diego County Fair. The signup was available at the March meeting. There are still a few spots open. Three people are requested for each day (hours 9am – 6 pm). Dates of the fair are June 10th thru July 4th. The fair will be closed on Mondays (June 12, 19, 26). Parking passes and tickets will be made available. Everyone was encouraged to submit scratch built models for the Design in Wood competition. There are prizes of \$500, \$200, \$175, \$125, and \$75.

In the area of new business, Chari Wessel has been working as a volunteer on the ROSE (SURPRISE) - being refitted for a sail in October. Work has included cleaning out the hold, line and sail inventory, line replacement, running rigging replacements and miscellaneous work. She mentioned that anyone wishing to work should come to the museum and volunteer. The disposition of the displays need to be determined. The gun deck may be modified to allow visitors access to the cannons.

For the Nautical Research Guild Conference, vendors will be on the orlop deck of the STAR. All models will be on the t'ween decks of the STAR and main deck of Berkeley. There has also been discussion to have special "show" prices for PREAC TOOLS.

A suggestion was made for the newsletter to have a "picture of the month". Of the photos submitted, one will be chosen and posted on the cover page each month. Any one interested should submit a digital photo to John Wickham or Dave Dana.

SHOW AND TELL

Opium Smuggler



Opium smuggling needed small fast ships to ferry from opium clippers to rendezvous with Chinese smuggles then dash from authorities. Ron Render has just finished a 22' boat in his yard, so now is finishing this neat opium smuggler he carries in a cigar box. The original, designed and built by Joshua Humphries in Philadelphia in 1840 as a yacht, later ended up in Chinese waters. He began the model at sea on a research vessel, and now hopes to finish rigging by year's end. Ron simulated the treenails in its planked deck with a hot paper clip. He's

added details and improved the Authentic Models kit quality.

BB62 USS New Jersey

Tony Bunch is "fascinated by battleships." This 1:700 scale model USS *New Jersey* from a Tamiya kit is not really finished, for he will add more detail. Tony's model won a first place award in a manufacturer's contest. Add-on details to the plastic kit model include Gold Medal Models photo-etched railings surrounding the deck, JAG Collective cast resin main gun turrets. Steve Nuttal brass barrels replaced the kit 16" 50 barrels.



Chinese sampan



Chinese *sampan* are special purpose small boats. The origin of the word *sampan* is lost in the past. They are landing dingies, fishing-boats, house-boats, cargo-carriers - basically small *junks* (also an ancient generic term). Bill Grolz found 7 pages of "weak" plans for this one on the internet. He is scratch building this out of canary wood, which is common in Asia and would likely have been used in the full sized *sampan*. He cut these ribs with a jig saw. For

those interested, the web site is www.friend.ly.net/ (then click "personal web sites," Then "dadadata," then search "sampan"). This search will reveal Bill's plan and confirm Bill's problems with what a "sampan" looks like and how it is built.

Egyptian Boat

Howie Franklin is making this challenging kit model "for someone else." The old ship - really old - 2,500 B.C. - named *Nave Egizia* was found in 1954 in the sand near the Great Pyramid in Egypt. Its shell-first design shows that the hull was shaped before the internal members were added. It has no keel and the side planking is lashed with rope for security. It has sail and oars for power plus steering oars. The construction is different than most kits. The original was crude - made with no nails. There is no end to the rope lashing it together. It's 140' long, "but this doesn't scale." Howie admits that "this is not an easy kit to build."



RC Tug Boat



Ernie Andrews showed a fascinating and well used working model of an unnamed model harbor tug used from the 1940s to the present. This bass wood and mahogany tow boat is battery powered with four channel steering, motor, plus crane extension and lifting by radio control. It also has full navigational lights and a searchlight. Ernie wanted to show the operating crane. Many RC models get stuck or break down off shore, and Ernie is developing the boat to tow them home. The crane reaches out over a disabled ship, drops a bag of lead fishing weights onto its deck. The weight holds the ship while the tug tows it home! The system needs more developing – to play the tow line out more and find a more secure way to grab the ship. The crane is strong enough - it once almost pulled the tug over and swamped it!

USS Constitution

More progress on Ed Trasoras' *Constitution* shows with the completed second layer of walnut and maple planking. Tony used diabetes lancets to hold the planks until the glue dried – they only made tiny holes which disappear with sanding. Again he asked the guild for suggestions for coppering the hull – “bare metal foil” copper strips and sheets that come with adhesive backing. Tony also asked whether he should paint the hull the traditional (and accurate) black and white, or leave the nice looking natural walnut. The discussion was followed the collective recommendation - a 50 -50 vote. It's up to you, Ed!



Solebay and Providence



Robert Hewitt's tiny models of SOLEBAY and PROVIDENCE will sail a “Wine Dark Sea” - Literally – Robert spilled a good claret on his Tupelo wood carved sea. The outer shape of the hulls for both SOLEBAY and PROVIDENCE are finished. The plans of PROVIDENCE were taken from the book “Valour Fore & Aft by Hope S. Rider. The plans are of the reproduction that exists today. The masts of SOLEBAY are finished and are made of bamboo then painted black. White fly is wrapped around the yards to simulate the sail robands. The tops and doublings are made from English Boxwood and are left unpainted. The main top, just over ¼”x 3/8” (.27”x .40” actual) is made of 60 pieces of box wood. Four ships boats are completed. The plans come from the 20 gun ship Blandford in the Anatomy of the Ship series. Thin (.010) sheets of pear were glued

with black dye and clamped in a former the shape of the boats shear. When dry the lower portion was sawn flat on a PRIAC saw. This was then attached with Elmer's school glue to a block of holly and the outer shape was carved. The hull was shaped at the stern end, leaving the bow end still attached to the holly stick. The pear piece was soaked off and hollowed out by drilling, a Dremel with sanding drums and finally fine files for the corners. The hollowed out pear was then re-glued to the holly block using Weld-Bond glue. The thwarts made of rectangular strips of boxwood are fitted by gluing to the holly floor. A one inch thick piece of Tupelo was selected for the sea diorama. The block shows pencil outlines of the approximate positions of the two ships. Tupelo is a good carving wood and available from the Wood Carvers Supply at 800-284-6229



HMS Alfred



Phil Mattson's lovely model of the ALFRED, 74, has been an ongoing project over many years. The details are amazing. Phil is unable to make the meeting so I took the opportunity to visit him at his home in La Jolla. The plans are from Harold Hann and Phil has the highest regards for Mr. Hann's work. Phil traced the stern carvings using graphite paper on boxwood then cut out the pattern in the rough. Then He attached it to a dummy stern piece with Elmers glue. The carvings were cut with a Dremel, and then formed with raster files. The final finish was then carved in with fine knives.

The carving extends into the dummy piece to obtain that beautiful rounded finish. No laser cut or C&C stuff for this maestro!

At the other end of the ship is the figurehead of King Alfred. Phil took a class in jewelry making and used the principles to make the figurehead. First, a wax copy was carved and when satisfied Phil made a mold with investment material which is known as the lost wax process. He then dropped bronze blocks into the mold and placing it in a centrifugal casting machine in his workshop. The blocks were melted with a torch and when liquid he pulled the casting pin and out came this beautiful figurehead.

Phil works in the model shop on the BERKELEY on Wednesdays, stop by and say hello.



Valour Fore and Aft

by Robert Hewitt

The book, *Valour Fore and Aft* by Hope S. Rider has a description of the encounter between PROVIDENCE and SOLEBAY.

On the first of September, 1776 things seemed to be looking up when five sail were sighted, hull down over the leeward horizon. One of them looked to Jones and Rathburn like an old Indiaman or a homeward bound Jamaican there-decker, in either case a fat prize. The PROVIDENCE stood up to the stranger. As the distance closed, the lookout through his looking glass could make out the details of the Indiaman's hull, and the dismaying word was passed below-"She's a frigate Sir!" She was, in fact, His Majesty's 26 gun ship SOLEBAY which, a few months earlier, had brought the famous prisoner back to America-General Ethan Allen, who had been taken to England after being captured at Ticonderoga.

The PROVIDENCE, her four-pounders no match for the frigates cannon, took to her heels, and SOLEBAY left her convoy of merchantmen to sail in pursuit. All hands were piped on deck to tend the sloop's sails. She was a good fast sailer, but a strong cross sea gave the heavy frigate an advantage through the water, and slowly but surely the SOLEBAY began to overhaul the straining PROVIDENCE. For four tense hours the two vessels raced by the wind, the Englishman firing his bow guns and steadily narrowing the distance between them. Finally the frigate pulled up within musket shot of the sloop's lee quarter. Captain Jones ordered the colors run up and the leeward battery to fire. Even as the guns recoiled, plunging inboard in their tackles, American colors soared aloft on the frigate and her leeward cannon went off. This broadside, directed at the empty sea, was the signal for "I am friendly". It fooled neither Jones nor Rathburn, who, like everybody aboard, there was no such ship in the Continental Navy. PROVIDENCE was in a desperate fix and they knew it. As soon as SOLEBAY drew alongside, her battery of heavy guns could blow the sloop out of the water unless she struck. But Jones and Rathburn had plenty of time to foresee this moment and to prepare for it. Their strategy depended on the sloop's chief advantage over the square rigger-agility in maneuver-and on split-second timing. During the chase, top men had gone aloft to set spars and canvas for the running sails-topsail, topgallant, and stuns'ls - and had stayed at the yard to wait for orders from below. Agonizing minutes dragged by as the frigate came inexorably on.

At last the moment came. Captain Jones ordered the tiller put hard over, and Lieutenant Rathburn signaled to the men aloft for the sails to be run out. The PROVIDENCE turned sharply to lie helpless right across the looming bow of the onrushing SOLEBAY until the running sails, suddenly blossoming from the yards, fluttered and filled to send her downwind to safety.

Reporting his narrow escape from the frigate, Jones wrote:

"Before her sails could be trimmed and steering sail set, I was out of reach of grape and soon after out of reach of cannon shot. Our "hair-breadth 'scape" and the saucy manner of making it must have mortified him not a little. Had he foreseen this motion, and prepared to counter act it, he might have fired several broadsides of double headed grape shot which would have done us very material damage. But he was a very bad marksman, and though within pistol shot, did not touch PROVIDENCE with one of the many shot which he fired."

There was an extra ration of rum that night and three cheers for the Captain as the wardroom and the messes buzzed with the rehash their near-miraculous escape. Even Captain Jones reticence was broken down in the general rejoicing. The perfect teamwork between officers and crew, coupled with sheer audacity that had bought their freedom forged a bond of mutual confidence that was to be a hallmark of this cruise. Small wonder that John Paul Jones would remember it as the happiest of his entire career.

THRU THE LUBBERS HOLE

By Robert Hewitt
Making miniature blocks

Because I decided to make a number of ships in 1"=40 ft. scale, I needed to develop a method of making blocks at that scale. The method I use is a development over many months. I decided to use pear wood. A 1/32" piece was glued to a flat piece of bass wood with school glue. The pear was then thinned to .007/.009 thickness on my Precac thickness sander. Cuts were then made in the pear wood sheet .040 wide along the length of the grain and only deep enough to just cut into the bass wood. The strips, about an inch long were removed from the bass wood by soaking in water. One inch long pieces of brass wire .004 diameter were blackened along with pieces that were 3/8" long. The glue used is weld-bond and it is mixed with water soluble black dye.

I coat one side of the pear wood strips with the black dyed glue and add about ten pieces of the long pieces of wire to the wood strip, keeping the wire even with one edge of the strip. FIG.1

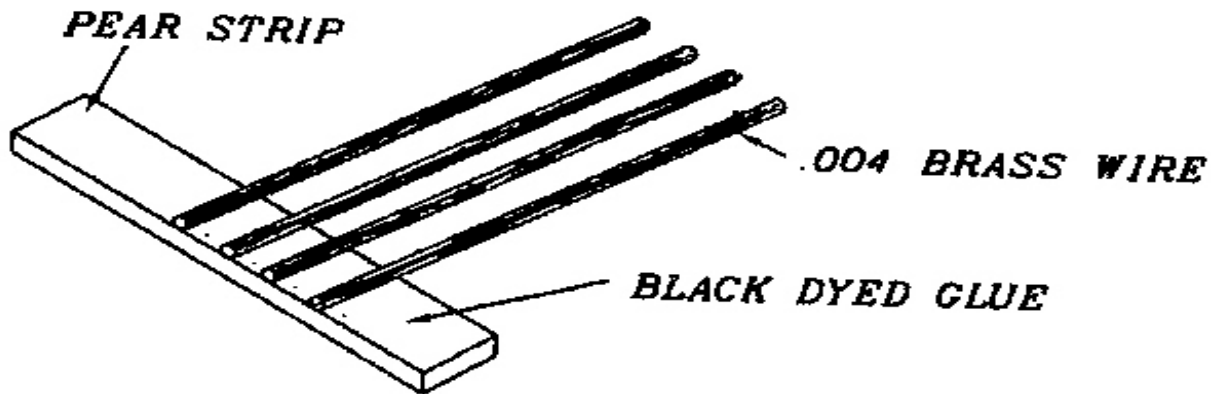
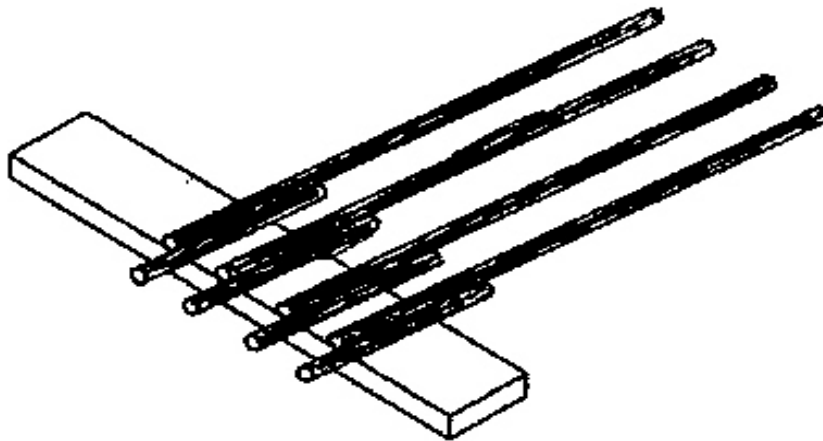


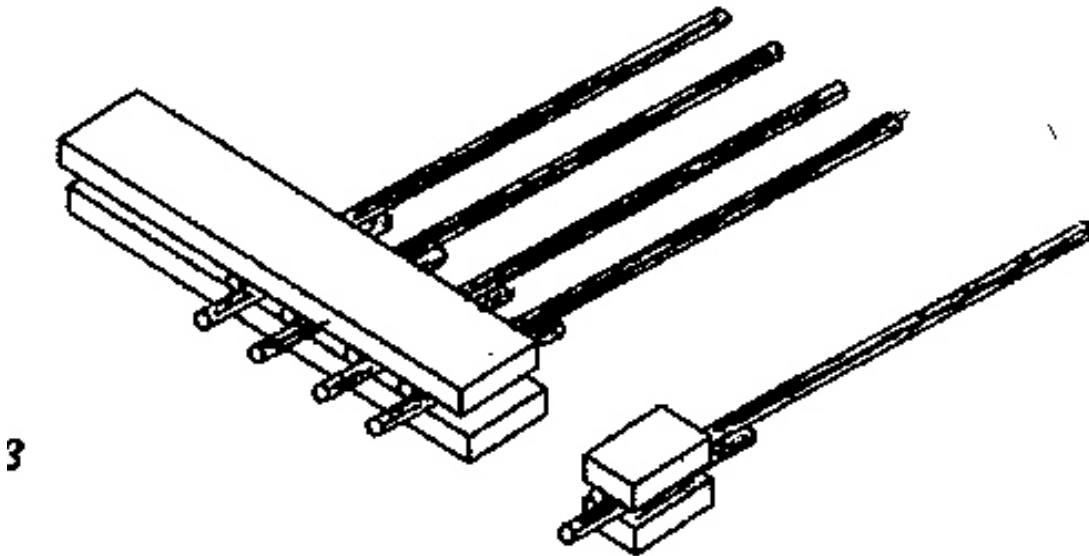
FIG. 1

I then add the shorter pieces of wire along side of the longer ones and extending over the strip by about 1/8". It is important that the two pieces of wire are glued together. This represents the lashed end of rope around the fitting. FIG.2

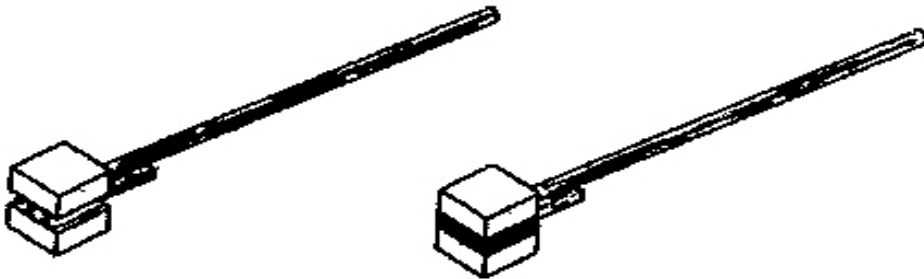


.2

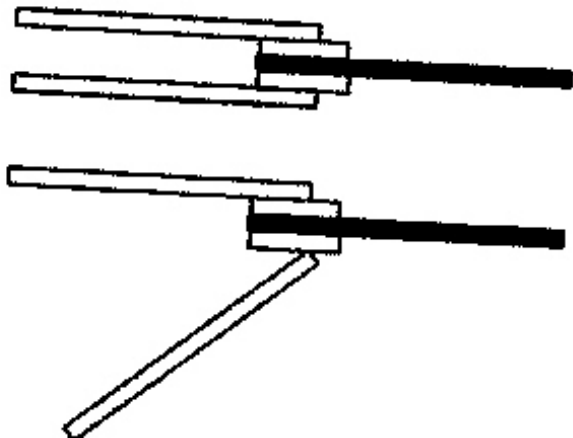
Another piece of pear wood is glued and this is positioned over the wire and aligned along the edges. This is repeated for as many blocks as needed. And at least 20% more assemblies should be made to cover lost or damaged pieces. FIG.3



After a 24 hour drying time, the assemblies are ready to cut. I use a sharp single edge razor blade and part them along the edge of the wire, being careful not to nick the edge of the wire. Wider blocks also can be cut, simulating a double block. These are usually cut when needed in the rigging process. FIG. 4



The pieces are now cut to length and a small dot of black paint is added to the end of the wire to hide the shiny tips of the brass wire. The black dyed glue will fill in the gaps between the two pieces of pear. FIG.5



The fitting is now ready to use. I glue painted wire to the fitting on the top and bottom to simulate rope roved through a fitting. FIG.6

Model of efficiency remodel of the model shop

We haven't got the final bill for glass and materials on the job, but as I write, the Museum painters are putting a finish coat on the new front. We had a great turnout after the March meeting that emptied the closet, desk and bookshelves, destroyed the front workbench and rebuilt it with more efficient drawers, etc., etc. There is still an ongoing effort to reorganize the ship fittings, tools, and other minutia that make up the innards of the Shop Well done to all hands on a remarkable job.

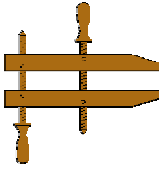
The NRG 2006 Conference Committee Meeting

We could really use help to organize this year's San Diego Maritime Museum and San Diego Ship Modelers Guild sponsored Nautical Research Guild conference scheduled for October. We have scheduled an organizing meeting at 7:00 pm the Tuesday after this month's Guild meeting, May 16, 2006. We'll be assigning specific responsibilities and assignments. Please join us. Any questions contact Bob Crawford @ <redacted>

Final Del Mar Fair Schedule

Here are the final assignments for the upcoming Del Mar Fair. If you are going to have trouble making it to an assigned day, be sure to tell Robert Hewitt as soon as possible.

<redacted>



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Described as “the biggest and best woodworking exhibition in the country” by the editor of Fine Woodworking magazine, the international Design in Wood Exhibition now averages over 300 entries. This is a significant increase from the first show in 1982 when it had forty-five beautiful juried pieces on display (see Fine Woodworking Magazine #37).

The Design in Wood Exhibition is co-sponsored by the San Diego County Fair, 22nd District Agricultural Association and the San Diego Fine Woodworkers Association (SDFWA). The talented, dedicated, and hardworking SDFWA members make this unique, popular, and award winning exhibition a success. Over 1,160,000 people are expected to visit the fair this year and this exhibit is the standout. Now the exhibition has national sponsors, gives out awards, and over \$20,000 in prize money to entries found in 21 classes. The Design in Wood Show truly contributes joy, inspiration, recognition, and support to the community it serves.

In addition to the juried gallery show, which runs this year from June 10 to July 4, many other volunteer activities take place during the show. The Wood Turners Association demonstrates wood turning techniques for the fair goers. The San Diego Wood Carvers demonstrate woodcarving in their booth. The San Diego Maritime Museum demonstrates model building. The Scroll Sawyers demonstrate various methods of scroll saw work.

The biggest demonstration area is the 19th Century Cabinet shop staffed by the SDFWA. Here, volunteer members of the largest woodworking association in the country, with membership in excess of 1,600, make small oak chairs for preschoolers using only 19th century hand tools to shape them. The Association makes fifty chairs each year and these last-a-life-time gifts are donated to various organizations in the community such as day care centers, schools, hospitals, health clinics, shelters, and other charitable organizations. To date, over 1,100 chairs have been donated.



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Next meeting is Wednesday May 10, 2006 on the Berkeley