



# San Diego Ship Modelers' Guild

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



**14 March 2011**

Apr. 2010 Vol. XXXV No. 4

Bill Grolz opened the meeting on board BERKLEY. He reminded everyone that the meetings will be held on the SECOND MONDAY of each month for the next six months. After this period, the meeting schedule will be reevaluated. There was one guest. His name is George Cook. He would like to start a modelers group for high school students. During the meeting, he discussed his desires with several of the guild members who provided him with information about ship modeling, sources of information, and general items of interest. The purser, Ron Hollod, gave his report. The balance as of February 28, 2011 was \$<redacted>. He reminded everyone that annual dues of \$20 should be paid as soon as possible. If dues are not paid by the March meeting, loss of membership will result.

The newsletter editor's report was given by Katherine Pogue. Katherine requested that she would like feedback about the newsletter. Please contact her at <redacted>.

Nomination of Guild officers was conducted. After nominations closed a very spirited campaign followed. (However, if a person yawned or closed their eyes, they probably missed it). A voice vote was conducted and the officers for the next year are: Guild Master: Bill Grolz, First Mate: Chuck Seiler, Purser: Ron Hollod, Logkeeper: Bob McPhail, and Newsletter Editor: Katherine Pogue.

The San Diego County Fair will be held June 10 through July 4. The museum will again sponsor the competition for best wood ship model. The model can be from a kit or scratch built. Deadline for submissions will be April 29, 2011.

Regarding coffee during the meeting: It was previously voted on and approved that coffee (regular and decaf) will be purchased for the meeting. This plan will continue for three months then reevaluated. During this meeting, however, coffee was made using the existing coffee and equipment. Bill Grolz found out that the coffee vendor on the BERKLEY can provide coffee for \$10 a container. Bill will make arrangements with the vendor to supply coffee at the April meeting.

Equipment for the model shop such as: lathe, sander, and dust control vacuum system; and voting on these possible expenditures were discussed. It was voted on and approved that approximately \$300 will be used to purchase the vacuum system and accessories. It was also voted on and approved that the model shop lathe will be refurbished at a cost of not to exceed \$200. If the cost is more than \$200, the refurbishment will be not done and the issue will be revisited. Bill Grolz will also discuss a sponsorship with the manufacturer and/or a "gift in kind" donation.

Robert Riddock discussed the USS SAN DIEGO project. Dr. Sheehan brought the hull to the meeting. A place for its construction is still being evaluated. Work will probably done as piece work, then assembled. Volunteers are needed for this project since the Museum would like to have it completed as soon as possible.

Dr. Sheehan discussed the SAN SALVADOR full size replica. The keel laying will occur on 15 April and construction will occur at Spanish Landing.

There was some discussion about use of the model shop. Right now, it is being used by Museum personnel. If a guild member wants to use the model shop, there should be no problem. Dr. Sheehan should be contacted, however, if there is a conflict.

John Savajot discussed his reed boat. He talked about his research and what he plans to do to complete the model.

In the area of new business, Chuck Seiler brought up the subject of "getting back to basics" specifically, more time for demonstrations, discussion about "modeling" related subjects, etc. Some ideas for future meetings include: demonstrations on a lathe, milling machine, tree nail making, etc.

## OFFICERS

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*Guild Master*

Bill Grolz  
phone redacted

*First Mate*

Chuck Seiler  
phone redacted

*Purser*

Ron Hollod  
phone redacted

*Editor*

Katherine Pogue  
phone redacted

*Log Keeper*

Bob McPhail  
phone redacted

*Newsletter Distribution*

Robert Hewitt

*Write-Ups*

Dave Dana

*Photographs*

John Wickman

*Established in 1972*

*by Bob Wright  
& Russ Merrill*



# SHOW AND TELL

M a r c h 2 0 1 1

## **USS CONSTITUTION Bob Riddoch**

We have seen this model as it progressed from a box of sticks to a fine planked and decked hull. Bob Riddoch has completed planking with basswood from the kit and sealed it with four coats of wipe on polyurethane after sanding with 600 grit paper between coats. Bob began painting the upper hull black, but the brush strokes showed, so he tried another paint with exasperating difficulty. "Last ship I'll ever paint!" he pronounced. Members suggested thinning the paint, trying a better brush, practicing on scrap wood, and layering several coats. Bob will copper the lower hull and has made, but not installed, the galley roofs.



## **PHILADELPHIA Dave Yotter**

On October 11, 1776 British army reinforcements advanced on American colonists in New York down the corridor from Quebec. Benedict Arnold and a colonial fleet of gondolas, sloops, and schooners intercepted them at Lake Champlain. Two days fighting stopped the reinforcements in an important delaying action which led to eventual victory. The shallow draft American fleet slipped away from the heavy British gunboats by sneaking close to shore, and blocked passage between the mainland and Valcour Island. Only a few invading ships could attack at a time, and the Americans successfully outgunned them. A 50' long, 2' deep heroic gondola gunboat, Philadelphia, received damaged in the battle and sank.



The original was salvaged in 1936 and since 1961 has been at the Smithsonian. Dave Yotter's fine large scale model - 1:16 or 3/4" to 1', about three feet long, is made from plans that Howard Hoffman of the Smithsonian provided him. His model Philadelphia's hull is largely completed, all armaments are installed, and Dave is rigging the single mast and yards. He makes his linen lines on a home made rope walk, cast the guns in silver bronze, made molds for the lost wax swivels. Powder, balls, crates, and barrels have to be made. Sweeps, the main power for the 43 man crew, are done, rams and sponges and tools for the guns to be completed. Dave will build a wide shelf to hold the completed model at home.

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## **REED BOAT Jon Sauvajot**

Jon Sauvajot with Christina Pogue's help is making a small fleet of reed boats to accompany the large scale model San Salvador for the Maritime Museum. Native Americans living on the west coast and off shore islands used such boats for fishing and travel, and were the first to meet Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo when his ship San Salvador explored the coast in 1542. The last issue of the Main'sl Haul is devoted to coastal native archaeology.

Jon has meticulously studied and experimented to achieve authentic design and building techniques. The reed canoes ranged in size 20 to fifty feet stem to stern and made of tule reed bundles tied together in the shape of a boat. Jon's model uses scale tule reed look alike corn broom strands. He tried unsatisfactorily to tie the strands around a clay core to form complex curved bundles. After several attempts at a substitute, he used coat hanger wire for the core, then tied the corn straw together, placing short straws in the fatter parts of the bundle, longer straws over them tied at the ends with tape or wire to be hidden or painted. The assembly then doused in diluted white glue to hold all together.



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# THROUGH THE LUBBER'S HOLE

*Arkansas* ~ by Robert Hewitt

*Arkansas* was a twin screw ironclad ram laid down by J.T. Shirley in October, 1861, at Fort Pickering near Memphis. She was one of a pair, and the contract called for them to be completed by December 24 or sooner. The usual problems of obtaining material and transporting it to the site, along with a shortage of skilled labor, greatly delayed construction. The builder decided to complete one vessel at a time. However, delays continued to dog the craft, prompting one officer to complain of poor workmanship.

ARKANSAS



General Beauregard, who had taken command of the Army of the Mississippi, and who realized the value of such vessels, offered any number of skilled workers to help Shirley finish the vessel, but the offer was not taken.

When New Orleans fell it was decided to move *Arkansas* to a safer place for completion. She was towed up the Yazoo River to Greenwood. The sister ship was left and destroyed.

*Arkansas* was moored to a pier with machinery, guns, and stores cluttering her decks. Her wood was all in place, and the main deck was armored to about one foot below the waterline. The casement armor still needed fitting and the engines and boilers were on board but not working.

On May 26, 1862, Lt. Isaac Newton Brown took command and soon had things moving. He obtained slaves and two-hundred men from the army as his workforce. Construction then went on twenty-four hours a day under pressure of the Union advance. Yazoo City was still an important building center with facilities for repairing the river steamers, and also the largest timber mill in the area.

A steamer was moored along the *Arkansas* for the workers to live on. Work continued throughout the hottest weather, and men fell ill with heatstroke or malaria, so others took their place. At night, work continued relentlessly by lantern light. The steamer *Capitol* was also anchored alongside so that her hoisting engine could be used to drive the drills needed for fitting the railroad iron to the shield. The iron was laid at an angle of thirty-five degrees and backed by thicker timber walls. The large funnel came up through the top of the battery, and in front of this stood a small pilot house with an iron speaking tube for passing on orders below.

The ship had two each 32, 64, and 100 pound guns which came from Memphis. Gun carriages were made of railroad iron and dragged to the ship by an ox team. After spending an active five weeks at Yazoo City, *Arkansas* left the dock on June 20th and started downstream. The vessel was still not finished but the rapidly falling river made it imperative to get the craft into deeper water.

By July 14th, with a full crew the ship made a run to Memphis, stopping at Vicksburg for supplies. On her way

down the twisting Yazoo River, *Arkansas* encountered the Union Ironclad *Carondelet*, a Pook turtle sister ship of *Cairo* accompanied by the gunboat *Tyler* and the army ram, *Queen of the West*. The ensuing fierce action ended with the *Carondelet* being disabled and forced ashore. *Arkansas* pursued the other two vessels into the Mississippi. The lone ironclad now ran past the Union fleet, having been badly damaged in the action and losing many men.



CARONDELET



TYLER



QUEEN OF THE WEST

While anchored off Vicksburg, she was attacked by *Queen of the West* and the ironclad *Essex* on July 22, but managed to beat off the assault. In action again with *Essex* on August 6, about five miles above Baton Rouge, but with engine trouble, she was unable to maneuver or escape. The long-suffering vessel drifted ashore where she was set on fire to avoid capture. She had originally cost \$76,920, and her loss was a disaster to Confederate efforts in the west, one of many such losses to the cause. Her performance against superior Union forces, combined with the success of the *Merrimac*, proved the value of the ironclad to the Confederate cause and bore out their faith in this type of vessel. From then on even more effort would be put into their construction.



ESSEX





# San Diego Ship Modelers' Guild

The next meeting will be  
Monday, 11 April 2011  
aboard the *Berkeley* at 7:00pm



One of the *Johnson* twin brigantines at the  
Dana Point Tall Ships Festival, 2010.