



August 2023

NEWSLETTER

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Fun Under the Summer Sun



The July meeting was attended by **Frank Dengler, Don Dressel, Tom Hairston, Mike Lonnecker, Jay MacMaster, Steve Miller, James Pitt, Jon Sanford, Gary Seaton, Chuck Seiler, Kevin and Patrick Sheehan, Chris Sullivan, John Walsh, Isaac Wills, Dave Yotter,** and Powder Monkey **Karl Zingheim**. We were also delighted to meet aspiring ship modeler **David Gary** and his mother **Kara**, as well as **Albert Tamayo** from the Woodworker Association.

After a brief recap on a successful Del Mar Fair, Guild Master John introduced Mike Lonnecker's presentation (see below). Then, Chuck Seiler opened a debate about the actual founding date of the Guild, based on his archival research (see below as well). He discovered that it was a multi-month process: with the Guild being prosed in July, August seeing the origination of the charter, and September the first formal meeting convened. For the time being, the September session will be regarded as the anniversary observance, and this year will feature a pot luck.



The San Diego Ship Modelers Guild is affiliated with and supports the
Maritime Museum of San Diego
1492 N. Harbor Drive, San Diego, CA 92101



From the Quarterdeck by the Guild Master



Ahoy, Guild members!

I'm writing this month's update from my childhood home—the perfect location to serve as the backdrop for our continuing discussion on serving the next generation of ship modelers.

During the July meeting, we had a visit from David Gary, a young man whom you'll meet in the pages of this August newsletter if you haven't already. Despite being a guest, David jumped right in alongside our veteran members, presenting his work and experience with a passion and vigor that was as infectious as it was informative.

David doesn't come from a background of ship modeling, but rather tanks. And what he can't find in kits, he scratch builds, doing extensive historical research and using every conceivable material he can get his hands on, all while paying careful attention to scale. Hearing David talk, I felt like I had been transported back in time to witness the dawn of our own Karl Zingheim's model building career. It was nothing short of magical.

And lest you think David's interest was a fluke, I've also received an email from a father who is looking for a way to foster his son's interest in ship modeling—they are also planning to be at the upcoming August 8th meeting.

That's two lads in the span of less than a month, drawn to our proud guild because we are a stalwart lighthouse beacon in the

thickest of fogbanks when it comes to those whose internal compasses guide them to what the modern world has deemed archaic and pointless. Despite having every excuse and avenue to pursue something quick and shiny and new, these young souls want to be a part of something old, weathered, and time-consuming. It is of the utmost importance that we gave them safe harbor in which to anchor and grow.

Working on my first beginner model (the H.M.S. Bounty's Jolly Boat that you see me holding above) has made me realize that our craft as a whole doesn't really start at the beginner level, but rather a novice one. So what resources do we provide for the novice?

The Mini-Star kits are important as a gateway, but they are only the first step for novice builders. Without a clear and appropriately progressive path to follow, we risk losing them to unnecessary uncertainty and frustration. As guild master, I've fielded multiple inquiries as to whether we offer ship modeling classes. The interest is out there; it's up to us to provide a way forward.

It won't be easy. It will take an incredible amount of time and effort and coordination. But if we can sustain working on multi-year model builds, then certainly we have it within us to support the fledgling seeds that will grow to be the literal future of our craft. We'll start on Tuesday.

Fair winds and following seas,

John Walsh

Meet David Gary!

In a delightful fulfilment of the truism “it pays to advertise,” the Guild welcomed its newest member, **David Gary**, who found us at the Del Mar Fair this summer. A young devotee of both history and scale modeling, David exercises his intellectual curiosity in crafting his own scale models, primarily of World War II armor, from cardstock and other handy materials. Judging by what he brought to show in his first meeting, he is already an accomplished scratch builder in the armor category, and now he looks forward to



seeing what ship modeling has to offer his budding interest. We are delighted that his entrée into our genre was none other than one of our illustrious *Mini-Star* kits, which he brought along with his tank collection. We look forward to having David at our gatherings and will watch with anticipation as he enhances his promising abilities.

Hail Tom's Prize Winners!

Our favorite ship modeler from Modesto, **Tom Hairston**, took top honors at the Del Mar Fair this year with two of his beautifully crafted renditions of actual vessels in the San Diego Maritime Museum's collection: the harbor work boat *Butcher Boy*, and the bark *Star of India*. The *Butcher Boy* secured second place and a special award, while the *Star of India* won first place and an additional special award! Tom's skills and attention to historical detail in replicating the Museum's fleet in miniature are a treasure, and we are proud to have his award-winning works adorning the Museum floor.



July's Presentation: Build Boards

Master modeler Mike Lonnecker composed a fascinating demonstration on how he builds models to exacting standards. Plank-on-frame construction is the most challenging approach for modelers because the lack of torsional strength in the tiny timbers can easily cause a model's frame to twist and warp as planking is installed. Mike avoids this by employing a "build board" which mechanically braces the model along the keel and at the fore and aft



extremities. Plexiglass sheet provides a continuously flat surface for the keel while shorter lengths of plexiglass placed on either side can keep the keel running true fore and aft. Thick custom clamps hold the model securely at either end while attached themselves to the build board. To detect and twisting, Mike often uses a square and a height gage to doublecheck alignments to detect defects early and correct them. To ensure accuracy, Mike produces scale drawings of his subject onto sheets of mylar (vellum may work as well) for durability and the capacity to view either side of the model. Mike emphasized that quality, accurate reference drawings be obtained so as to avoid the necessity to undo incorrect work in the midst of construction.

To keep the body form of the model true and to produce smooth and steady planking, having even frame spacing is crucial. In the example Mike brought in, he has extra frames spaced extremely close together to help produce an accurate hull form even before the planking is applied. Wood ship models are truly built from the inside out, and having the defining armature of the entire model, the keel and framing work, installed correctly, and then using a firm jig like the build board, will assure a satisfying progression of planking, decks, and tophammer to produce an eye-catching and accurate build.

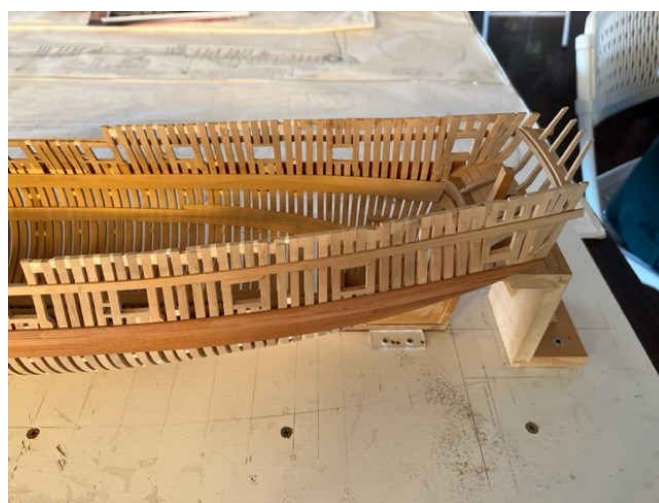
Thank you, Mike, for demonstrating this technique!



Mike's Latest Project Using a Build Board



The model Mike Lonnecker used for his demonstration on the efficacy of the build board is the Royal Navy sloop HMS *Fly* constructed at the height of the age of fighting sail. Mike opted to employ a precise method of plank-on-frame construction, meaning that many more frames were installed for the model than normally would be found in hobby work. This approach ensures a faithful reproduction of the sloop's structure, and ensures an accurate rendering when the outer planking is installed. Although more time– and material-consuming, this literal approach to ship crafting brings the satisfaction of knowing that the model is as true a representation of the subject as is humanly possible in scale.



Kevin's Mystery Model

Museum Librarian and Guild member Kevin Sheehan brought in a collection of completed ship parts and an unfinished hull in a very large scale. The mystery assortment turned out to be a model project of the German battleship *Bismarck* built by the late Al MacDonald of Concord, California. His estate provided the Maritime Museum completed models of the Japanese battleship *Fuso*, battleship *Missouri*, and destroyer *Black*. Those three will be featured in the Museum, but the unfinished *Bismarck* will require another home. If there is any interest, please contact Kevin at the San Diego Maritime Museum.





I Object! A Case for July Guild Anniversary

By Chuck Seiler

A few months ago, my esteemed colleague from Pt. Loma, **Alex Roel**, made a case for the Guild Anniversary being in September. This resonated poorly with me. I have been a Guild member for over 20 years and it seemed we always considered July as the anniversary month. I wanted to prove him wrong.

I believe Alex used an article by co-founder **Bob Wright** in the January 2000 newsletter as the basis for his case. As a former newsletter editor, I recall other articles giving other information. I dredged them up and we reviewed the details. We agree on the details, not necessarily the conclusion.

How it went. In 1971, **Bob Wright** was working on a model of the 2 masted schooner **VOLANTE**. He was having problems building the model and he beefed to his friend **Al Hollie** that it would be nice if there was a club where one could discuss issues such as this. Al agreed. He also shared his thoughts with **Russ Merrill**, who owned a hobby store. Russ thought it was a good idea and said he would talk to some of his customers. Bob approached **Capt. Ken Reynard** about holding club meetings at the Museum. Ken was master of the **STAR of INDIA** at the time and Executive Director of the Museum. Bob had worked with Ken on the restoration of the **STAR**, so he was familiar with the captain and the museum. **Capt. Reynard** was all in favor of it. As Bob states a letter published in the July 2006 newsletter "The first meeting was held at 8PM, 30 July 1971 in the office on the **STAR**, which was aft of the saloon. Russ took the minutes. About 9 people came to the first meeting." They submitted a formal written request to **Capt. Reynard**, who presented it to the board of directors at the next board meeting. The board approved and notified Bob in writing by letter, dated 17 August 1971. The one stipulation was that the Guild join the Nautical Research Guild. (NOTE: Bob says the meeting on the **STAR** was 30 July, but the letter from Capt. Reynard indicates the board meeting was 20 July. Old guy memory...go figure.) The Guild began meeting regularly shortly thereafter and the rest is history. Dues were 50 cents, by the way.

If you read the three accounts; the JAN 2000, JUL 2006 and APR 2014 (includes JUL 2006 letter and interview of **Bob Wright** by **Bob Riddock**) there are admittedly conflicts in dates. One could draw different conclusions. However, what did the founders consider to be the founding month? None are here to ask, but we can see when THEY celebrated it. Once again we consult the newsletter archive (masterfully compiled by Alex Roel) to find the answer. The first newsletter was published in MAY 1977, so we do not know when they celebrated from 1972 to 1976. However, from 1977 until 2003 the anniversary party was held 23 times in July and 4 in June. None in September. In 2004 we changed the month to August. I don't remember why, but had something to do with summer vacations and the Fair. From 2004 until 2019, the party was held 15 times in August with 1 in September due to an August power outage at the Museum. The 2020 party was cancelled due to COVID. The 2021 party was moved to September to allow for 50th anniversary prep. Posterity speaks.

While the Museum formally approved Guild sponsorship in the 17 August letter and the first official meeting was held afterwards, the first UNofficial meeting where the members decided to form the club WAS in July. The actual decision by the board to approve the request was also in July. As I stated at the July meeting (to Frank's objection), we celebrate the birth of our nation on July 4th, when the Declaration of Independence was signed and we made our intentions known, not when the Treaty of Paris was signed and the war was over. July, August, September, October - you decide, but I'm always going to celebrate in July. 🍷

From the Guild Vault

Reproduced below is the founding memorandum from the leader of the San Diego Maritime Association mentioned in Chuck Seiler's feature. It approved the request for the Guild to hold their monthly meetings aboard the *Star of India*, provided the Guild became a part of the Nautical Research Guild, which was accomplished.

Thanks for both Chuck and Alex Roel in bringing this document to light!



MARITIME MUSEUM ASSOCIATION OF SAN DIEGO
Bark *Star of India* • 1306 N. Harbor Drive • San Diego, California 92101

17 August 1971

Mr. Robert G. Wright
1105 Moana Drive
San Diego, Calif.
92107

Dear Bob:

This is in confirmation of our conversation regarding your request to hold monthly meetings of the Ship Modelers' Guild aboard the STAR OF INDIA.

At our Board of Directors meeting, on July 20th, your proposition was presented to the Board for consideration. As you know, the request was approved with the stipulation that the Ship Modelers' Guild join the Nautical Research Guild.

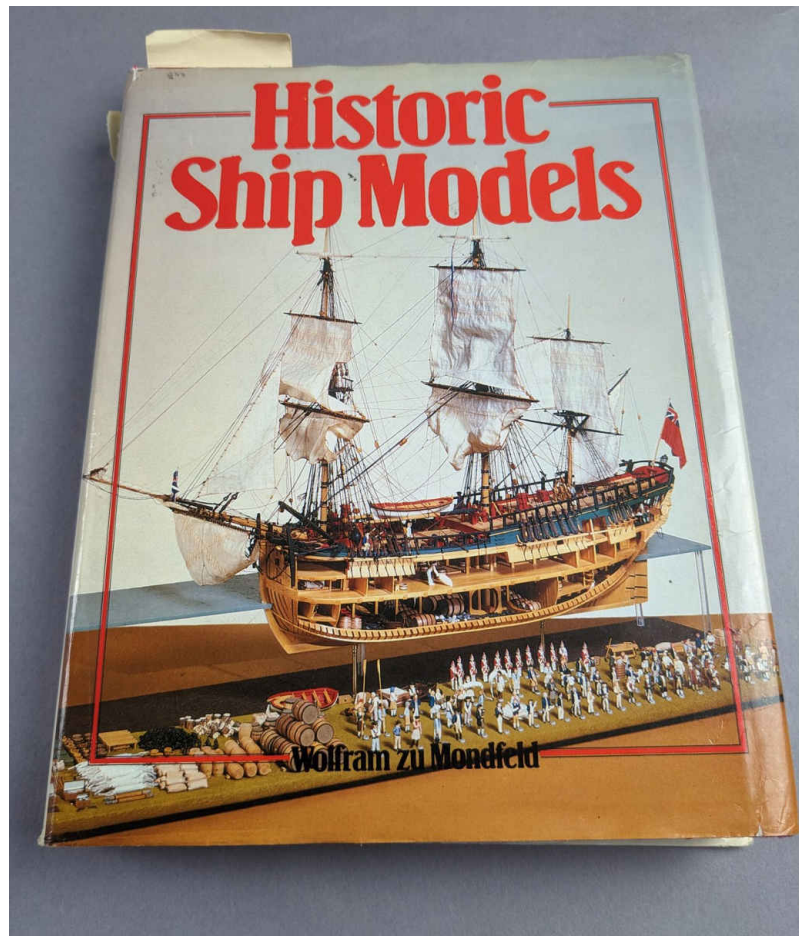
Good luck in your endeavor!

Sincerely,

Kenneth D. Reynard
Captain Kenneth D. Reynard
Master, Bark STAR OF INDIA

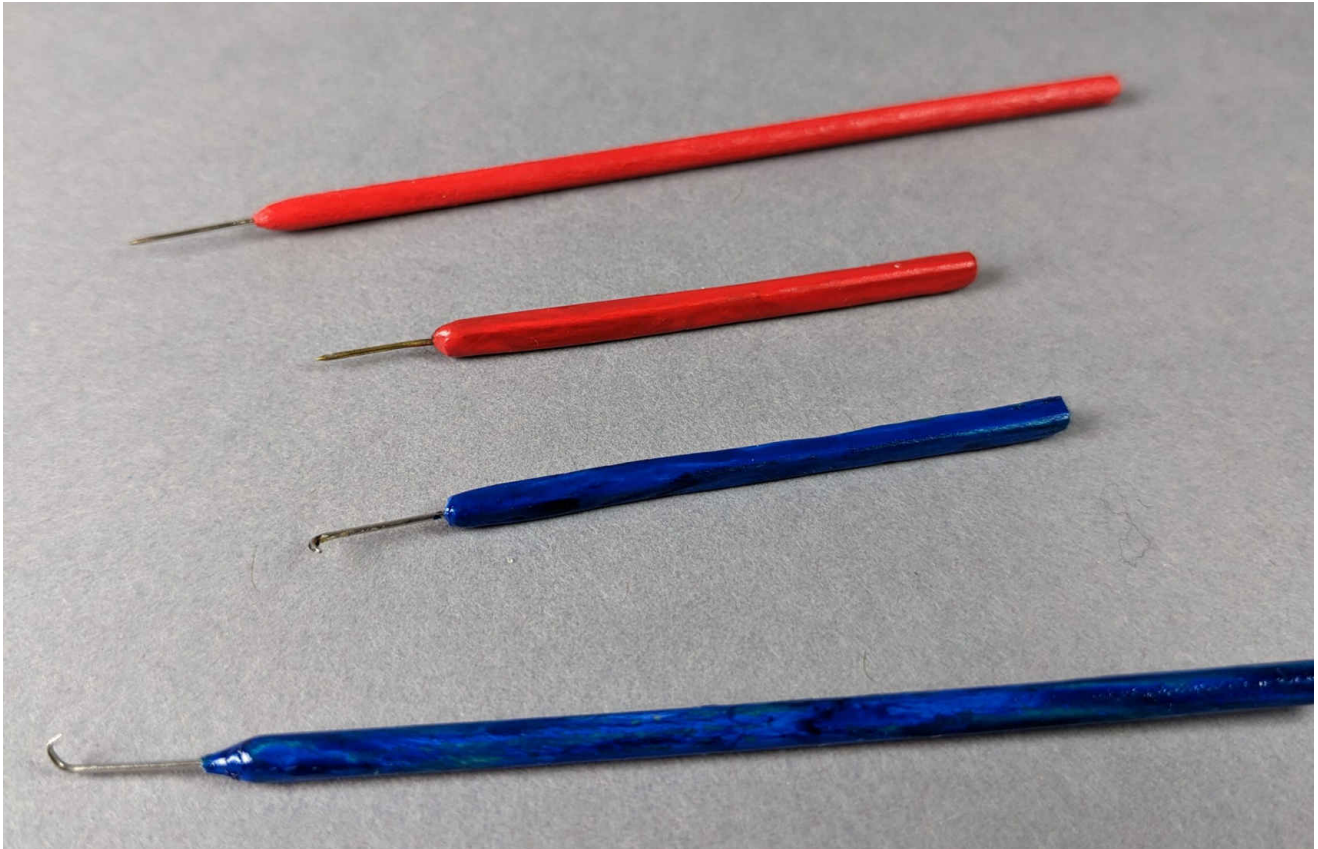
KDR/ge

Looks At Books



Don Dressel recommends this book for its full coverage of the technical nomenclature for the various portions of a wooden ship structure.

The Cool Tool of the Month



Producing accurate rigging can get a modeler into tight spaces, but Tom Hairston avoids all that with these home-made rigging picks and hooks.

**“Don’t you move, little model.
I’ve got you just where I want.”**



Chuck recites from the Guild Codex.

**“This is what happens when
you tell a genie bartender
you want your Cutty Sark
in a large glass.”**



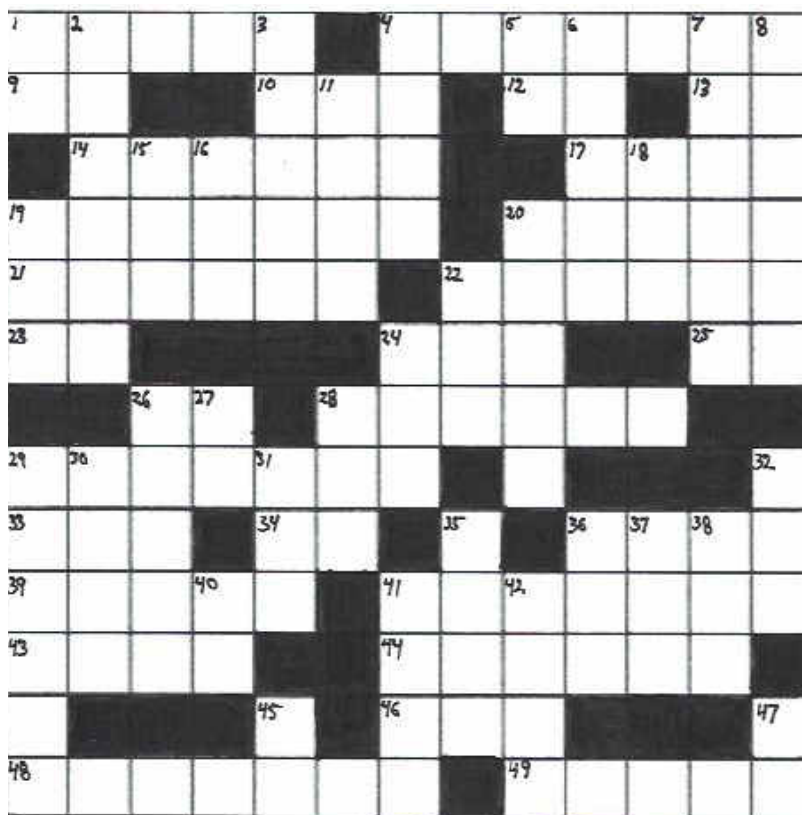


Kevin and David share the wonders of very small scale modeling.



“You can hang a Mini-Star on that one, baby!”

This Month's SDSMG Crossword



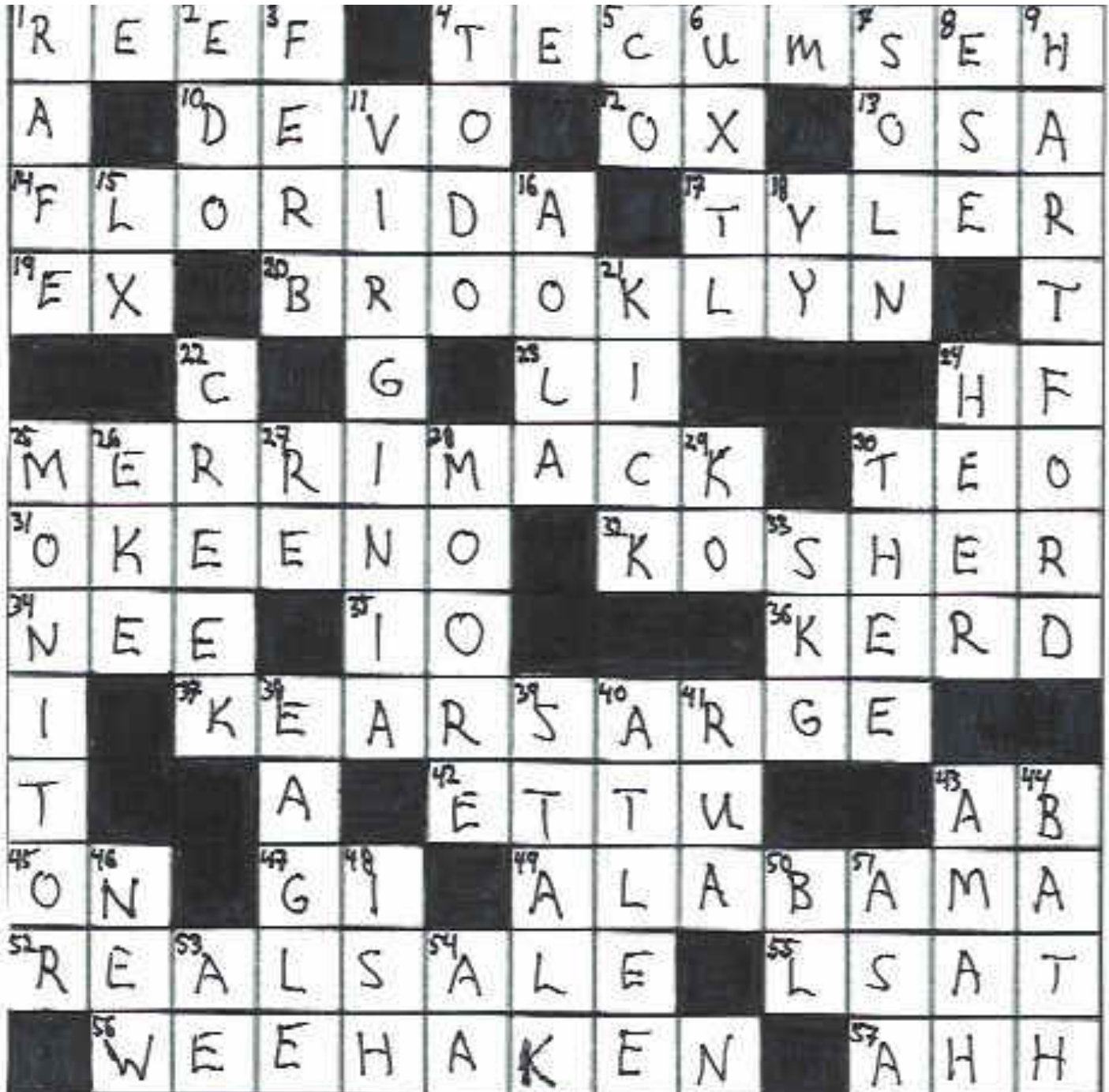
Across

1. A ship to remember
4. Part of Dewey's force at Manila Bay
9. Not them
10. Naval Supply Corps award
12. In your arm (abbrev.)
13. Recent Netflix show
14. Spanish flagship *Infanta Maria*
17. Sea in SE Russia
19. U.S. commander at Santiago
20. DC-based fashion designer
21. Minor member of Dewey's lot
22. Cruiser with Dewey
23. Repair ship desig.
24. Italian torpedo boat type
25. Symbol for vital element
26. Shot meas.
28. Popular leisure chair
29. Cruiser with Cervera
33. Where metal comes from
34. Submarine desig.
36. Ancient battlefield
39. Gross fellow
41. Cervera flagship first name
43. Mormon prophet
44. Thirty-third State
46. Tiny in Perth
48. Dewey's flagship
49. "Old Hoodoo" in USN

Down

1. Twelfth Greek letter
2. Meaning "warrior"
3. Village in NW Hungary
4. WWII historian
5. One and fifty to Vespasian
6. Captain of *Iowa* in 1898
7. Not a goof off?
8. Site of *Maine* tragedy
11. English on foreign tongue acronym
15. Medical guy
16. VD test
18. Teen skin issue
19. Relaxing place
20. Italian duke
22. Gunman Masterson
24. U.S. arithmetic geeks
26. Not bounced in Prague
27. Very large number in Relativity equation
28. Actor Davies middle name
29. South African actor
30. Nice in Jamaica
31. Georgian orchestra (abbrev.)
32. Breakdown friend
35. Regarding legally
36. Not zig
37. Year
38. Neighboring time zone (abbrev.)
40. The essence of existence
42. Something to smell on 10/31
45. Computer servicer
47. After writing

Last Month's Puzzle



BUILD LOG: HELLER AMERIGO VESPUCCI

BY DON BIENVENUE

Don is back with more pictures of the progress in his build of the Heller plastic kit of the Italian training vessel *Amerigo Vespucci*. Don has furthered his work on the rigging, installing the lifts for each of the yard arms.



After completing the standing rigging, Don installed the lifts for each of the yardarms, taking care not to over-stress the tension on the lines. All-plastic kits are vulnerable to the flexibility in narrow parts like masts and yard arms. Don indicated that the final rigging step to be completed will be the braces. After that, additional superstructure details like the taffrail at the stern and the lifeboat rigs will be installed. We are looking forward to seeing this model in person at meeting soon!

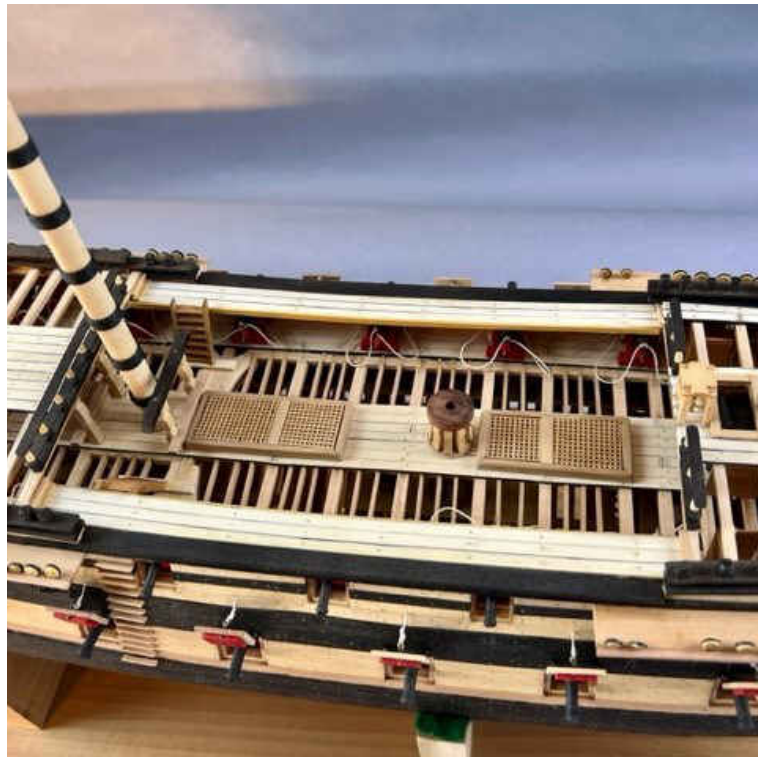




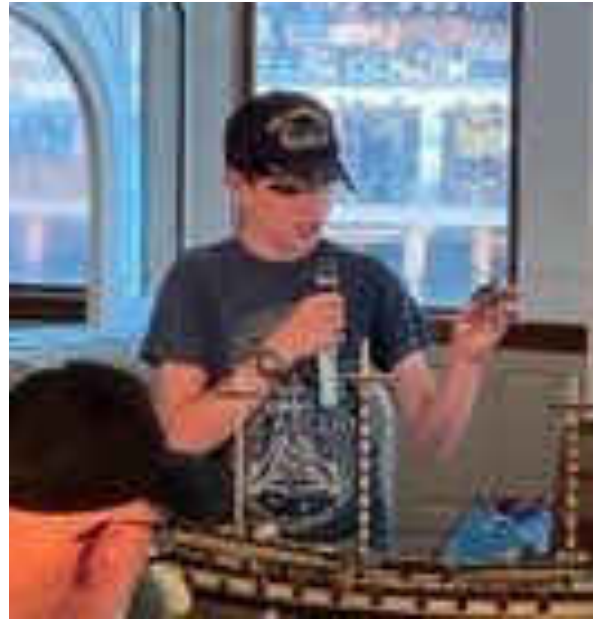
Show & Tell



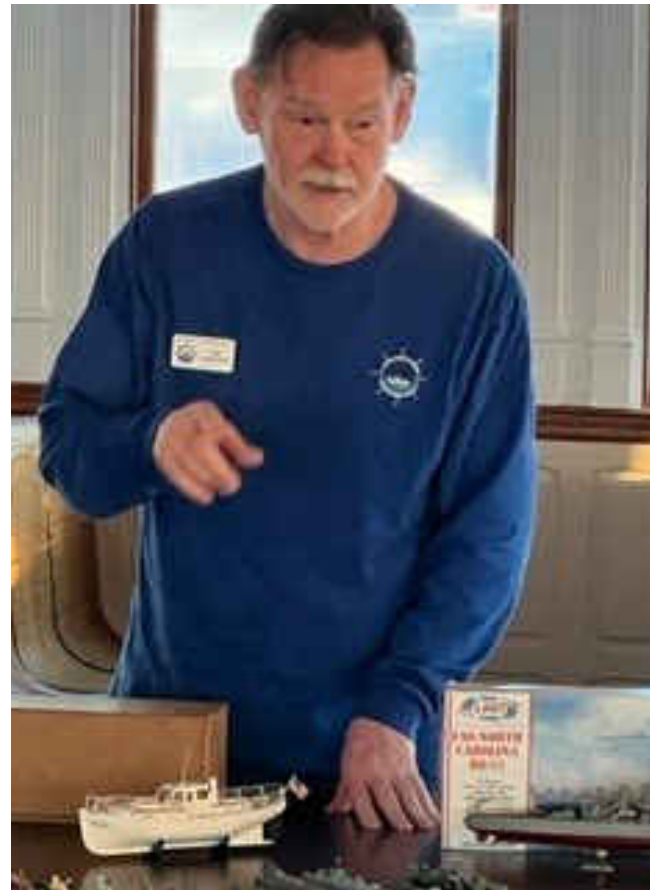
Don Dressel returned with more to show on his HMS *Roe Buck* model which is largely based on the Harold Hawn plans since the Admiralty originals are problematic in accuracy! The model is in 1/16-inch scale. Don found the suggested scroll work around the figure was too ornate for a working warship, so he pared back the details on the figurehead. He plans to place rigging on the lower masts as well as crewmen in places.



David Gary introduced the Guild to his approach to armor modeling, which emphasizes working from raw materials because kits are so expensive. He has already become a formidable scratchbuilder of these vehicles in very small scales, and he looks forward to exploring the mysteries of nautical modeling. His first foray is none other than our *Mini-Star* kit of our favorite bark he acquired while visiting our booth at the Del Mar Fair. We have no doubt Gary will swiftly become adept at ship modeling!



Our Fair champion Tom Hairston showed his now-completed model of the pilot boat introduced in the previous issue, and is also another addition to his models of the vessels the comprise the San Diego Maritime Museum. The intricate railing installed around the model's deck was custom built, and features solder tips to form the spheres at the top of each stanchion.





Distant member Mike Hite likes to keep in touch by sending in photos of his work (which we encourage all of our out-of-town members to do), including this recently completed Admiralty model kit of a colonial ketch *Mary Byrne* from the 1820s, produced by Model Shipways. Mike reports it was a good build, and featured the best photo instruction manual he's ever seen. We hope to see Mike in person soon with yet another one of his builds!





When Steve Miller got called out to a two-month visit to the carrier *Theodore Roosevelt*, his wife presented him with the Italeri 1/720kit. Though accurate in size and shape, Steve needed to scratchbuild the superstructure to faithfully represent what he saw. The radar domes, for instance, were produced from desiccant beads. All the aircraft are in 1/700, and the “yellow gear” support vehicles are 3d printed, as are the scimitar blades on the E-2 Hawkeyes. Steve found the 3d parts tricky to paint, and employed Tamiya’s quick set adhesive.

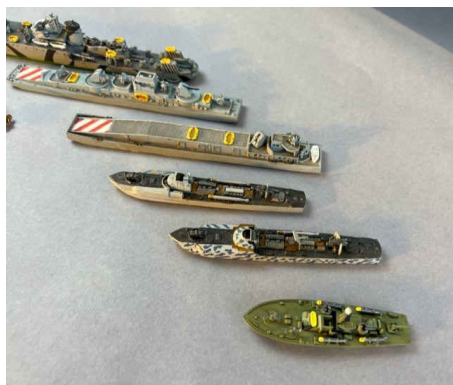


Chuck Seiler intended to progress on his 1/32 colonial-era John Smith shallop by building the framing jig while manning the Guild booth at the Fair, but the cant frames came out poorly and had to be disassembled and attached to the keel while still in the jig. This Ships of Pavel Nifkin kit features alder for the frame, and beech for the planks. In spite of the setback, Chuck's commitment to this kit of a kit (the original shallop was disassembled in England for reassembly in the wilds of 17th century Virginia) has made a difference in this challenging subject.





The father-son duo of Kevin and Patrick Sheehan introduced the Guild to their passion for small scale warships, including Kevin's set of 1/6000 Russian pre-dreadnoughts (pinched between his fingers) and Patrick's 1/300 World War II Italian vessels, a PT boat, and a German S-boat. He also displayed his now-completed battleship *North Carolina*, and showed his recent acquisition of a short-forecastle Flower-class corvette in a vintage wooden kit form.





The Civil War was a theme for Karl Zingheim as he announced his first night scene diorama project, which will be based on a naval action from the War Between the States. He is seen holding the hull of the USS *Hatteras* converted from a Heller wind-jammer kit. He also brought along a set of 1/96 scale Civil War naval figures that were commercially produced by Flagship Models because he politely asked the manufacturer. It never hurts to ask!

