



# San Diego Ship Modelers' Guild

1306 N. Harbor Drive

San Diego, CA 92101

October, 1994

NEWSLETTER

Volume 13

Number 10



## Constellation Not the Draw It Used to Be

The *Constellation* is falling on hard times. Not only has her deteriorating condition prompted her listing on the National Trusts "11 Most Endangered List", but tourists are finding other places to visit and spend their money. According to the Associated Press, paid adult admissions sank to 3,375 this past May, a reduction of 62% from the 8,914 who visited her in May last year.

In response to the lost income, operations director Len Schmidt was forced to lay off the ship's four remaining full-time carpenters and riggers, themselves the remnant of a seven member crew that had maintained the 141-year old sloop-of-war. Schmidt suspects that the removal of the *Constellation's* masts and rigging in March, due to winter damage, decay and safety concerns, have contributed to the decline in visitation. USF *Constellation* Foundation chair Gail Shawe believes the layoffs should pose no immediate threat to the structure of the ship. Shawe says she hopes the board will have a restoration plan and financing strategy ready for presentation to the Navy, which still owns the vessel, in the Fall. (USF *Constellation*, Constellation Dock, Baltimore MD 21202; 410 539-1797)



Don't be deterred by storms or calms or waiting for your LOTTO numbers, get up and OUT of your easy chair and COME TO THE NEXT MEETING on OCTOBER 20th.

OCTOBER						
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30	31					

It will be a SPECIAL SWAP IDEAS session--

You may take them for granted, but they're

NEW to somebody else.

You know--special little jigs for this and that, a tool you made out of this-or-that, anything from keel to truck and bow to stern.

Who knows? Maybe there will be some idea you've never seen before. How do you make your rigging screws? Should be very interesting.

## Correspondence

### The Alvin Clark is No More

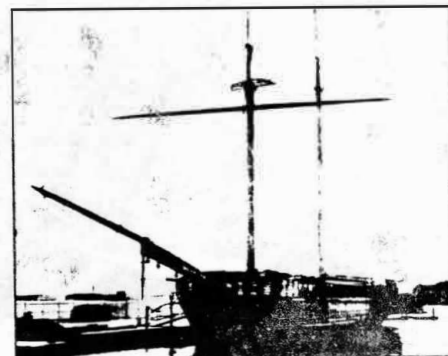
Sadly, I send you the enclosed clippings and photos describing the demise of the schooner *Alvin Clark*. I stopped to look at her in February when I took the photos and was shocked at the deterioration in her condition. Surely, if there is a lesson to be learned through this tragic story it must be that shipwrecks must never be raised without assurance of conservation.

BRUCE M. CLOSSER  
Marquette, Michigan

Mr. Closser, who performed an appraisal on the *Clark* in 1984, makes fair comment on the vulnerability of wooden shipwrecks. When the *Alvin Clark* rose to the surface of Lake Michigan in 1969, 105 years after sinking to the bottom in a storm off Chambers Island, it was amazingly intact. The 105-ft 218-ton vessel, launched into a different world in 1846, had slept many



The Alvin Clark in January 1994



The Alvin Clark not long after her 1969 salvage. years in the cold lake water, and seemed in nearly perfect shape. Her salvor, Frank Hoffman, a diver and

marina owner, envisaged a major tourist attraction. In 1981, the Coast Guard's Merchant Vessel Documentation Division declared the Clark the oldest Great Lakes ship in existence and the oldest known floating merchant ship in the world. But exposure to the atmosphere reduced her to a rotting hulk. The new owners of Hoffman's marina recently broke up and hauled away her remains.

The Clark was an opportunity to keep a fascinating piece of Great Lakes maritime history. It is easy to understand the excitement of Clark's finders when they stumbled upon her as she lay intact, masts upright, on the lake bottom in Green Bay. And maybe it is also easy in hindsight to say what should have been done to save her. But what we know is that as soon as sunken wooden vessels take their first gasp of air, their fragile timbers are on an accelerating path of deterioration. Expensive, sustained conservation must be administered at once. If—perhaps—a non-profit maritime group with resources had been given possession of the vessel at the very first, and not offered her sorry remains in her last six years, the Clark might have had a fighting chance.—Ed

#### Restoration Alert: USS Cabot

From the Historic Naval Ships Association comes the alarming news that the group owning the ex-USS Cabot has given up on the light carrier and she was headed for the scrapyard. More details next issue.

### Members Rally in Greenport for John W. Brown

NMHS Trustee Jimmy Moore rounded up 31 NMHS members for a luncheon welcoming the crew of the *John W. Brown* to Greenport, Long Island, on Monday 29 August. Claudio's harbor restaurant buzzed with good cheer as NMHS members feted and paid tribute to 15 *Brown* crewmembers, 5 from the deck force, 5 from the engineer force, and 5 from the steward's department. Various crew members gave their wartime merchant marine stories and a number of the assembled NMHS members gave theirs in kind. Members then joined local residents to visit the Liberty ship moored off the East End port in launches provided by King's Point Merchant Marine Academy.

The *Brown* was on route to Baltimore after a port visit to Boston. She was also fresh from an historic encounter with her counterpart, the Liberty ship *Jeremiah O'Brien*. Earlier in the month, while the *Brown* was Halifax bound, she rendezvoused with the *O'Brien* off Provincetown. The San Francisco-based *O'Brien* was making her way down the East Coast from Portland ME, on a leg of her return voyage from Normandy and D-Day commemorations there.

Locally, the JEREMIAH O'BRIEN now (Sept. 19th) is in San Diego, pausing on her way home, and it is a good time to go aboard one of the last of the WWII "workhorses" which supplied Europe with war materials and much-needed supplies. And the ship was in the Normandy invasion, which makes her unique.

BOSUN

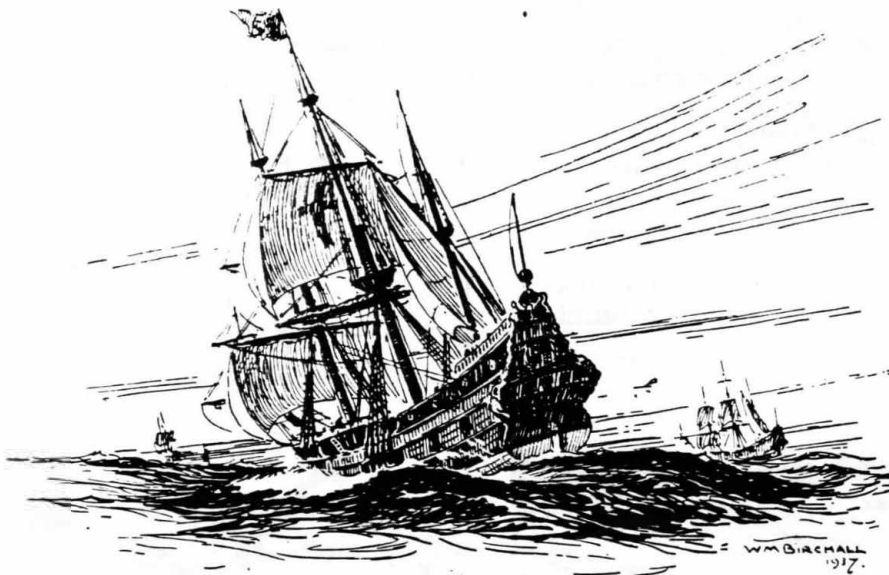


**S**IXTEEN stone  
Of beef and bone,  
Sort o' beggar to hold his own  
With a foc's'le full of fighting drunks  
And haul and hustle 'em out of their b'

Made of spunyarn and Stockholm tar,  
The same as all good bosuns are:  
Can't read, can't write,  
But he can holler and he can fight,  
And swear—why, no one can come near  
him!

I tell you it's a treat to hear him!  
He can cuss in Spanish and Portugee,  
Eye-taliano, Chinook, Chinee,  
A dash of Yank and a smatter of Greek,  
And as many besides as there's days in the  
week,  
And keep it up from the Nore to Dover,  
And never use a word twice over!

From FULL SAIL by C. Fox Smith



Fighters of Yesterday.

Thanks to SEA HISTORY GAZETTE for the above news items: ED.



--- Wooden Boat Festival---

"--of wooden ships and iron men": descriptive of sailors of years gone by. Wooden boats are returning to popularity but the men are not as tough as in those bygone days. They are engineers, business men and folks who just love to "muck about in boats" We got a good taste of today's wooden boats at the annual Wooden Boat Festival in Port Townsend, Washington several weeks ago. It was an event that I had dreamed of attending ever since I first subscribed to WOODEN BOAT magazine.

Wooden boats of all descriptions and ages were on display, dozens and dozens in the water and open for our admiration; others being built on the shore. The little town on the North-East tip of Washington's Olympic Peninsula was jumping with people, -men, women and kids from all over a wide area. The 71 foot schooner, ALCYON, on which I sailed three years ago was there and the skipper invited me aboard for reminiscences. I shot so many pictures I almost used up my supply of film.

The annual schooner race was the signal activity but ALCYON showed again that she is not a racer but a sturdy cruiser that needs a brisk wind to put a bone in her teeth. Perhaps the accompanying photo best depicts the aura of the scene: an old gaff rigged cutter with billowing clouds and the ever present ferry from Keystone plying her hourly run. All in all, a joyous week end. God willing I'll do it again next year, -- maybe even pack up my model schooner and be the hit of the show!

Bob Cornell, a wooden boater who still dreams.

---

Thanks for the fine report, Bob. And following are some notes Bob also made at the Sept. 15th. meeting:

Jim Hawkins was unable to attend so Co-Master Doug McFarland chaired the meeting.

Doug reminded the attendees that the traditional Chula Vista Harbor Days event is close at hand and pleaded for a better participation than interest to date has indicated. The Argonauts seem to be "turned off" as a result of the lack of launching facilities in 1992 and 1993.

The Americas Cup organization is providing a promotional facility at the Broadway Pier on October 30 from 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM. A 12 X 12 booth is available and the Guild will provide tables for it. Here, too, the Argonauts are showing little interest in setting up a display, recalling the pathetic public turnout in 1993.

Bob Crawford has asked for help in a clean-up and re-arrange work project on the Berkeley on October 22, (Gordon: what time?) The equipment stored in the "bilge" needs rescuing as a result of leaking decks. Please help.

Report cont'd, over

Fred Fraas (Mr. Gadget) showed a paint mixing stirrer for small bottles of detail paint.

Tony Depeo showed a base for a ship display case that was textured with fish tank rocks bedded in white glue;-looked like a real beach!

Jim Hamill, a newer modeler, was excited about a number of little tricks and gimmicks that he thought he, alone, had discovered only to hear that most of them are old stuff for the experienced modeler. At least he was glad to share them. Jim's report might inspire us to have a special meeting devoted just to neat gimmicks and trick tools. Maybe the October session?

For the program of the evening Bob Cornell gave a condensed overview of the history and processes of the foundry industry. This ranged from the gold flowers cast 4000 years ago in China to the capabilities of the high pressure die casting process. The latter included tricks of casting steel and plastic inserts into magnesium die castings. Without the die casting process the automatic transmission in today's cars would cost over \$100,000!

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Misourian	Mar 16	Mar 22	Mar 27	Panaman
Ohionan	Mar 23	Mar 29	Apr 3	Fresno
Minnesota	Mar 30	Apr 5	Apr 10	Dawson
Pennsylvan	Apr 6	Apr 12	Apr 17	Mexican (Calls Char)
California	Apr 13	Apr 19	Apr 24	Misourian
Kentuckian	Apr 20	Apr 26	May 1	Ohionan

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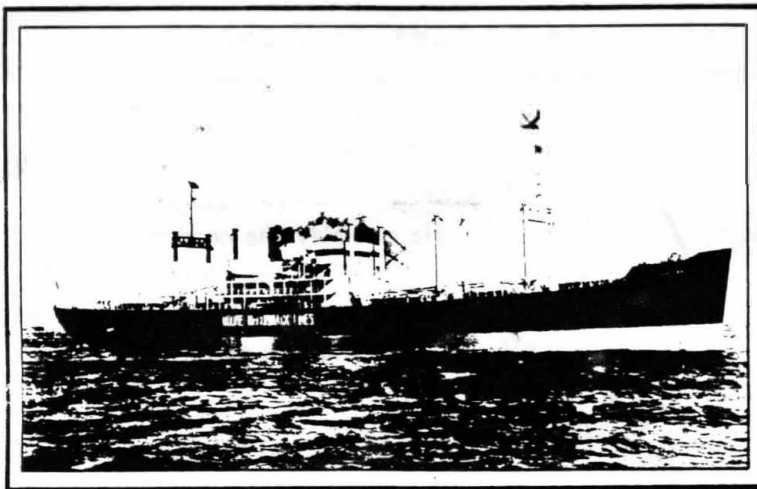
SHOW-AND-TELL still alive & Well

Member "KC Edwards", also a local purveyor of ship model chandlery, brought his kit model of KATE CORY, a whaler. It is coming nicely, and only a dab of grease here and there would make it a more authentic "spouter". TOM TAYLOR opened up an ancient cardboard coffin to reveal a "thirties" model of USS PERRY, advertised at one time as the "fastest ship in the navy". What with but one small sheet of printed instructions, it is moot whether the PERRY will ever sail. It will be a painful day, indeed, if DOUG McFARLAND ever has to part with his model of HOTSPUR, a make-believe British 20-gun, 4/carronade sloop of war. It's fun just to look at this model and imagine yourself aboard. JIM HAMILL must be given "A" for optimism in moving ahead to assemble the full-rigged auxiliary training ship AMERIGO VESPUCCI from a 15-sheet Italian plan of no scale. The VESPUCCI has been around a long time, but to my knowledge, never on the west coast.

~~WORK~~ FUN PARTIES... Referring to Bob Cornell's meeting notes, our usual MAINSTAYS (the most important stay in the ship) have offered themselves as follows---For Saturday, October 22nd, on board ferry BERKELEY, JOHN FLUCK, ED WHITE, DOUG McFARLAND, TOM TAYLOR, FRED FRAAS, BOB CRAWFORD and TONY DeFEO.

Likewise, for the BROADWAY PIER model showing on OCTOBER 28th, the following bestow themselves and their talents upon the alter of sacrifice: DOUG McFARLAND, BOB CORNELL, FRED FRAAS and BOB CRAWFORD.

The rest of us slackers can be found below in our bunks. Such is the model seafaring life. I knew a respected Puget Sound pilot and Captain who had been invited to sail down the coast in the schooner C.A. THAYER in 1957. When the galley stove needed more coal, when spuds needed peeling or when some "Norwegian steam" was needed on deck he could never be found. He wasn't in his bunk or in the chain locker--we never did solve the mystery of his disappearance. However, on our last night at sea, when a party was held in the galley and empty glasses were being thrown against the bulwarks, he was there in full bloom. Like I say...such is the seafaring life. Ed.



## C-3 CARGO VESSEL

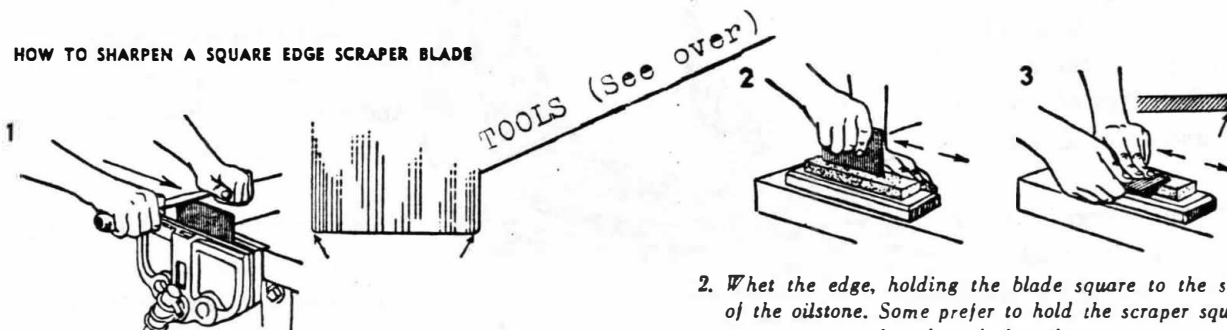
Overall Model Length 30 $\frac{3}{4}$ " ; Scale 1/16"=1'

This is a medium sized kit of a very large and long-popular vessel. C-3's were 492 feet long and were very modern and high speed for their day. This accounts for why most were named after Clipper Ships of bygone days. Our kit features SEA FOX (pictured), however as the differences among C-3's were very minor, the kit may be used as the basis for building most vessels of the type.

### A COUPLE OF FUTURE POSSIBILITIES...

ED WHITE announces that a possible tour of the Pt. Loma submarine base is up-coming. BOB CRAWFORD also announced that there is a possibility that the maritime museum may be the beneficiary of the last (1959) diesel tug built for the U.S. Navy. Southwest Marine has hinted that it would aid in the restoration.

#### HOW TO SHARPEN A SQUARE EDGE SCRAPER BLADE



1. File the edges square and straight by draw-filing with a smooth mill file. Round the corners slightly.

2. Whet the edge, holding the blade square to the surface of the oilstone. Some prefer to hold the scraper square to the edge of the oilstone.

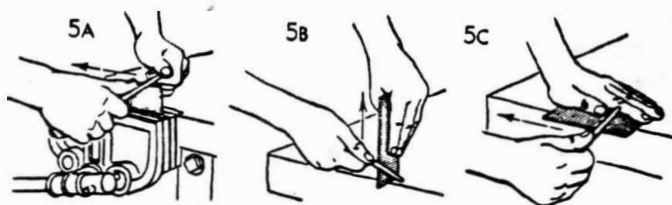
3. Remove the burr by whetting the scraper flat on the oilstone. The edges should be very smooth and sharp.



4. Draw the edge with three or four firm strokes of the burnisher held flat on the scraper.



To turn the edges out, the burnisher is held at 90° to the face of the blade for the first stroke. For each of the following strokes, tilt the burnisher slightly until at the last stroke it is held at about 85° to the face of the blade. A drop of oil on the burnisher helps.



Turn the edge with a few strokes of the burnisher. The scraper can be held in any of the three ways shown above. Draw the burnisher toward you the full length of the blade with a sliding stroke.

The CABINET SCRAPER is one of the handiest tools a modelmaker can use. When sharpened properly, it is ideal for removing nicks and scratches from flat surfaces, rounding and tapering spars etc. Its use will be demonstrated at an upcoming meeting.

From: HOW TO WORK WITH TOOLS & WOOD by the Stanley Pool Co.

## CHIPS

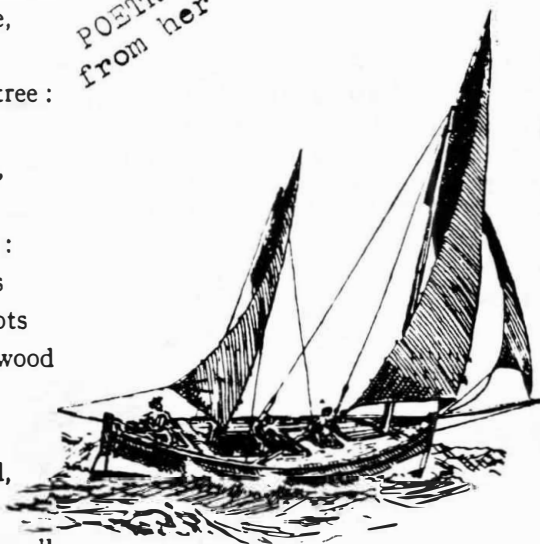
Learned his trade in the Blackwall ships,  
Learned it right from A to Z,  
From rudder trunk to foc's'le head.

Square and hard as a baulk of teak  
Or the quid he stows in his starboard cheek,  
He rules his life by Blackwall fashion,  
Work's his pleasure and his passion.

If you took and shoved old Chips ashore  
With just his adze and nothing more,  
He'd make no raft of skins, not he,  
Nor botched-up job of a scooped-out tree:  
He'd start right in and fix a slip,  
And lay his keel, and build his ship,  
And rig up sheers for masts and all,  
The blooming same as old Blackwall:  
And last he'd finish her off with lots  
Of fancy twiddles and ropes and knots  
And flowers and flourishes worked in wood  
As large as life and twice as good.

A makeshift job, be it large or small,  
Is a thing he can't abide at all,  
For he learned his trade in the Blackwall ships,  
Did Chips.

POETRY is by C. Fox Smith  
from her book FULL SAIL.



COOK

SLUSHY'S a Dutchman, he's a cracker-  
jack at music,  
He can play the ocarina,  
And the German concertina,  
But the sort of grub he dishes out 'ud make  
a kangaroo sick.

He's greasy and he's lazy and he's frowsy  
and he's fat,  
His face is large and dirty and his feet are  
large and flat,  
And he knows no more of cooking than the  
steward's ginger cat.  
His duff is tough as leather and his bread  
'ud break your jaw;  
His hash is burnt to cinders—if it isn't,  
why, it's raw;  
You can tell his tea is meant for tea because  
it's warm and wet,  
And the taste of Slushy's coffee is a thing  
you won't forget.

If you want to know the secret of its extra-  
special savour,  
He drops a dozen beetles in to give the  
stuff a flavour.

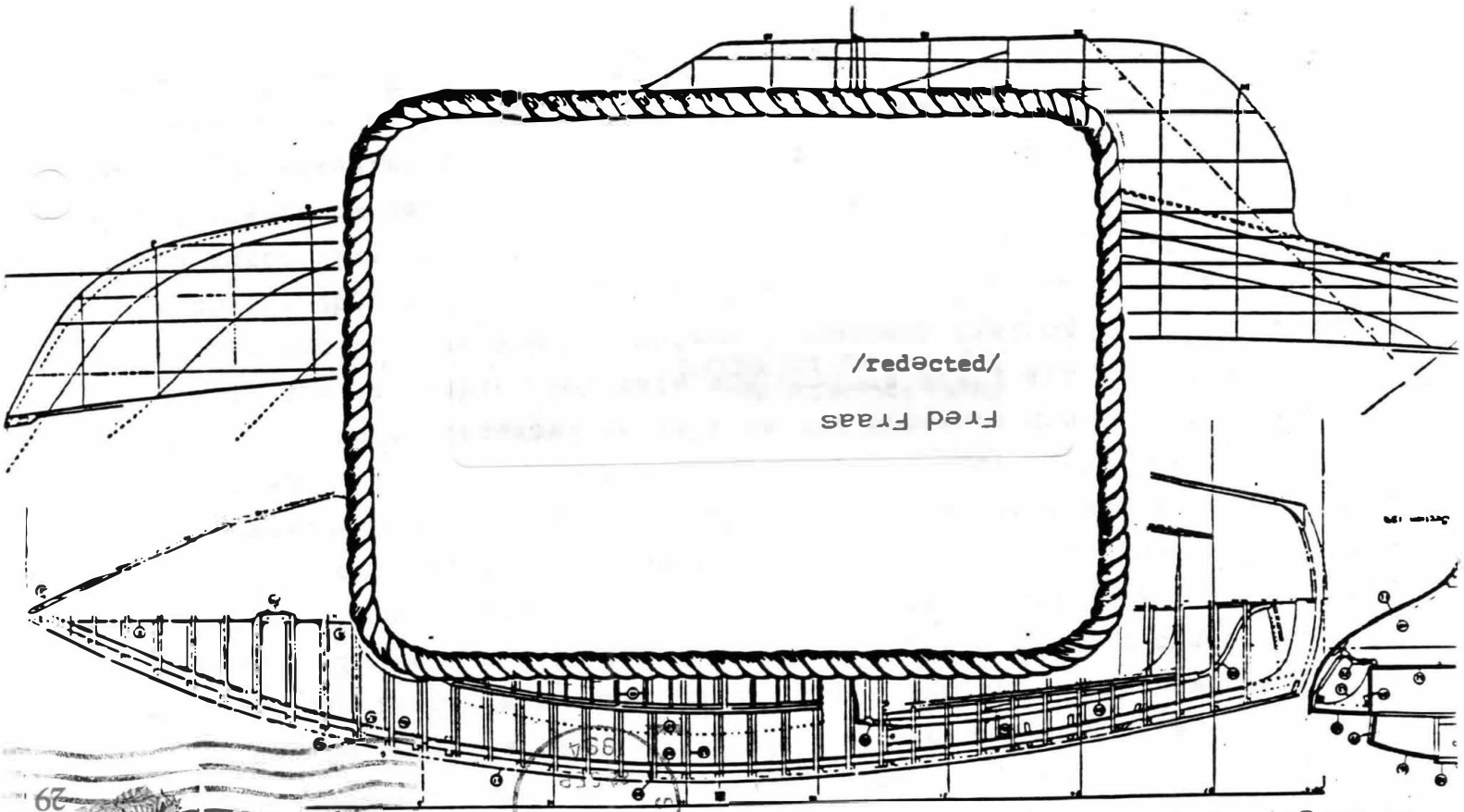


## Ship happens.

Yes, and unfortunately all too often. But unless our MODEL SKIPPERS are concealing something, we have been entirely "free" of groundings. Right, fellas...??

---

OUR LAST MEETING, on September 15th, was attended by fifteen members who were lucky to hear a capsulated report by member BOB CORNELL of a life-time devoted to metal casting. As a kid, he had the advantage of being able to use his father's basement shop, fully equipped with power and hand tools. His Da d had followed the moulding and casting trades and it was inevitable that young Bob should follow suit. Though depression jobs were hard to come by, bob got one at Dow Chemical Co, in Cleveland, Ohio, in the pressure die-casting dept. The casting business was ancient--havin g been engaged in by the Chinese some 4,000 years ago. Sand casting and mould casting were discussed as well as the pressure die method in which the moulds are re-usable. Bob made the world's FIRST all magnesium engine. Core box examples were shown. Modern investment casting or "replicating" in which the object vaporizes was discussed as well. Casting keeps our modern automotive transmissions (and many other objects as well) within an affordable range. At age 13, Bob was visited by the local power co. rep. after experimenting with carbon electrode melting of aluminum in his basement. The transformer on the power pole kept burning out. It was a "hot" talk Bob, much appreciated by all. Ed.



/redacted/  
Fred Fraas



San Diego Ship Modelers Guild  
c/o Maritime Museum Assoc. of SD  
1306 N. Harbor Drive  
San Diego, California 92101

**San Diego Ship Modelers Guild  
Officers for 1993**

Master	Jim Hawkins /redacted/
First Mate	Doug McFarland /redacted/
Purser	Jim Hawkins /redacted/
Logkeeper/Secretary	Ed White /redacted/
Newsletter Editors	Bob Cornell /redacted/
	Fred Fraas /redacted/
	Gordon Jones /redacted/
Steering Committee	Open to any and all interested in the welfare of the club.
	Jim Hawkins /redacted/
Regatta Commodore	

Schedule of Activities:

Meetings --Third Thursday of the month  
7:00PM Social; 07:30PM Meetin.

Static Workshops -- (discontinued)

R/C Operations --Saturday mornings at the  
Model Yacht Pond. (Mission Bay)

Annual Regatta-- Third weekend in June  
\*\*\*\*\*

Membership:

Dues are \$15 annually  
(\$7.50 after July 1st)

We strongly encourage  
all to join the San Diego  
Maritime Museum as expression  
of appreciation for  
the facilities they provide  
for our benefit.