



# San Diego Ship Modelers' Guild

1306 N. Harbor Drive

San Diego CA 92101

September 1998

NEWSLETTER

Volume 22, No. 9

## THE AUGUST MEETING: "WE HAD A GOOD ONE" (AND "LIKE CHRISTMAS MORNING," TOO)

The high proportion of New Members in the well-attended August meeting, as reported in Fred Fraas's minutes below, inspired the Newsletter to dub this its New Member Issue and express for the Old Members their pleasure at the presence of new blood. Welcome, and be assured that the old blood will lend a helping hand if you need it (see page 4)-- or accept a helping hand if you want to give it.

Our August meeting could be summed up with a short phrase: "We had a good one." For a starter, we had two dozen attendees, yes 24, with many new members attending for the first or second time. And it was like Christmas morning for those picking up excess ship-parts goodies recently donated to the members.

We voted to make a permanent \$300 contribution to the museum. And for "show and tell," two modelers seated next to each other brought the same model, *Sultana*. Several good suggestions were made for improving our meetings and effectiveness. Overall, it was a productive experience.

Purser Ed White reported a treasury of some \$600 to \$700. Jack Klein thanked Del Mar Fair volunteers again and gave a report of their successful activities, especially in introducing our club to prospective new members. For new business, it was suggested that our Guild fund the \$300 MicroMart miniature saw on the Maritime Museum's "wish list" (see the catalog entry on page 9). This MicroLux saw will be available in the model shop for any Guild member.

A table full of modeling materials, unfinished kits, various fittings, etc. (as reported in last month's Newsletter) was up for grabs to those present. A request

was made for small donations to the Guild's treasury for those items taken. In a very short time about \$110 was collected, which will partially pay for the saw. A fair trade indeed.

We were especially delighted to welcome three new members, who brought their current modeling projects as well. **Steve Woolley** brought his *Elidir*, a plank-on-frame Constructo 1:26 model. Steve reported that this was a good kit, but that the plans translated from Spanish were hard to follow. He said that he spent three months building this early 1900's English passenger boat used on the Thames.

Another new member, **Charles Rowe**, brought his *Sultana* and sat next to **Jacki Jones**, who also brought her model of *Sultana*. We don't often have such a coincidence, and Jacki was very interested in the added progress evident on Charles' model.

New member **Bob McPhail** reported working on a Model Expo kit, and guest Devin Huey reported working on a *U.S.S. Constitution* cross-section.

Veteran modelers Royce Privett and Robert Hewitt also brought their models to this meeting. Since the June meeting Royce has completed the 20-gun carriage for his

*Continued on P. 9*

### MEMBERS WHO HAVE JOINED SINCE JAN. 1

**Gaetano J. Avila**

**Jim Balastreri**

**Krystof Bodzon**

**Don Bowes**

**Icela Gonzalez**

**James D. Hammond Sr.**

**Jacki Jones**

**Achim Von Kapff**

**Paul King**

**Frank D. Lee**

**Robert McPhail**

**Hans G. Merten**

**Roy T. Nilson**

**Dennis Reed**

**Duane J. Richwine**

**Charles Rowe**

**Stephen Woolley**

*September*

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26

*Meeting Date*



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

The San Diego Ship Modelers Guild is an association of craftsmen that share a common interest in ship modeling and in the related fields of ship construction, maritime history and lore of the sea. The Guild is dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of craft of scale ship modeling and to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, information, skills and techniques. The regular monthly meeting, held on the upper deck of the ferryboat BERKLEY, provides this forum. Members are encouraged to bring a model to the meeting and to participate in an informal discussion about the models present. The wealth of experience represented by the various Guild members can usually provide the answer to virtually any problem. In addition to the meeting space, the Guild shares the operation of the ship model shop aboard the BERKLEY, where reference materials, magazines and catalogs are available to the members. If you are interested in becoming a member, or learning more about the Guild, you are invited to attend one of our monthly meetings. Simply come aboard the ferryboat BERKELEY on the scheduled meeting night and ask the gate attendant for directions to the Ship Modelers Guild meeting. Meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month aboard the ferryboat BERKLEY at 7:00 p.m. Membership dues are \$15.00 annually and we strongly encourage all members to join the San Diego Maritime Museum. Please make checks payable to the San Diego Ship Modelers Guild and mail to:

Ship Modelers Guild  
Membership  
1306 North Harbor Drive  
San Diego, CA 92101

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### SAN DIEGO SHIP MODELERS GUILD MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SPOUSE: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ ALT PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_  
INTERESTS \_\_\_\_\_

# The Art of The Dhow

*Guild Member Robert Hewitt contributes a beautiful dissertation on the making of this exotic Arab ship – and on the making of a model of it.*

**THE DHOW** The Arab dhow has been around for centuries, and a few remain today, in the style of the boom. Dhow-building did not require plans; each shipwright needed only to know what type to build: a boom (bhum), a baggala (bachla), or a sambuk. The shipwright also needed to know how many bags of dates were expected to fit in the hold. The shipwright's bare feet were used as a vise. The only tools used were an adze, an Indian bow drill, a small hand saw and a rough plane.

The ships were built on the beach, surrounded by a mud and corral enclosure. This assured that no woman could jump over a freshly laid keel. It was believed that in doing this she would conceive, but the life of the *nakhoda* (captain) or the shipwright would be sacrificed.

## **Goat Fat and Shark Oil**

Early vessels were made of teak from India. This is now banned by the Indian government, and *aina*, which is similar, is now used. The masts are made of *poon* from Bepor, India, a wood once used by the Royal Navy. Dhow builders used no nails, but instead lashed the ship together with coir (coconut fiber twisted by hand). The 20,000 or so holes were packed with lime and tree gum. The hull below the waterline was smeared with a mixture of goat fat and lime. Above the waterline shark oil was used, giving the ships a distinctive odor!

The wall was knocked down and the ship was dragged to the sea. It was noted that the ships always floated true. *H.M.S. Victory* when launched needed 38 tons of extra ballast on the port side to float true.

The sails were made on the beach from plans drawn in the sand. A double-ended Arab bhum could easily outrun the early European steam launches.

**THE MODEL** My model is of a bachla, which has a stern similar to the European ship of the day. It was noted in Allen Villiers' book *Sons of Sinbad* that the Arabs did not book passage on European ships but

**dhow** (dou), *n.* any of various types of sailing vessels used by Arabs on the east African, the Arabian, and the Indian coasts, generally lateen-rigged on two or three masts. Also, *dau, dow.*

preferred the bhum because it was more seaworthy.

The model was built from plans in Model Shipwright #99 and reduced to a scale of 1" equals 20'. The built-up hull is of basswood planked with pear, and the deck is made of holly. The stern windows are made of isinglass. The ship's boats are made of holly.

The hatch grating is made of fly tyne stained with Floquil New Manila Stain and stretched over a homemade loom that uses extension springs as spacers. The sails are made of rice paper printed out on my computer and formed over a "sculpy" mold. The symbol on the sail is the national symbol of Oman: two swords crossing over a dagger and belt, done in red. (Ref. National Geographic, Vol. 162 #1, July 1982.)

## **On the Seat of Ease**

The deck is fitted with various cargo, barrels elephant tusks (made of holly), and chests. Villiera also noted that nothing was lashed down until it shifted, then only that which moved was dealt with. I also included a crew, one smoking a hookah (water pipe), one on a prayer rug bowing to Allah, one on the seat of ease, and the man at the tiller. The crew is made of wire coated with gesso.

The ship is set in a sea of 1/32" Plexiglass, coated with Liquitex heavy gel to form a sea, and painted underneath with blue and green paint. Five dolphins carved in boxwood precede the ship. A glass case covers all.



**Dhow**

*Happy to be of assistance*

# THE MOST IMPORTANT ADVANTAGE OF BELONGING TO THE MODELERS GUILD

*By Bill Forbis*

An impressive number of new members have joined the San Diego Ship Modelers Guild since the beginning of this year, but I'm not sure that all of them fully realize the most important benefit that membership brings, which is this: you are now in touch with some of the most skilled, expert and helpful model builders in the U.S. As Editor of this Newsletter I try to keep myself in the background, but in this article I want to turn personal and make my point by describing the assistance I've received in my current project, a model of a 1918 Hog Island freighter, which I chose because I sailed on one in World War II.

The modelers who helped me most were Bob Crawford, Fred Fraas and Jack Klein, but many others contributed to my education in big and little ways. I'm thinking of Gordon Jones, Ed White, Bob Hewitt, Bob Wright, Tom Taylor, Dave Manley, K.C. Edwards, Doug McFarland, Phil Mattson and Royce Privett. I'm sure the great Joe Bompensierro can't remember showing me how to reeve ratlines against a background of lines drawn on a card, but he did. However, in what follows I'm going to list the ways I got help in building my current model, rather than single out those who gave the help.

## **A Plain Old Workhorse**

The Hog Islander was to World War I what the Liberty was to World War II, a plain-looking, workhorse cargo ship, built by the hundreds. (The name comes from the shipyard that built most of them and is now the site of the Philadelphia airport – as I learned from the Guild newsletter a few years ago.) My ship was the *Wolverine*. Where was I going to find the plans for a ship built 80 years ago? The Maritime Museum library promptly produced the catalog of Taubman Plans Service International (11 College Drive Box 16, Jersey City, N.J. 07305), and there was my baby, a “411-Foot Cargo Ship.”

Through the mail came a sheet five feet wide, showing the ship as seen from above and from one side, plus the essential body plan showing cross sections at 17 places along the length, all on a scale of 1/8” to 1’. At a copy shop I had the plan reduced by one-half, to the size and scale (1/16” to 1’) of the model I wanted to build (our house has no room for a four-foot model).

The ship was to be built up on the bread-and-butter system – layered 1/2”-thick boards cut to contours determined by measurements transferred from the body plan and glued together. What kind of wood? I had

earlier made a couple of bread-and-butter models from pine and spruce; the universal advice that I now received was: “use poplar.” At Dixieline (a local San Diego lumber chain) I picked up, for \$2 per linear foot (if I remember right), 16 feet of 1x6 poplar.

The advice was sound. I narrowed the boards to 4”, the dimension of the model's beam, and sawed them into 22” lengths. Then I planed them down to 1/2” on my Ryobi thickness planer, and sawed them to the proper contours. Gluing these “lifts,” as the boards are called, can be scary; on one of my models, the water-based glue severely warped the spruce lifts, sending me into a panicky process of powerful clamping, nailing and heavy weighting. The poplar didn't warp.

For the work of carving off the stair-steps left at the bow and stern of the hull in the lift construction method, I got encouragement – more like orders – to persist until the curves were close to perfect, as determined by viewing them in various kinds of light.

## **Discovering Squadron Green**

Replicating rivets in the ship's plating seemed to me impossible on the 1/16<sup>th</sup> scale, and wiser heads agreed. But they did point on the need for flawless smoothness as the base for paint, and introduced me to Squadron Green as the best wood filler.

For paint I chose Floquil Black Boot-topping and Anti-Fouling Red. I wanted flat paint; these colors were described as semi-gloss. But it was a kind of gloss that readily became flat when gently rubbed with the finest grade of steel wool. The result suggests a ship of steel, not wood.

Following further advice, I went to Tri-City Paint, an auto-supply store in Santee (the company also has branches in Escondido and National City), and bought the kind of masking tape used by car detailers for super-fine designs. In masking for the waterline, this tape proved elastic enough to follow curves, sticky enough to prevent wet paint from seeping under it, and not sticky enough to pull off dried paint when being removed.

Until my Guild guides called my attention to it, I'd never noticed in the Bluejacket catalog that I could buy 1/32”-thick decking scored to represent planks 1/32” wide, or 6” on the 16<sup>th</sup> scale – just about right.

I shaped thin poplar boards to the correct camber and sheer, glued them to the model's forecastle, boat and poop decks, and topped that with the scored planking. I found that Minwax Fruitwood stain deposited pigment in the scoring that looked a lot like caulking.

I was also taught a dandy trick for use in working around the model's deck houses: don't glue them down, but instead attach them to the hull by plug-in dowels. This way you can make them removable for such operations as painting or drilling for portholes or installing railings.

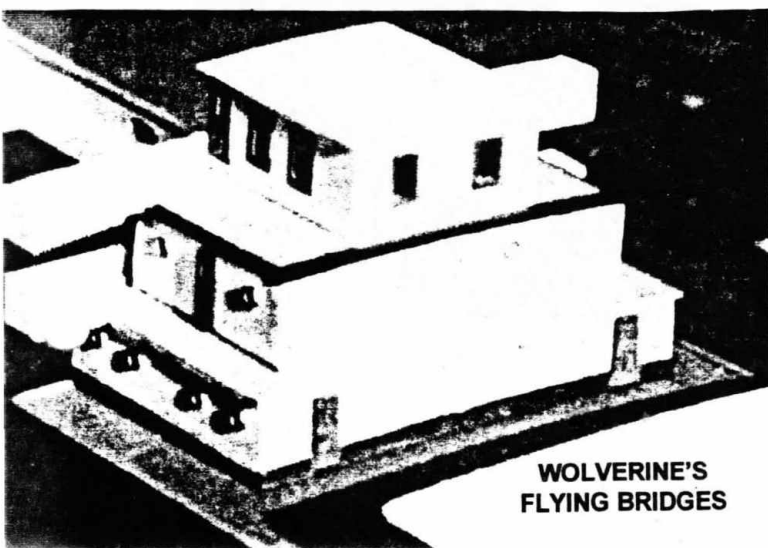
This is my first steel steamer (as opposed to wooden sailing ships) and I had to find ways of imitating metal only 1/4" thick, such as the sides of the two flying bridges. Here I got conflicting advice. One favored styrene, a smooth, strong white plastic that comes in sheets about 6x12" in area and .010", .020", .030" .040" (1 mm), .060", .080" and .125" (1/8") thick. Another said, "Wood is always best," pointing to the availability of three-ply aircraft plywood 1/64", 1/32", 1/16" and 1/8" thick, in 6x24" sheets and made with waterproof glue.

Partly out of curiosity, I chose styrene, and made a neat, white, see-through pilot house with .040" walls and 12 acrylic windows. For the 3x3" boat deck that forms the roof of numerous officers cabins and the engine room, I tried 1/32" plywood, only to have it buckle along the eaves because of the white glue.

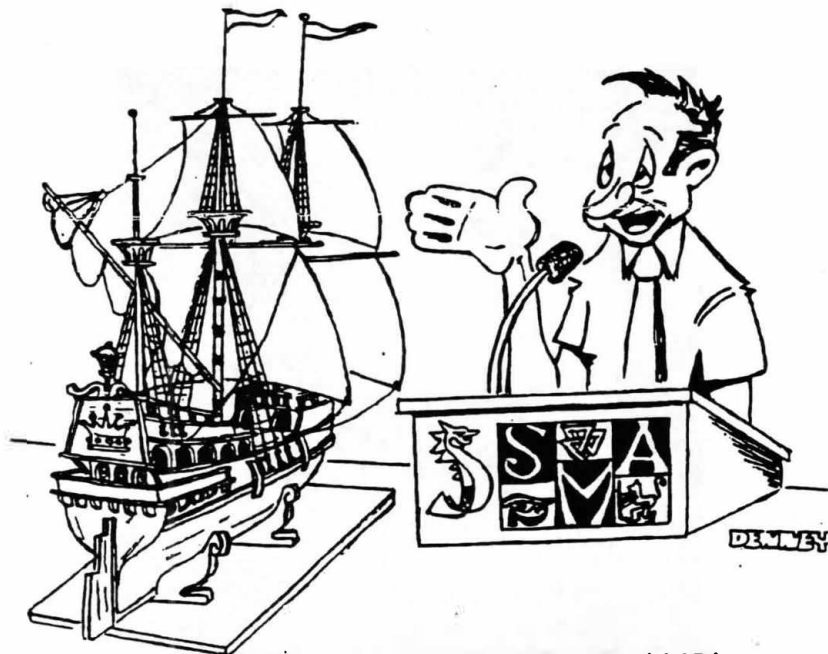
So I unplugged and discarded that painted-wooden deckhouse, and made a replacement with .010" white styrene veneer on the outer surfaces, and a .040" styrene roof/deck. It is slightly crowned, and epoxy glue failed to adhere to the styrene sufficiently to hold the curve. Testor's Cement for Plastic Models glue for plastics did the job

The big remaining operation for this ship is the hatches, masts, booms and winches of the two shelter decks on either side of the center island. One problem is already solved, thanks to a wise Guild member. The winches widely used on Liberty ships, he informed me, were like those on Hog Islanders. I've already bought eight Liberty 1/16-scale winches from Bluejacket.

As for simulating the masts, booms, and the rigging running along them to the drums of the winches, I will be counting on getting a lot of good advice. And I know where to get it. But don't ask me for it. I'm still a modeler of very modest skills and knowledge. My only advice is to get good advice.



WOLVERINE'S  
FLYING BRIDGES



AND TO MAKE THE SAILS STIFF, I SOAKED THEM IN VIAGRA..

From the Ship Modelers Association newsletter

## Oct. 17 Berkeley Centennial Will Honor Year 1898; Guild to Have Booth and Provide Information

Plans for the *Berkeley* Centennial Celebration on Saturday, Oct. 17 are shaping up rapidly, says Bob Crawford, curator of the *Berkeley* models. The theme goes beyond the career of the venerable ferry: it covers the year 1898 as a historical whole.

The Guild will have a major role, both in providing a booth on the *Berkeley* and in volunteering to serve in passing out information and answering questions about the *Berkeley's* models. In a half-hour ceremony the night before, Joe Bompensierro's superb model of the ferry will be unveiled, and Bob -- aided by a slide show -- will describe the research and construction work that went into the model.

Many municipal organizations will participate in honoring the ferry as a San Diego landmark (if a ship can be a landmark). They include the police and fire departments, the San Diego Historical Society, the Balboa Park Railroad Museum, and others.

On Oct. 24 Bob will fly to Newark to assume direction of the Nautical Research Guild's 1999 Conference and Exhibition, to be held here on November 4-7 of next year, a major event for San Diego and the ship-modeling world.

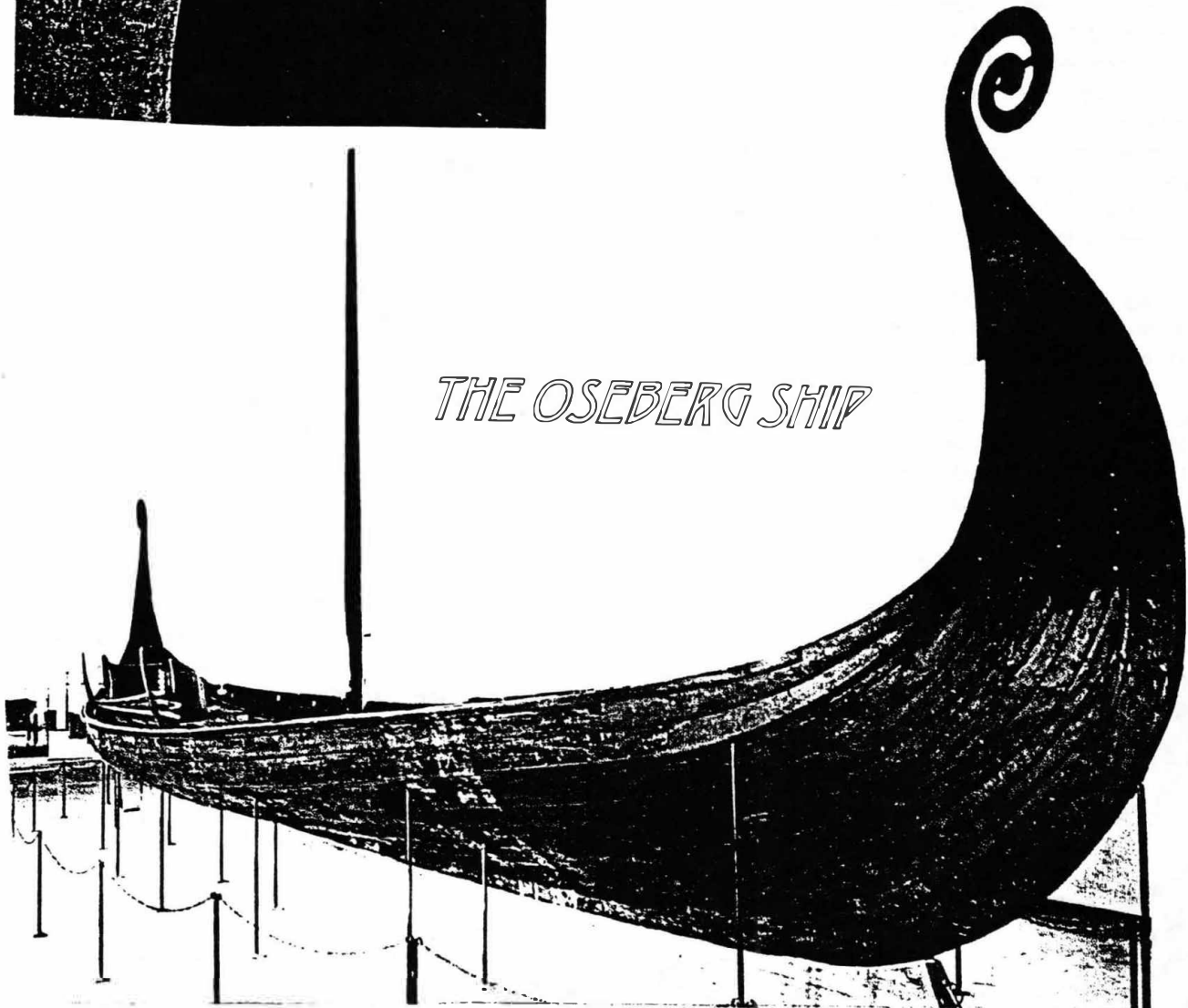
In preparation for his departure, he wants to hold a meeting with the heads of local N.R.G. committees on the *Berkeley* on the evening of Oct. 21, a week after the Guild's October meeting.



## FROM THE WORLD OF VIKING SHIPS

Building models of Viking ships has long appealed to certain modelers – most notably, in the San Diego Guild, Lewis E. Johnson. A recent visitor to Norway's University Collection of National Antiquities gave the Newsletter a copy of the collection's "Guide for The Viking Ships," from which these pictures were taken.

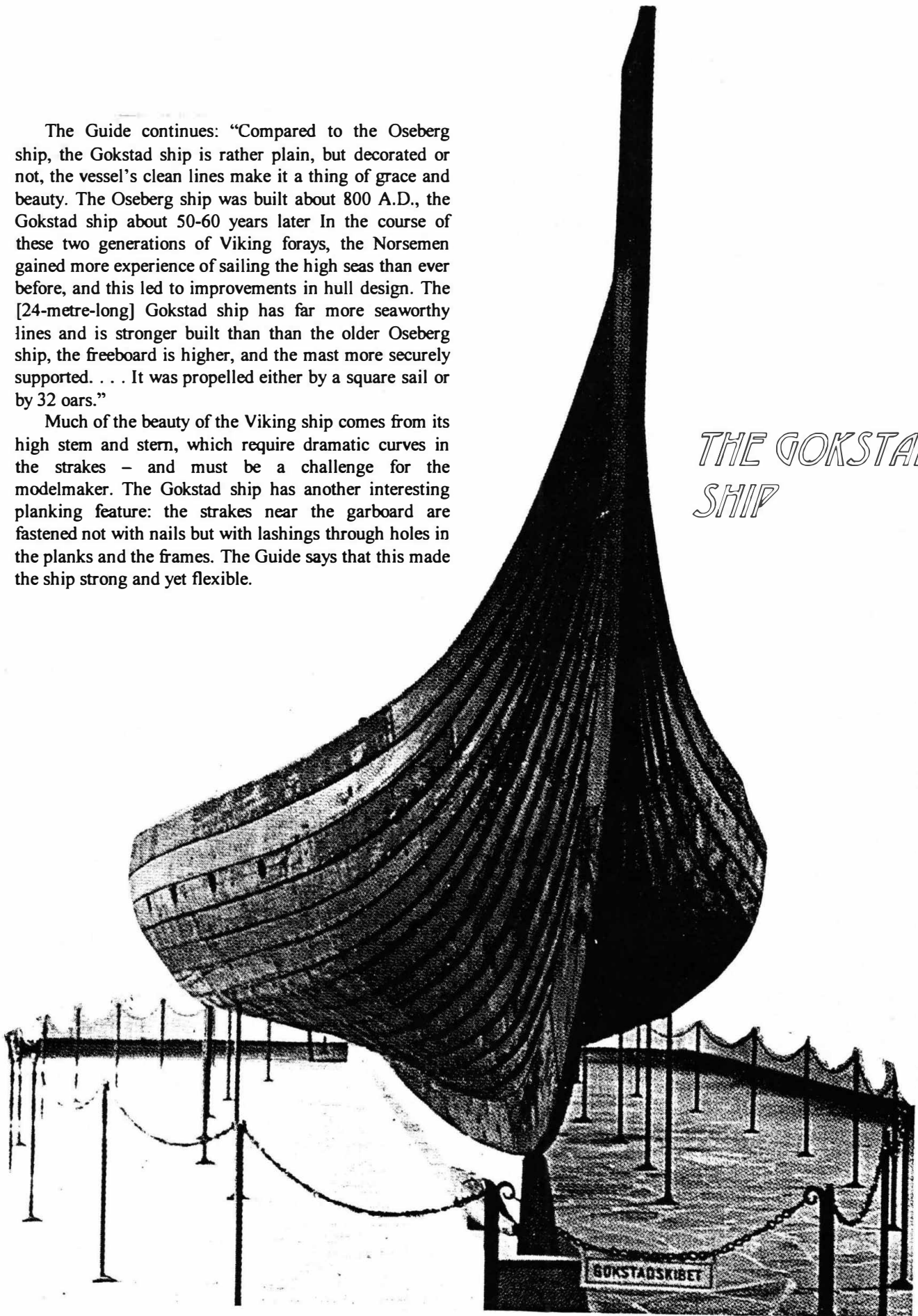
Says the Guide: "The Oseberg ship, excavated [near that city] in 1904, is by far the richest [of the collection's finds]. The blue clay of the subsoil and the airtight burial mound have preserved wood, leather and fabrics remarkably well, despite the lapse of more than 1000 years. The ship . . . is about 22 m (75 ft) long. Built entirely of oak, it has a frieze of animals carved on the stern and stem posts." The animal-head carving at left is from the Oseberg ship.



The Guide continues: "Compared to the Oseberg ship, the Gokstad ship is rather plain, but decorated or not, the vessel's clean lines make it a thing of grace and beauty. The Oseberg ship was built about 800 A.D., the Gokstad ship about 50-60 years later. In the course of these two generations of Viking forays, the Norsemen gained more experience of sailing the high seas than ever before, and this led to improvements in hull design. The [24-metre-long] Gokstad ship has far more seaworthy lines and is stronger built than the older Oseberg ship, the freeboard is higher, and the mast more securely supported. . . . It was propelled either by a square sail or by 32 oars."

Much of the beauty of the Viking ship comes from its high stem and stern, which require dramatic curves in the strakes – and must be a challenge for the modelmaker. The Gokstad ship has another interesting planking feature: the strakes near the garboard are fastened not with nails but with lashings through holes in the planks and the frames. The Guide says that this made the ship strong and yet flexible.

## THE GOKSTAD SHIP



## San Diego Ship Modelers Guild – Membership Roster on August 15, 1998

Name	City	Sta	Zip	Phone	Spouse	M
Ernest J Andrew	San Diego	CA	92116		Jean	
Gaetano J Avila	San Diego	CA	92126		Elizabeth	N
Jim Balestreri	San Jn Capistrano	CA	92675		Masisie	N
Joe Beauchemin	Santee	CA	92071		Karina	
Ronald Bluhm	El Cajon	CA	92021		Eyra	
Krystof Bodzon	San Diego	CA	92131		Agnieszka	N
Don Bowes	San Diego	CA	92128		Elayne	N
Win L Brown	El Cajon	CA	92020		Lorraine	
Walter E Cagle	Chula Vista	CA	91910		Kathlyn	
Mike Davis	Poway	CA	92064		Sue	
John De Friest	San Diego	CA	92124		Mary	
Kenneth C Edwards	San Diego	CA	92117		Jo Ann	
Gary A Emery	San Diego	CA	92128			
James Evans	La Mesa	CA	92142		Karen	
William J Flemming	Beverly	MA	01915		Aurora	
William H Forbis	Big Arm	MT	59910		Margy	
Fred Fraas	San Diego	CA	92119		Shirley	
Jeffrey Fritz	San Diego	CA	92108		Judy	
William A Furniss	Mission Viejo	CA	92691		Betty	
Icela Gonzalez	San Diego	CA	92105			N
Albert Grimes	Cordes Lakes, Mayer	AZ	86333		Jackie	
Randall Hall	Vista	CA	92083		Donna Lyn	
Robert J Hallbach	El Cajon	CA	92020		Edith	
James D Hammond Sr	Carlsbad	CA	92008		Stephanie	N
Jerry E Hazlett	Henderson	NV	89015		Arloa	
Robert T Hewitt	San Diego	CA	92102			
Devin G Hughey	San Diego	CA	92139			
Evan B Hull	Rancho Bernado	CA	92128		Virginia	
Bruce R Jamieson	Bonita	CA	91902		Cathy	
Lewis E Johnson	San Diego	CA	92120		Helen	
Gordon Jones	San Diego	CA	92111		Betty	
Jacki Jones	San Diego	CA	92109		Terry	
Achim Von Kapff	Bonita	CA	91902		Pauline	
Paul King	El Cajon	CA	92019		Marypaull	
Jack Klein	San Diego	CA	92119		Jackie	
W R Kocar	San Diego	CA	92109		Vikki	
Frank D Lee	St Louis	MO	63116			
Phillip T Mattson	La Jolla	CA	92037		Helen	



# “We Had a Good One”

*Continued from P. 1*

1799 frigate *U.S.S. Essex*, and has rigged two. Robert provided an interesting and very descriptive summary of his Arabian dhow (see page 3).

Since we had so many new members at the meeting, we next held a “round the table” introduction of each other. It was then suggested that we wear name tags to assist newer members in learning who’s who. Instead of permanent tags which each member buys, we could use plastic clip-ons and place them in a container at the end of each meeting. Not a bad idea. No one could use the “I forgot and left it at home excuse.” And we’d get to know each other more easily. How about it, guys – and gals?

Peggy  
Hedi

Donna  
Treva

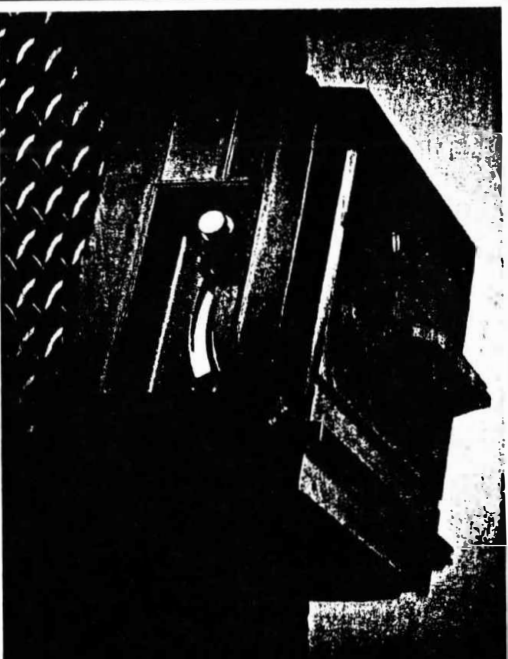
Joyce  
June  
Ellen

Kay  
Lauretta  
Ruth  
Joyce

San Diego	CA	92128
Bonita	CA	91902
San Clemente	CA	92672
Poway	CA	92064
Benson	AZ	85602
Poway	CA	92064
Santee	CA	92071
Poway	CA	92064
Coronado	CA	92118
Escondido	CA	92027
Del Mar	CA	92014
San Diego	CA	92111
San Diego	CA	92109
La Jolla	CA	92037
San Diego	CA	92120
San Diego	CA	92119
Wellfleet	MA	02667
Carlsbad	CA	92008
San Diego	CA	92128
San Diego	CA	92117

Chuck McGohey  
Robert McPhail  
Hans G Merten  
Mathew Moranville  
Roy T Nilson  
Robert E O'Brien  
Royce Privett  
Calvin D Raymond  
Duane J Richwine  
Brian Rowe  
Nicholas Bugen  
Charles E Seiler  
Thomas L Taylor  
Henry S Wenc  
Edmund F White  
Bob Wright  
Capt Reuben R Baker  
Dennis Reed  
Bunny Benson  
Anne Merrill

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TILTING ARBOR TABLE SAW**  
Give away your old, underpowered saw and trade up  
to the best hobby-size table saw ever made!



The new MicroLux is more powerful, more accurate, and smoother running than any other saw its size. And because it's the world's first variable speed table saw, it will cut metal and plastic, as well as wood. This is, without a doubt, the most feature-packed machine ever designed for the scale modeler. Includes a self-aligning rip fence, calibrated miter gauge, blade guard and an 80 tooth fine cut blade for balsa and basswood up to 1" thick, hardwood up to 1/4" thick (hardwood up to 1" with optional carbide blade). Blade dia. 3 3/8" with 10mm hole. If you care about precision and are serious about producing quality work, don't delay. Order your MicroLux saw today.

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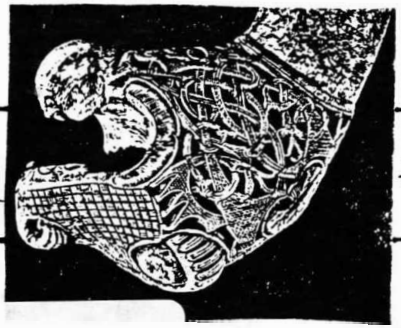
*The Show*



*Robert Hewitt's  
Fascinating  
Essay on*

**P. 3**

**VIKING SHIPS**



**P. 6**

Fred Fraas  
/redacted/

98

# New Members Issue

San Diego Ship Modelers Guild  
c/o Maritime Museum Association of San Diego  
1306 North Harbor Drive  
San Diego CA 92101

## SAN DIEGO SHIP MODELERS GUILD

### Officers for 1998

Guild Master	K.C. Edwards	/redacted/
First Mate	Doug McFarland	/redacted/
Purser	Ed White	/redacted/
Log Keeper	Open	
Newsletter Editor	Bill Forbis	/redacted/

*Founded in 1971 by Bob Wright and the late Russ Merrill*

#### SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Meetings	Second Wednesday of every month. 7 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. meeting. Held on board the ferryboat Berkeley
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 1).

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