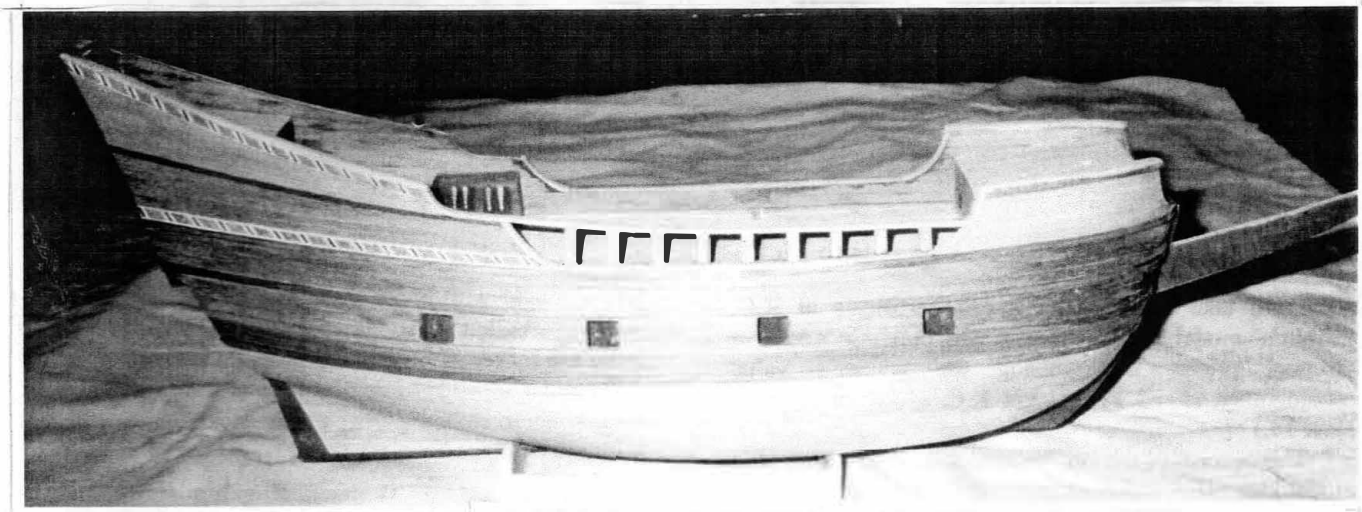
San Diego Ship Modelers' Guild

1306 N. Harbor Drive San Diego, CA 92101

DECEMBER 2000 NEWSLETTER Volume 24, No. 12



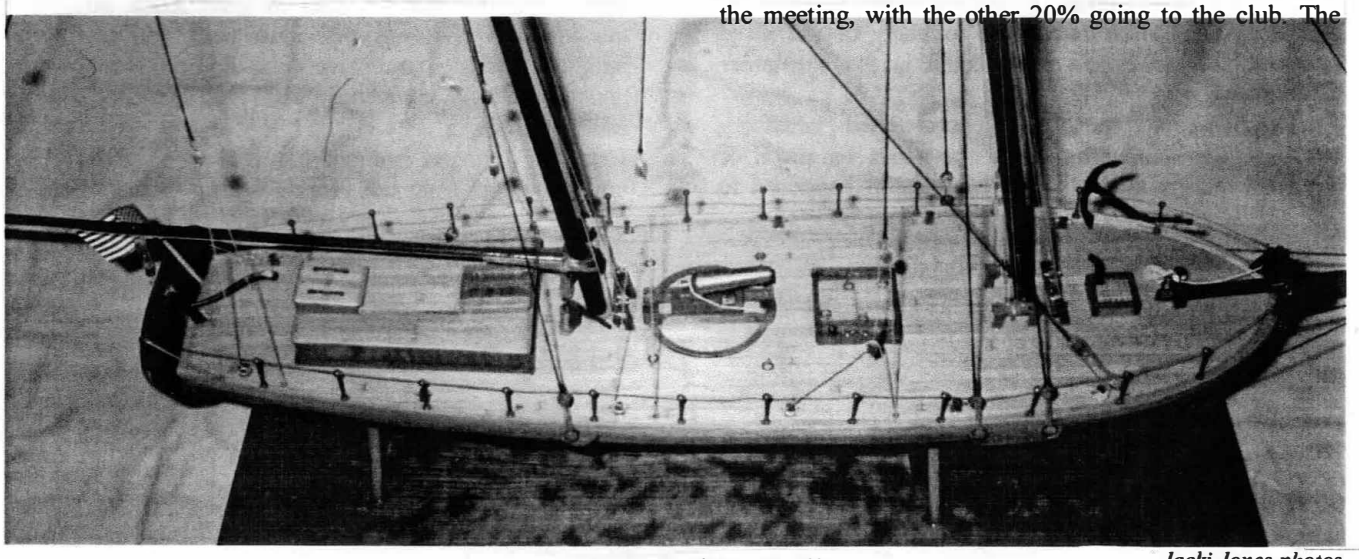
Nick Rugen's *Half Moon*

The November Meeting: A Feast of Companionship

On November 8, 2000, San Diego Ship Modelers Guild members filled every one of the chairs that are set up each month around four long tables forming a rectangle on the upper deck of the historic ferryboat *Berkeley*. Two hours later, they had been treated to a feast of companionship, sea talk, shop tips, humor, expertise and information. The men and women of the San Diego Ship Modelers Guild are people of good brains and nice personalities---**Bill Luther** and **Gary Emery**, just to name a couple of examples who contributed thoughtfully to the discourse at the meeting They are well worth joining every second Wednesday of the month.

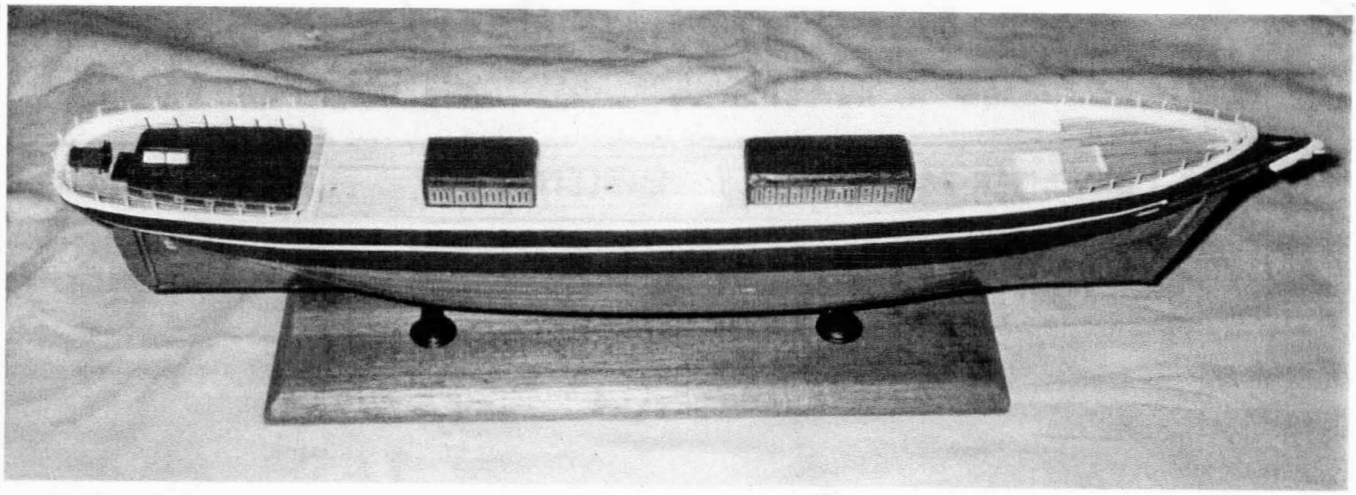
Purser **Bob McPhail** reported that $|redacted| remained in the treasury from the previous month, and noted that dues of $20 should be brought to the January meeting although it will be a pleasant surprise if you to pay them earlier. Staying on the subject of money, Guildmaster **Jacki Jones** turned the discussion to a couple of other ways to fatten the treasury: raffles and auctions.

By a show of hands, the guild scheduled a raffle for the meeting on Dec. 13 and an auction for the meeting on Jan. 10. The raffle prize will be dollars---80% of a sum to be raised from tickets sold for a dollar at the beginning of the meeting, with the other 20% going to the club. The



Howie Franklin's *Dallas*

Jacki Jones photos



Bob McPhail's *Cutty Sark*

80% will take the form of a gift certificate at K.C. Edwards' model shop, where it will purchase goods at discount prices, thus raising the winner's value considerably. (**Fred Fraas** got K.C.'s confirmation on Nov. 17.)

The concept of the auction is that members have ship model kits, plans and parts, plus other materials and tools which they no longer need but which other members may ardently desire to bid for in an auction. Buyer and seller both benefit. **Robert Hewitt** offered to handle this project and for starters asked for volunteers to phone every member just before the January meeting and remind them to bring their unwanted but valuable items as donations to the Guild to be sold at auction. This will be considered in more detail at the December meeting. For example, should the seller of a high ticket item of, say, more than $100 be able to donate a fourth, a third or a half to the treasury?

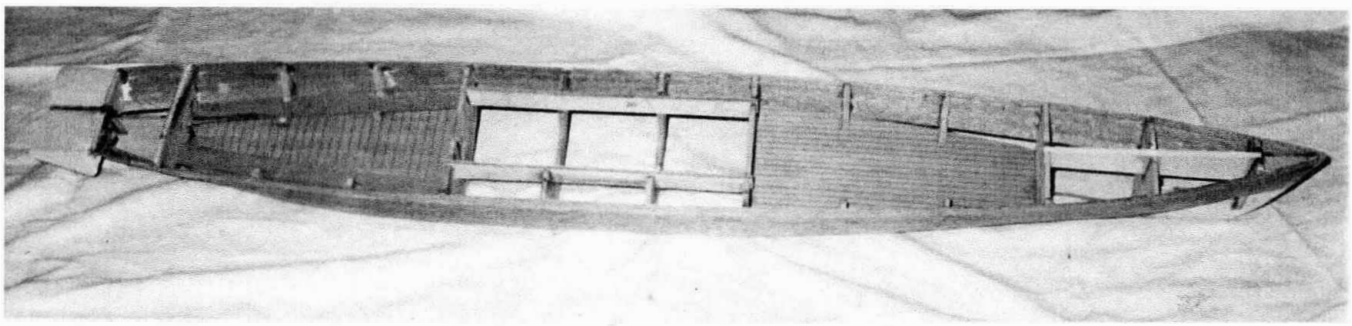
As he promised to do in the November Newsletter, Fred Fraas brought copies of the interesting new "Model Ship Journal," published in Bellingham, Wash. He also displayed the long and detailed model-parts catalog, advertised in the Journal, of Pacific Front Hobbies of Roseburg, Oregon, a new name to many of us. (Fred discussed this subject in more detail in the November Newsletter.)

Pacific Front's specialty is photo-etched "accessory kits"---all the small brass parts one needs for naval or merchant marine models. John McDermott happened to have brought with him a great assortment of tiny photo-etched parts that he bought from Gold Medal Models to build the U.S.S, *Arizona.* This stress on photo-etching led Bill Luther to offer to demonstrate at a meeting how he makes photo-etched parts, which Jacki Jones accepted with alacrity.

Show & Tell **Nick Rugan**'s *Half Moon* is about half finished, and she provoked a lively discussion. The real ship, of course, was the vessel Henry Hudson sailed on his third voyage attempting to find a passage to China in 1609. Ice stopped him when he went north up the east coast of Greenland, looking for a Northeast Passage. So he doggedly turned west to Virginia and, looking for a Northwest Passage, found and went up the river now named Hudson. (On his fourth voyage, aboard *Discovery,* he reached Hudson Bay, but his crew mutinied, left him in an open boat, and he was never heard from again.)

The model, built plank-on-bulkhead from a Model Expo kit with black walnut lumber, has eight gun ports. Nick isn't sure why---*Half Moon* wasn't a fighting ship. Hewitt wanted to know how Nick, with the deck planking already laid, planned to install the guns. Ahah, said Nick, the guns have pins on their inner ends, and an interior bulkhead is drilled to receive them. So he'll just poke the guns in through the ports. "Oh," said Hewitt, "dummy cannons."

Lew Johnson brought his *Whitehall* rowboat, not much changed from last month, when it was pictured in



Ernie Andrew's *Hjejlen*

the Newsletter.

Howie Franklin, a custom scale model builder who works out of Gilford, Ontario, Canada and Coronado CA, showed his *Dallas,* an 1815 Coast Guard cutter, "a revenue boat that was used to chase bad guys," says Howie. "It was fast and shallow and worked up and down the East Coast."

The model was built plank-on-frame from a kit made in Spain and purchased in Ontario a year ago. It is for sale, Howie emphasizes.

Bob McPhail has constructed the solid hull of an extremely neat *Cutty Sark* "approximately on the 1:160 scale---'N' scale in model railroading," he says. "I plan to purchase 'N' scale parts and people figures to detail the model."

The kit came from Scientific Models. Bob used copper tape for the bottom sheathing.

Cutty Sark, as everybody knows, was one of the most famous of China tea clippers. She can still be visited at Greenwich, just down the Thames from London.

Amplifying his fame for really tiny miniatures, **Robert Hewitt** showed no less than three of them.

One, still in its box, was a kit for a Civil War gunboat that he bought for $20 while back east recently. All that's needed to complete it is to glue several parts together and paint it.

Another in the 1:240 range was his second *Sultana*--- the first being a birthday present that he gave to his son Garth. She was built using Hewitt's customary inventive choices of materials. Basswood served for the hull and carved sea around it. The sails and the deck are rice paper, and the masts and spars are bamboo. She's rigged with brass wire, linen and fly tyne, a kind of fish line.

The third and most fascinating little ship was an approximately 1:200 (2½" long) third-rate frigate that Hewitt has been commissioned to repair. The model, enclosed in a bell jar, dates back to 1805.

She is built of boxwood, *including the sails,* carved thin as paper. The pinhead-size muzzles of 70 guns, more or less, peep out through gun ports. Among the repair jobs awaiting Hewitt are re-attaching the spanker to the mizzenmast and replacing a broken bowsprit.

Jacki Jones, who bought a kit and was astonished to find that all it contained was "a bunch if wood," has turned it into the hull of another *Sultana,* which makes three mentioned in this report. She teamed up with her father, **Jim Dick.** in a clean and tidy job, and now she is turning to the rigging.

With help from **Jack Klein,** she thought up a clever way to space deadeyes: she uses staples (like those that hold together the pages of this newsletter) to connect through corresponding lanyard holes the upper and lower deadeyes while the shroud is being rigged. That led Hewitt to question whether deadeyes at the bottom of shrouds have to be strictly lined up, as the instructions require. On a real ship, he said, the deadeyes would position themselves wherever the lanyards pulled them.

In Victoria, B.C. about 15 years ago, **Ernie Andrew** bought a Billings kit for a Danish tour ship called *Hjejlen* (pronounced *Illian*).

Built in 1861, this ship, the country's oldest steamship, is docked in Silkeborg and takes passengers on pleasure cruises of the Guden estuary there. In function, she somewhat resembles our *Medea,* though in size (84'4½" long, 12'4" wide) she is smaller than *Medea* (134' long and 17' wide). The scale of the model is ¼"=1', making it 31½" long and 4½" wide

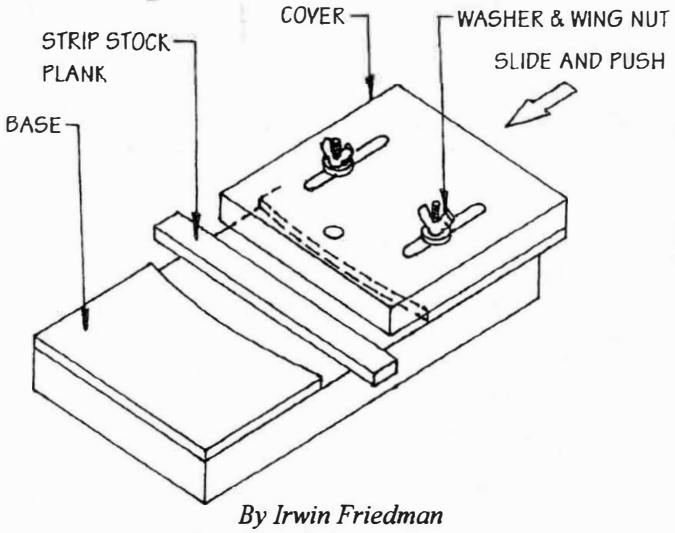
Ernie constructed the model to the point of partially planking it, but set it aside about 7 years ago. He brought it to the meeting disgusted at the peeling plywood planking, but still determined to finish it.

As part of that job, Ernie, who is known for his tiny engines and music organs, wants to build operating steam engines for the model---to "try and live-steam it," as he says. *Hjejlen* is propelled by two sidewheels, with a 50-HP engine for each.

The engines are of the "oscillating" type, in which a vertical cylinder with a rigid piston rod connected directly to the crank rocks from side to side as the crankshaft turns. Ernie lacks plans for the engine, but Lew Johnson and Jacki Jones, who have Scandinavian links, promised to help him find them.

From the SMA newsletter

A Strip Stock Bending Fixture



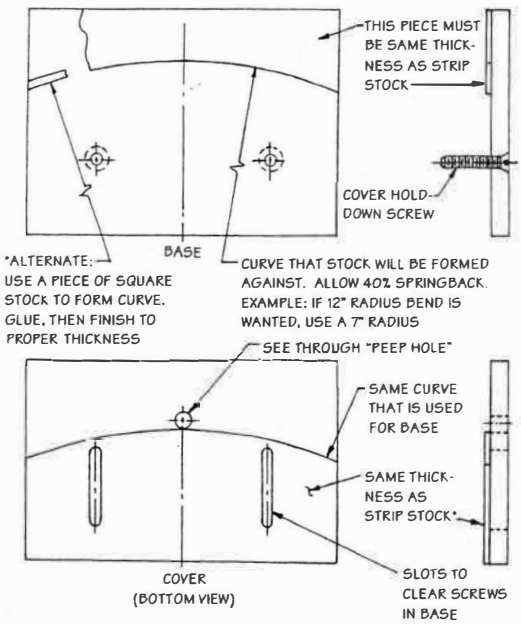
By Irwin Friedman
of the Ship Modelers Association

The fixture described here should offer help in bending and shaping timber of the size typically used for planking and decking.

Very often we would like to bend the plank in its wider dimension, but are then faced with the problem of buckling. This fixture will bend the plank without buckling and hold everything in place until your favorite wood softener has had time to dry. Here are the steps:

1. Condition plank with your favorite softener.
2. Lay plank in fixture.
3. Slide cover over plank, then push to form.
4. Tighten wing nuts.
5. Let dry.
6. Remove plank.

STRIP STOCK BENDING FIXTURE DETAILS

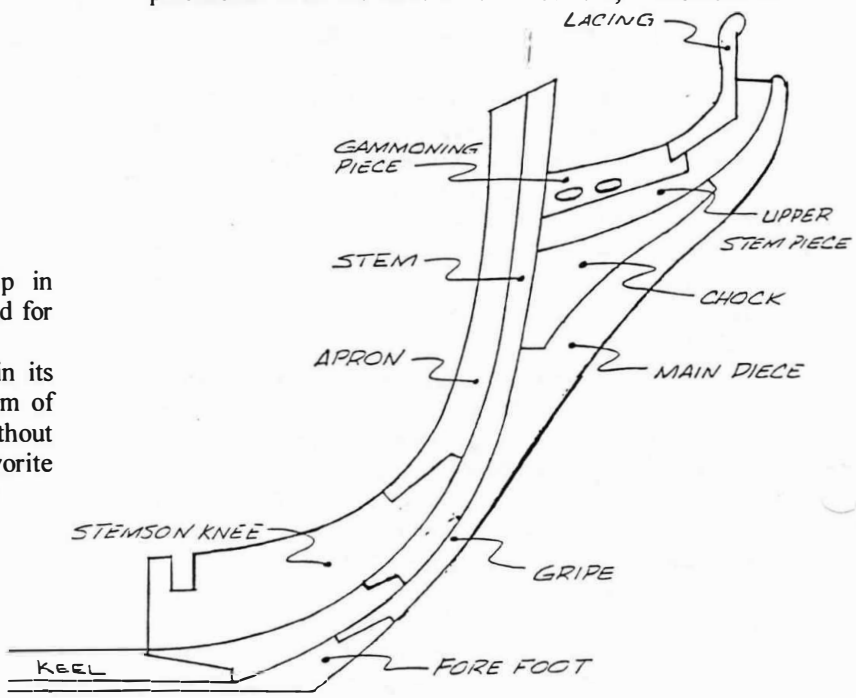


Piecing Stems & Sterns Together

By Tom Council
of the Ventura County Maritime Museum Model Guild News

During construction of the stem and stern of my 3/16" to l'-0" model of the Hancock frigate, I ran into that age-old problem of showing a built-up stem and stern assembly of many individual pieces. My plans were originally drawn in 1/8" scale and no detail was provided except the external shape of one piece of wood.

With the help of a little research and some friendly persuasion of an old hand modeler builder, I was able to lay out the individual pieces that make up this feature. I ran copies of the layout to the number of parts in each assembly. For example, there are 10 shapes in the stem and you will need 10 copies.



My next problem was how to keep the cut surfaces dead square. If you are anything like me, you will wind up with everything but square if you try to free-hand sand the edges. To get around this minor ergonomic dysfunction, I turned to my trusty band saw and spindle sander, which give you square cuts no matter how klutzy you are.

The next challenge was how can you cut all those weird shapes and end up anywhere close to the final assembled outline and still have tight joints? The final answer for me was fairly simple.

First pick the most complicated shape, which for me was the "main piece." Glue a paper pattern to your blank with the grain as parallel as possible, and cut and sand to the lines. Pick the next mating piece, "chock" and cut to pattern leaving a generous amount of excess on the

outside edges. Fit the mating edge of the chock to the main piece until you have a tight joint and edge-glue them together.

Rubber-cement another pattern of both pieces, aligning the finished edges, and cut/sand to the new outside pattern. Continue adding more mating pieces, always correcting the outer edges until the assembly is complete.

You will find that this method allows minor variations at any one mating edge for fitting the joints but always brings the outside shape back to the pattern at each step. While many of you more experienced modelers have probably used this technique or variations, I hope this will simplify the process for those of you who are building their first large-scale scratch-built model.

Hand-Powered Thickness Planer

The drawings at right show a device that can cut planking, rails, square stanchions, keels and stems, deckhouse trim and many other model parts down to the desired thickness with plus or minus .005" accuracy.

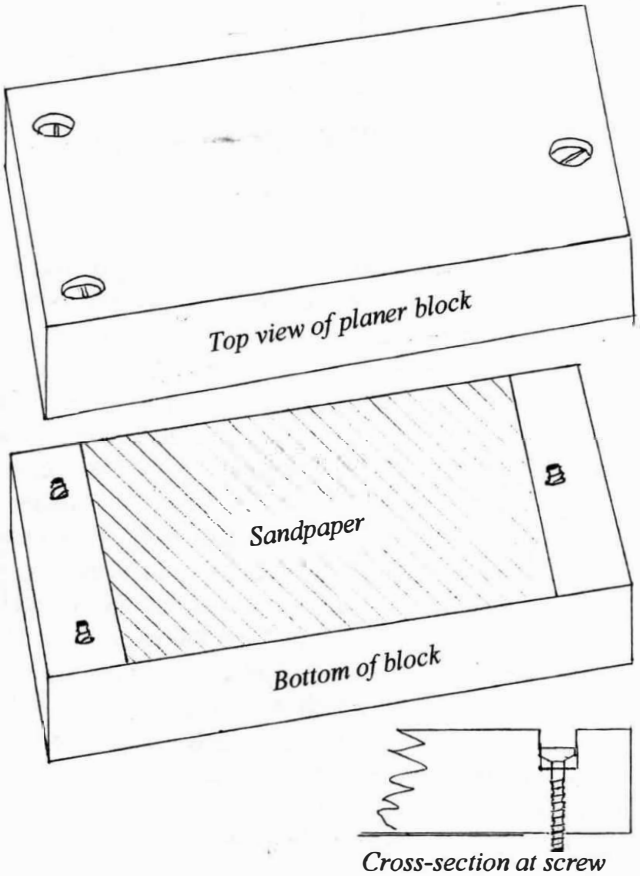
The cutting material is sandpaper fastened with double-sided carpet tape to the bottom of a block around 5" long and 2" wide, with three screws installed as shown. The tips of the screws glide on a perfectly flat surface such as a power saw table. They hold the sandpaper block over this surface at whatever distance you choose by turning the screws.

You'll want to grind the points of the screws flat, to avoid damage to the saw table or other surface. The sandpaper can be #100 or #150 grit, aluminum oxide or garnet.

With a power saw, cut the lumber to a thickness about 1/64" or 1/32" more than what your plans call for. Place the resulting workpiece on the saw table, securing it by hand for long pieces or with double-sided tape for short ones (such as the bow stem parts shown on the opposite page).

Center the thickness sander over the workpiece with screw-points on both sides of it. Slide the sander back and forth until it takes off enough wood to let the screw-ends sit solidly on the saw table. When the sandpaper ceases to produce dust, the job is done.

To determine the protrusion of the screws through the block (and to make sure that they protrude equally), eyeball them against a steel rule graduated to sixty-fourths, and then adjust them to exactly the thickness you want by "sneaking up" to it using scrap wood.



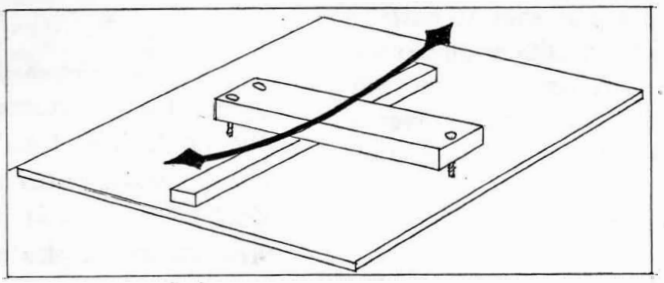
Cross-section at screw

You can also countersink the screw-heads, as the drawings show, and measure the distance from the top of the block to the point of the screw with a micrometer, subtracting the block-and-sandpaper thickness to figure the exact protrusion.

With the micrometer, you can also calculate how far the screws advance or retract in one turn, and use this information to set an exact thickness for the workpiece. On a #8 wood screw, for example, this distance is just about .080". Thus a half turn is .040", a quarter turn .020", an eighth turn .010", and a sixteenth turn .005" — the thickness of a page of this newsletter.

A thought about the math of this gadget: It works on the high-school-geometry principle that three points (in this case, the screw-tips) determine a plane. If you added a fourth screw, the block could rock like a chair with uneven legs.

—Bill Forbis



The thickness planer in action.

How the Images for the Newsletter Are Created

By Jacki Jones

At the last meeting **Lew Johnson** expressed an interest in learning how we create the pictures which appear in the newsletter. The editorial staff use all manner of tools from hammers and glue to digital technology to get the newsletter off to you readers every month. The big ticket items used are (1) a 35mm camera, (2) a computer with the photo processing software Adobe PhotoShop, (3) a scanner and (4) a printer with 1400 dpi capability. When we get our color photos developed we ask for the 4 x 6 inch pictures which I then scan in the RGB color mode at a resolution of 400. Thus the photo with all of its various details and colors becomes a "file" of digital information, which the computer then can recognize as a graphic image which is displayed on my computer monitor. The first thing I do with the new "file" is to save it as a backup file on the computer's hardrive and then I create a duplicate file which I open with the PhotoShop software. Anything you see in the newsletter in color is custom produced off of my ink jet printer, such as the address page. For the images which will be ultimately photocopied, I delete all of the color information by selecting the "grayscale" image mode. Next I crop the image to best show off the desired feature of the picture using the PhotoShop crop tool. The next step is to adjust the contrast and brightness settings until I like the look, and finally I set the image width size dimensions to 3.5 or 7 inches so that it will fit a single or double column width. To print the "file" I use Epson Photo Quality Ink Jet paper and print at the following settings:

Paper: photo quality glossy
Quality: 1400 dpi, microweave function on
Ink: Color

Interestingly, the picture comes out much clearer when I use the color setting even though it is a black and white picture!! I trim the finished figure with a paper cutter, then Bill uses a glue stick to paste it into the column. (even the Union Tribune employs a paste-up technique!) The final touch is that Bill discovered the new "Docu-tec" digital photocopier at the Office Depot. This gives a much crisper copy than the usual machines. All we need now is an electric stapler so Bill can quit using the hammer to staple shut the thicker issues.

Fred Fraas Remembers—

Several years ago I happened to be in the Norfolk, Va. area on a job assignment. I took advantage of the opportunity to visit the Mariners Museum in Newport News, about the finest in the country in my opinion. The models on display there are superb, almost overwhelming as many relate to ships built in nearby shipyards.

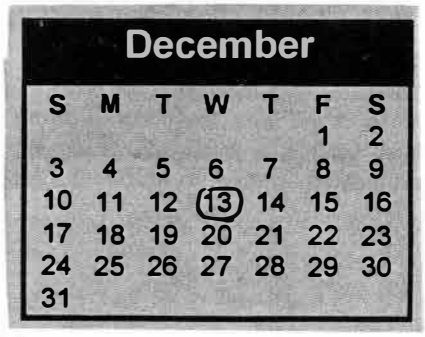
There was one particular display that stood out as different from any I'd ever seen in maritime museums. This was a series of some 16 dioramas each encased in a box-like display set into a wall. Each one depicted a scene describing a function of ship models, i.e., what they do.

Since I had already used nearly two rolls of film on other models and exhibits there, I did not want to photograph these 16 dioramas. So I grabbed a blank envelope from a reception desk nearly and simply wrote down the stated theme or subject which each diorama explained. They are listed below and I believe cover every possible reason and use of ship models.

SHIP MODELS:

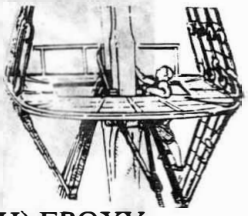
- **Give insight into the sailor's life**
- **Are functional**
- **Preserve a tradition**
- **Intrigue the viewer**
- **Combine art and ingenuity**
- **Document a ship's appearance**
- **Lessen the misery of captivity (POW model)**
- **Encourage travel**
- **Are used to train naval officers**
- **Help design a ship's hull**
- **Help organize a ship's construction**
- **Help test a design**
- **Present a design in three dimrensions**
- **Express precision**
- **Provide leisure-time enjoyment**
- **Challenge human dexterity**

On the Star!



Jack Klein announces that the next meeting of the Guild will take place Dec. 13 aboard the *Star of India,* either in the saloon or on the orlop deck, where **your models will look equally historic as we photograph them.**

THRU THE LUBBERS HOLE



REMOVING (UGH) EPOXY

By Robert Hewitt

Last month I received a call from Mr. Joseph Vallejo, the director of Vallejo Gallery in Newport Beach Ca. The Gallery, at 1610 West Coast Highway, has a large collection of marine art and antiques. Joseph also has a collection of ship models on display, including a number of miniatures in bone and ivory. The gallery is a sponsor of our Maritime Museum and has a full page color ad in the "Mains'l Haul". It is well worth a visit and is a pleasant drive up on highway # 1.

Joseph had just purchased a boxwood miniature of a third rate warship probably built around 1820 or so, that needed a few minor repairs. He asked me if I would like to take a look at it to see if I could repair the damage. The model was in a bell jar and had a broken bowsprit, a flying jib that was tangled in the foremast and a spanker sail that was broken in two and lodged in the traffrail. He asked if I wanted to remove the bell jar case and take a closer look at it, but I foolishly said no. We agreed on a price and I merrily drove home with the model.

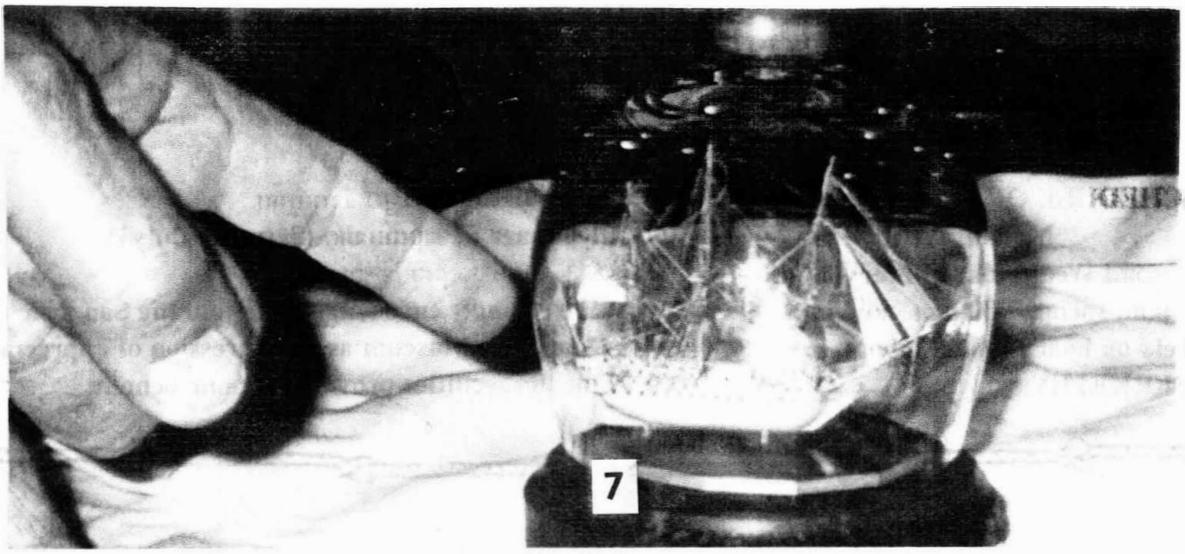
The next evening we had our guild meeting and I brought the model to show it. Jackie Jones took a picture as I pointed to the spanker to show the size of the model. The next day I removed the bell jar case and to my horror discovered that the spanker and boom were glued to the traffrail! I repaired the bowsprit and re-set the jib. I then tried to remove the spanker from the traffrail by soaking it with small dabs of water but it didn't budge. Someone had done a repair on it and thought that the spanker and boom were a flag and flagpole and glued it with epoxy! I called a number of model shops to find out if there was anything that I could use to remove the epoxy.

The only answers I received were "no" or, "cut it off."

I also tried acetone but that did not work, at least not the way I was doing it. Finally I went to San Diego Hardware and they did have a small 1-oz. bottle of epoxy remover that was in the $ 6.00 range. I read the instructions that said to use the product directly from the bottle to soak the glue. It also stated that the contents included acetone. I declined to purchase the remover and went home to try and give it another go.

This time I took a piece of paper towel, rolled it into a small ball, and dipped it into the acetone. Blotting the excess off on a piece of paper, I carefully laid the ball along the traffrail and let it soak in. After an hour or so, while holding the model on end, the boom came loose.

I then discovered that the sail portion of the spanker was glued to the stern carving. Using the same technique, I was able to remove the spanker and boom. The spanker was smeared with epoxy, as it had been broken in two pieces and re-glued. I laid the sail on my workbench and worked off the epoxy using the same method. After drying, I was able to re-glue the spanker and boom back to the proper position using white glue.



Some Nifty Shop Tips---pp.4-5

Robert Hewitt's Sultana (Actual Size)

San Diego Ship Modelers' Guild

1306 N. Harbor Drive San Diego CA 92101

SAN DIEGO SHIP MODELERS' GUILD

Officers for 2000

Guild Master	Jacki Jones	/redacted/
First Mate	K.C. Edwards	/redacted/
Purser	Bob McPhail	/redacted/
Newsletter Editors	Bill Forbis	/redacted/
	Fred Fraas	/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.

MEMBERSHIP

Dues are $20 annually ($10 after July1).

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