



# San Diego Ship Modelers' Guild

1306 N. Harbor Drive

San Diego, CA 92101

SEPTEMBER 2001

NEWSLETTER

Volume 25, No. 9



Fred Fraas and Frank Dengler discuss Frank's model of the guided missile armed destroyer *USS HENRY B. WILSON*.

## The August 2001 Meeting

# Railroaded!

## Guild to Help Build Museum's Forthcoming "Age of Steam Exhibit"

The August meeting of the San Diego Ship Modelers' Guild took place with 29 members aboard the Ferryboat *Berkeley* and opened with a visit and a plea for help from **Maggie Piatt**. Introduced to the guild by **Jack Klein**, Maggie is in charge of setting up the new "Age of Steam" exhibit at the Maritime Museum. A central part of the exhibit will be a detailed diorama which will represent an old time historical San Diego waterfront complete with an enormous log raft, steam powered vessels and a train (HO scale) to run out into the bay on a little pier. To create all of these features Maggie asked for the Guild's help.

As it turned out, **Ernie Andrew** had already created a working model of the exact type which was sought, the *Fantail Launch II* as well as a steam engine which Ernie most generously agreed to loan to the exhibit. **Robert Hewitt** offered to use his computer to help with the overall plan of the diorama and **Dick Camfield** just happened to have brought with him to the meeting an HO model steam

engine. Maggie was also interested in locating pictures of the lumber mill that processed the log rafts. Anyone else interested in getting involved is invited to get in touch with Maggie at the museum.

First Mate **KC Edwards** presided over the meeting as yours truly was busy taking the meeting notes. Visitor and prospective new member **Charles Cairns**, grew up on the East Coast, moved on to Eureka CA and now is here in San Diego. He enjoys modeling contemporary yachts. Modeler **John Conover** dropped in from Virginia and **Bob Reisner** showed up with a wooden model kit of the fishing schooner *Elsie* for sale.

**Jack Klein** thanked the San Diego Fair volunteers and noted that there were noticeably fewer visitors than last year (by 70,000). It has been decided that in the future, it will be necessary to work at least two full days to qualify for the *Medea* luncheon cruise.

**Chuck Seiler** mentioned that he had enjoyed working in the masterpieces in miniature exhibit. He also announced that **Doug McFarland**, a previous guild member, was moving to Idaho. Also in the "whatever happened to" category is **Gordy Jones** who shipped out to Hawaii, leaving us a few choice books for the evening's auction.

**Don Bienvenue** thanked **Bill Luther** for arranging the grand field trip to San Pedro on August 4th which was a smashing success. The participants enjoyed an all day adventure viewing the brigantines under construction, the Los Angeles Maritime Museum (which is primarily a model museum) and the Old Ironsides ship model shop.

The newsletter and its production then became a topic of lively discussion. **Jack Klein** mentioned that it is really great to read an account of a meeting which one has been unable to attend. Thus the logkeeping is a pivotal task in keeping everyone informed. Many members are already offering regular columns, frequent stories, shop tips, interesting news clippings and the other content which makes the newsletter so diverse and interesting.

One radical idea brought up by **Hans Merten** was to abandon the newsletter altogether and just publish a website. After some discussion and the realization that the majority of the members are not online, this idea was determined to be unsuitable at this time but possible in the future.

A helpful idea by CDR **Frank Dengler** was that the members who are participating in the show and tell could present the editor with a digital file on their model, thus eliminating the need to transcribe the hand written notes. This seems to be a very feasible idea for the computer oriented members. Frank produced an informative floppy disk (albeit in PC format yet read beautifully on my Mac)) outlining the details of his model of the USS *Henry B. Wilson*. Such digitized information can also be e-mailed to biochick@pacbell.net.

With the "changing of the guard" we are faced with the challenge of maintaining the precedent for high quality established by **Bill Forbis** and **Fred Fraas**. There are several tasks involved in creating the newsletter and our Guild members proved the motto "divide and conquer" will enable us to continue the tradition. Stepping up to the plate for assistance in proof-reading of content (and spelling and grammar) are **Bill Luther**, **Chuck Seiler** and **Robert Hewitt**. Also pitching in is **Bob Wright** who will be folding, stapling, labeling, affixing postage and mailing.

The four other main newsletter tasks are;

- (1) Production (lay out and organization),
- (2) Photography and preparation of images
- (3) Reporting and writing up this thing you are reading right now (it is good to have a computer for this job).

(4) Overseeing the reproduction by Docutech technology (i.e. dropping off the original for fancy photocopying and then delivering them to the Bob Wright) Anyone interested in any of these tasks can join the team and earn museum hours.

After the coffee break, **Bob McPhail** auctioned off four books donated by **Gordy Jones**, one of which was entirely in Italian (but it had lots of pictures).

### Show and Tell

**KC Edwards** showed off a lovely new kit of the Eastern Mediterranean fishing boat, available in his shop, which was manufactured by Rota in Turkey. Just to make things more challenging the instructions are all in Turkish, which got every one chuckling. Luckily the photos and diagrams of the 1/16" scale vessel are very clear. KC says "get one while they're hot". One nice thing is that the model comes in a tidy little wooden box.

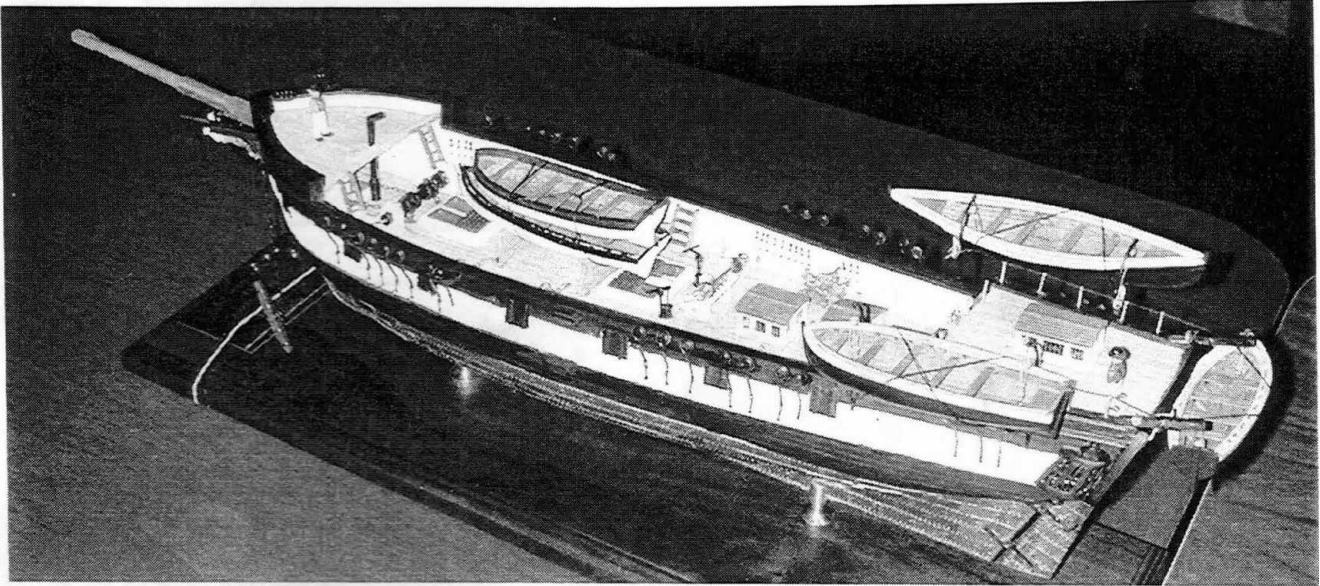
**Hans Merten** did a very scientific study of various woods found in his own yard for the purpose of finding a good wood for carving figures for his frigate *Berlin*. The surprising results are described in his article on page 10 in this issue. Samples of the "mystery wood" were offered to the meeting attendees. Hint, don't make toothpicks out of it.

On his second visit **Frank Schaffner** brought his solid hull 7/32" scale *Beagle*. He also mentioned that it was built in 1825 and served into the 1860's. In addition to the *Beagle's* famed 1832 voyage with Charles Darwin this ship boasted five officers who eventually became admirals. Fred used the "Anatomy of Ships" as a reference for building this model which, incidentally, he has coppered. He noted that it was a Brig converted to a Bark which lead to an interesting discussion about the differences between a Bark and a Brig with special attention to the differences in the sails utilized.

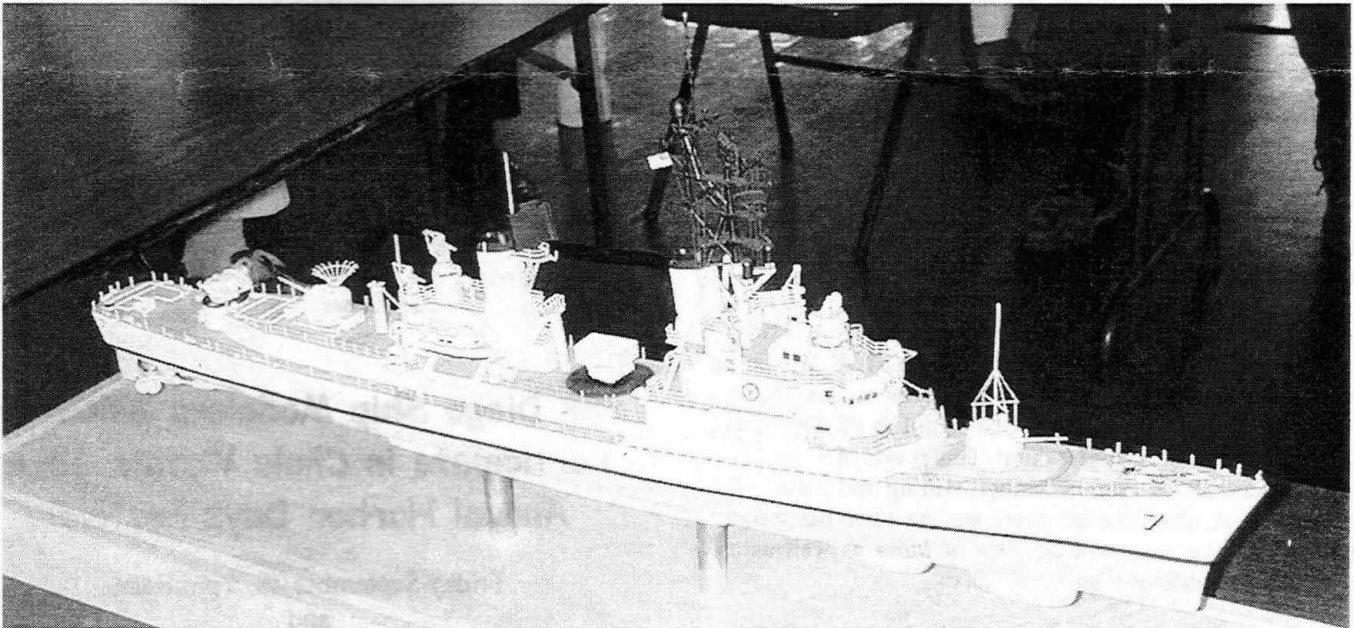
For further clarification, Bill Luther offers the following: "The discussion on the differences between a Bark and a Brig wasn't on the differences between the rigs per se. We all know that right? The Brig has 2 masts and is square rigged on both and the Bark has 3 masts, square rigged on the fore and main masts and fore and aft rigged on the mizzen. No, the discussion revolved around why a Bark can supposedly be handled by a smaller crew than a Brig, even though it has one more mast and one would think, with the fore and main masts being square rigged on both, the extra mast on the Bark would add at least one or two extra men. I think the reason for this apparent phenomenon is as follows; Assuming that both the Brig and the Bark carry about the same total sail area, the individual square sails on the bark will be smaller than those on the Brig and therefore fewer men will be required to go aloft to handle them, plus the number of men on deck to handle the braces and sheets, will be fewer. The fore

and aft sails on the Mizzen are very easily handled and in reality no extra men will be needed, so overall the Bark will need a smaller crew for sail handling. An additional reason Barks might carry a smaller crew, is most barks of

the *Beagle's* type usually carried just 3 square sails per mast, while a "Brig of War" would often carry 4 (or more) square sails per mast."



Fred Schaffner Brought in his solid hull model of the *Beagle*.



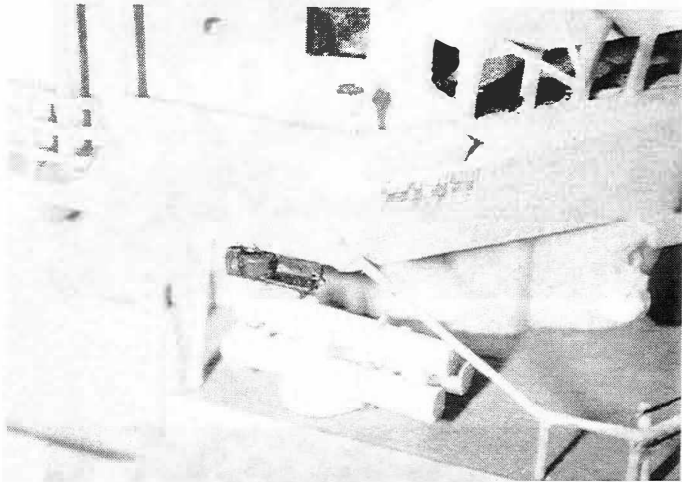
Frank Dengler's model of the *USS HENRY B. WILSON*.

A model by **CDR Frank Dengler**, USN (Ret) presents the CHARLES F. ADAMS (DDG 2) Class guided missile armed *destroyer* *USS HENRY B. WILSON* (DDG 7) as she appeared when Frank was her Executive Officer in 1980-82. The 1/16":1' scale model was based on a set of DDG-2 Class model plans refined by references to a U. S. Navy Booklet of General Plans for DDG-7 and photographs.

It is constructed largely from scrap wood with plastic and metal parts fitted as necessary. The hull was formed by inserting thin, glue coated, plywood nearly half-hull templates into slots cut almost to the centerline of a wood block then sanding the block down to the outer edges of the templates. The Destroyer Squadron 13 "Black Cat" insignias on each side of the model's superstructure and the campaign ribbons on the model's bridge wings were

developed by placing an embroidered DESRON 13 patch and naval uniform ribbons corresponding to those awarded the ship on a color copier and repeatedly shrinking the resulting images.

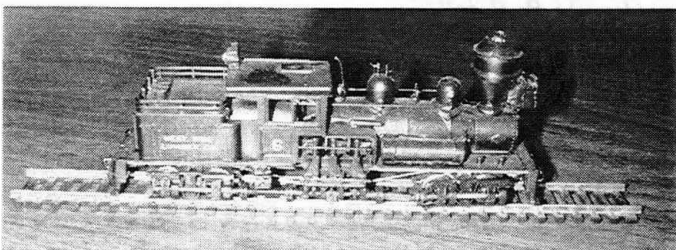
The red danger circles around the guns and launchers and the white helicopter sling load drop zone markers were made by cutting adhesive backed vinyl into appropriate strips. The model was begun in 1981 and largely completed by about 1996, however lifelines, made of black fishing line, weren't installed until July 2001.



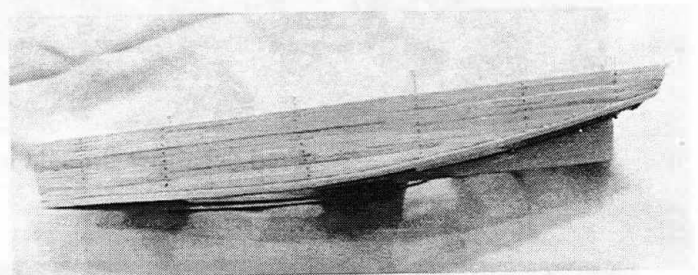
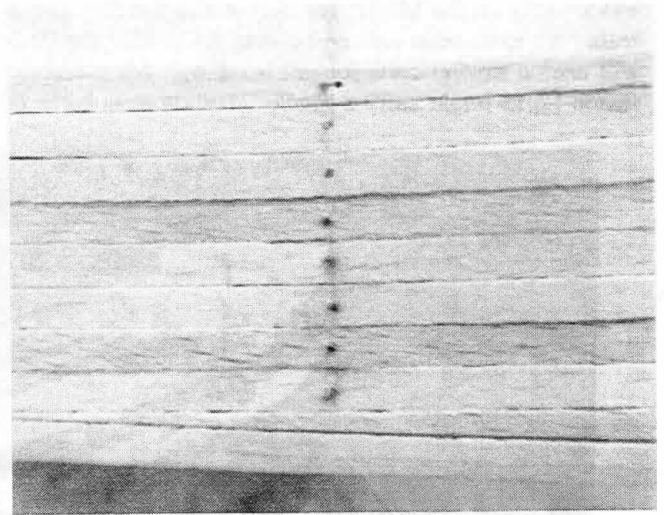
Detail on Frank Dengler's destroyer showing the campaign ribbons.

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of any photos of the USS Chester please contact Frank as this is his latest project and he has searched high and low for them!

**Dick Camfield** brought an HO scale model of a two-truck Shay Engine which he built from an MDC kit. This is an example of an engine used on docks at San Diego Harbor and which he hopes will be useful in the Diorama at the new "Age of Steam" exhibit. This is one of a class of geared locomotives used in lumber, mining and industrial settings. Dick also showed everyone the little basswood lifeboats he is carving for his *Star of India* as well as a historical pamphlet on Ship's Bell Clocks.



Dick Camfield's two-truck Shay Engine



Ernie Andrew's trunnelling job on his schooner.

**Ernie Andrew** brought his 1/4" scale Midwest kit model of the *Sharpie Schooner* which has a plank on frame hull. This model comes with sheet covering for the deck and hull. He decided at the Fair to plank the deck and hull and to use trunnelling. Ernie plans to make this an RC working model.

*Jacki Jones*

## San Diego Ship Modelers Asked to Participate in Chula Vista's 15th Annual Harbor Days Festival

Friday September 28, 5 pm-8 pm  
and  
Saturday September 29, 10 am-6 pm

Location: I-5 at J Street/Marina Parkway  
Chula Vista

For more information please call  
Jacki Jones /redacted/  
Chuck Fox /redacted/

# History and Design of the USS Henry B Wilson

By CDR Frank Dengler

HENRY B. WILSON was launched in April 1959 by Defoe Shipbuilding Co. in Bay City, Michigan. She was the first ship of her size to be side-launched and was the largest warship constructed on the Great Lakes up to that time. The destroyer was sponsored by Mrs. Patrick J. Hurley, daughter of the ship's namesake, Admiral Henry B. Wilson, the first Commanding Officer of USS PENNSYLVANIA (BB 38) who served with distinction in World War I and was later Commandant of the U. S. Naval Academy.

WILSON was commissioned in December 1960 with CDR L. D. Caney in command. She was the first guided missile armed destroyer in the Pacific Fleet when she reported to her long time home port of San Diego, California in May 1961. She departed San Diego in January 1962 for the first of many deployments to the Western Pacific where she served with the U. S. 7th Fleet. During her third deployment in 1965, WILSON engaged in combat operations for the first time, serving as flagship of Destroyer Squadron 21 performing shore bombardment, air defense, aviator rescue, and carrier escort functions in the Gulf of Tonkin.

Following multiple deployments in defense of the Republic of South Vietnam, WILSON played a significant role in rescuing the SS MAYAGUEZ from Cambodian pirates in 1975. The veteran destroyer continued to perform naval and humanitarian mission until decommissioning in October 1989. After being struck from the Naval Register, much of WILSON's superstructure was cut down in preparation for conversion to an electrical power generation barge, however the project was aborted and, at last check, WILSON was berthed in the Maritime Administration Reserve Fleet, Suisun Bay, Benecia, California pending dismantling.

WILSON displaced about 4,526 tons at full load, was 437 ft. long, and had a beam of 47 ft. and a draft of 22 ft. Her 1,200 psi steam turbines developed 70,000 shaft horsepower and could drive the ship at 33 knots. WILSON had a compliment of about 340 crewmen. The ship was armed with two Mark 42 5"/54 gun mounts, a Mark 11 twin rail launcher aft

for Tartar/Standard Medium Range anti-aircraft missiles, a box like, 8 rail Anti-Submarine Rocket (ASROC) launcher amidships for lofting Mark 44/46 homing torpedoes or Mark 17 depth charges to distant submarine contacts, and two triple Mark 32 homing torpedo launchers on her 01 level forward for use against close range submarine threats.

Her sensors included AN/SQS-23 pair sonar, reflected in her two sonar domes, a large AN/SPS-29 two dimensional air search radar antenna high on her foremast, a smaller AN/SPS-10 surface search radar antenna in a lower position on her foremast, and an AN/SPS-39 three dimensional air search radar on her after stack. Other distinguishing topside features included a Mark 68 Gunfire Control Director atop her pilothouse and two Mark 51 Missile Fire Control illuminators on her after superstructure. WLR-1 & ULQ-6 signal intercept & electronic warfare antennas were mounted on either side of her signal bridge.

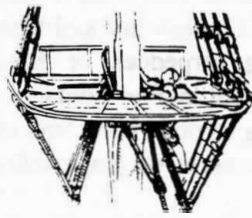
**Next Meeting**  
**On the Orlop Deck of the**  
**Star of India**  
**Wednesday September 12**  
**Bring a Ship Model!**

Ernie says he will bring a big box with hundreds of **free** small motors to **give away** at the next meeting!  
**Be there and get one!!!**

September						
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30						

# THRU THE LUBBERS HOLE

By Robert Hewitt



## The Guild's First Field Trip

We started off on Saturday, August 4, from the Mission Valley parking lot at 8:30 a.m. There were eight of us in attendance. Don Bienvenue, K.C. Edwards, Al Dillon and I were in one van. Bill Luther, who organized the trip, took Brian Rowe, David & Mrs. Shelky in his van.

Traffic was heavy, but we moved along swiftly. We arrived at the Brigantine Boatworks at 10:30. Ed & Mrs. White met us at the gate along with some members of our Maritime Museum. There were a total of about twenty people.

Bill gave us a rundown on the reason for building the brigs, which will be used primarily for character building & sail training for youth. The brigs will complement an ongoing program that is already in place using the schooners *BILL OF RIGHTS* and *SWIFT OF IPSWICH*. The program is notably effective with youth who are not coping well with the demands of society and are at risk of dropping out of school and giving up.

Topsail Youth Program, as it is called, does not train youths for sea but uses the sea to educate youth for life. Primarily a volunteer organization, the institute utilizes the skills and enthusiasm of over three hundred active volunteers to sail, maintain and support the Institutes tall ships and its program.

The seventy-foot *SWIFT OF IPSWICH* is a wooden topsail schooner designed by Howard Chapple, built in 1938 by William Robinson. The institute purchased it in 1994. *SWIFT* was once the personal yacht of actor Jimmy Cagney.

The ninety-five foot *BILL OF RIGHTS* is a wooden gaff-rigged schooner designed by McCurdy, Rhodes and Bates. She was built in 1971 and is patterned after *WANDER* a racing yacht built in 1856.

The boat yard is next to the Los Angeles Maritime Museum institute at the foot of Sixth Street in San Pedro, CA. The two brigs will be ninety feet stem to stern with a beam of twenty one feet nine inches. The sail area will be four thousand five hundred and forty square feet.

Before entering the yard, Bill gave us an overall description of the brigs, the layout of the cabins, engine layout, beam spacing and the various woods used in the project.

Seeing two fully framed brigs is quite an impressive sight. They are blocked up in the yard with all of the scaffolding surrounding the ships. The keels are made of purple heart and each is a single piece of wood 10" deep, 23" wide and 63 feet long, weighing 7,300 lbs. There is lead ballast attached to the keels, made up of 5 pieces, each being 18,000 lbs. The ribs are laminated white oak and were made in Wisconsin. A few of the planks were installed at the bulwarks.

Next to one of the ships is a large metal tube the length of the ship and about three feet in diameter. This is used to steam the planks prior to bending them on the ship.

Bill gave us a very detailed description of fitting the massive pieces of deadwood on the stern. The ribs are bolted to the keel with large bronze bolts.

One of the most impressive parts of the tour was the drawing of the ships with all of the material call-outs for the many types of wood used. The plans were personally drawn by Bill Luther and include a plan view, shear, and various cross sections. One can tell that Bill is very proud of his work, and rightly so, the results in the yard show it!

As we toured down the ships there was a large metal frame that will house one of the diesel engines. As we passed by I asked if that was a casting of the engine mount? "Yes" was the reply, "but it's a weldment". I had to go back and take a closer look, and sure enough it was all welded and finished to a high degree.

One of the yards was hanging in the cutting shed. Bill pointed out that it was made of sitka spruce and had a very tight grain in it. Bill noted that sitka spruce per pound is stronger than aluminum. It is also quite flexible. Sitka spruce was used to build the early bi-planes. It is still used today in the framing of the British sports car, Morgan.

One fact that was quite interesting was that the most expensive wood used on the ships was not the exotic hardwoods but the douglas fir from Oregon.

A question came up as to how and where the two vessels were to be launched. Bill replied "right here and by a house mover". He also noted that a framed ship is much stronger than any house.

We all took a lunch break and had a good meal with a great harbor view. The second part of our tour was visiting the Los Angeles Maritime Museum adjacent to the brigs. The Museum is housed in a very fine art deco building.

The museum has a large collection of ship models with sailing ships in one section, steam in another, and modern war ships in another section. In the latter there is a fine miniature collection of the turn of the century Great White Fleet.

Don Bienvenue, Brian Rowe and I were viewing the sailing ship section when we began to notice gray dust on some of the models. Sadly this is the result of using led castings on the models. Some of the ships had badly deteriorated and flowering anchors, capstans, ladders and window frames.

The museum has a large deck overlooking the channel and I was able to view two huge container ships pass each other just in front of the deck. About an eighth of a mile down from the museum the *LANE VICTORY* is moored. As one of the container ships passed it I was surprised to see how similar the are. Not much has changed in sixty years!

Ed White pointed out the 1940's tug *ANGLES GATE*, moored at the museum dock. It is the oldest surviving operational tug from WWII.

The third part of our tour was to a local model shop. They are just getting under way and not all is set up. They are interested in ship models on consignment and give a generous percentage to the modeler. Contact Aviation Books (Old Ironsides) at 310-832-1776

We finished our tour and crawled home in the L.A. and Del Mar race traffic and arrived back at 6:30.

Bill promised to keep us in touch with the fitting out and the planking. I sure would love to see the launching!

Thanks Bill for a wonderful tour. We should give you a badge that's imprinted OTG (Official Tour Guide)

Hewitt

### **Plan Ahead for the *Queen Mary* Ship Model Conference...**

-It's going to be April 5-7, 2002, on board the *Queen Mary* in Long Beach, CA.

For more information check out the following  
web site:  
([www.shipmodelers-assn.org](http://www.shipmodelers-assn.org)).

# "Come Aboard Friends - Close the Door"

By Captain Al A. Adams



This picture shows the completion of that phase with the hearth, teak mantel, fireplace fixtures, draperies, carpet and a shelf for my square rigged model with moonlight shining down on its spars from the inset light above.

How did this come about? Sitting at my office desk - an idea took my interest. I wanted to create a den in my home, a study, my retreat. My mind was in tune for this, so I sharpened a drafting pencil, opened a tablet and sketched what my mind's eye was depicting. By quitting time I was fired up, could hardly wait. On my sketchpad - there was my den project - and in my home was a seldom used room.

I hurried home, changed my clothes, brought out the ladder and my trusty sledgehammer. Plaster dust was flying as I tore out thirty-five feet of wall, removing everything but the 2x4 studs, floor to ceiling of that spare room outer wall.

Well, into the next-door driveway came my neighbor lady in her car. Hearing the pounding and seeing the cloud of dust flying, she said "Al, what are you doing?" answering quickly, I said, "I forgot my key!"

Several wheelbarrow fulls of house I hauled away - then the impact hit me - I had work to do - such as lathing, plaster board, tar paper and chicken wire, plastering, troweling, carpentering, painting and

laying carpet, building a fireplace with chimney, hearth and teak mantel, provide andirons and fireplace screen and fixtures, electrical wiring, matched grain teak walls, draperies, new windows, book shelves, furniture and on and on.

Yes, I had work to do. As I sat on the floor looking out at the sky through the bare studs, I thought, this room must have a fireplace and windows. I went to work measuring, cutting the studs, shaping the window frames and the fireplace, all to be built.

I wanted a den, a study, a retreat, I had work to do. I went to work. I had many ship models about the house - now if I can produce they can take turns being displayed in my private den retreat. Sail on!

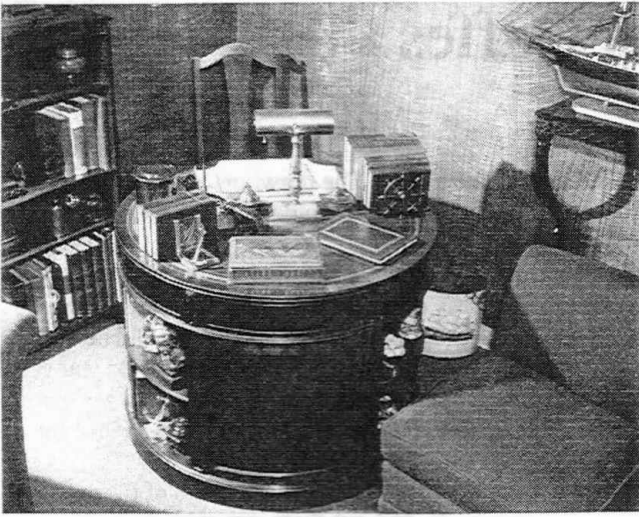


Furniture for this room had to be low profile to keep from over-powering the room. Colors must blend with teak walls, mantel and mahogany furniture.

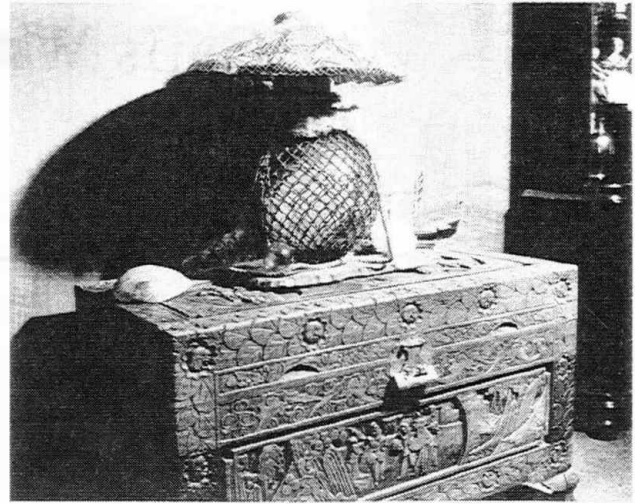


Inside the door I built a closet for a sound system for records, tapes and radio to reduce space used in the room. I removed the center panel in the door, installed shelves for books.





A circular desk that could be walked around; in a furniture store on Wilshire Blvd, in their back room I spotted just what I wanted. The store, the clerk informed me, had built the desk of mahogany with leather top, shelves and rounded opening doors for Jimmy Cagney. He had made a holding payment but had not returned. The clerk said "if you will give me a check and wait thirty days - if we don't hear from him, it is yours". I waited and it was mine.



My teak, hand carved, camphor wood-lined chest that I found in China, and on it is my lamp I made using a Japanese glass fishnet ball float I found at sea as I sailed back from Hawaii in 1939. These items were a must for my den. My project that I sketched became a reality - a home for my models- and my personal retreat !

Come aboard!

# WOOD CARVING

*by the Bay with the*

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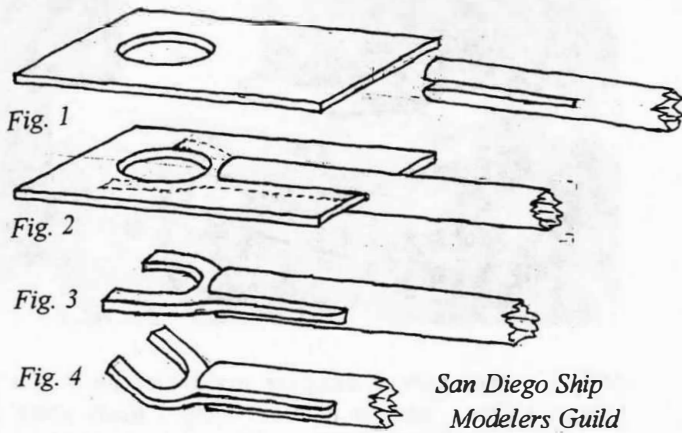
MONDAYS 9 A.M. - 12 NOON

INFO: 619-425-2238 619-276-6768 619-465-6445

California Carvers Guild (Chapter # 6)



# Gaffs Without Gaffes



It's easy to make a gaffe when you're making a gaff—or a boom.

You can goof up trying to shape two tiny jaws so that they will fit against the spar (which has to be carefully flattened on both sides) and against one another at the throat. After that it's difficult to position them as they slither around in the glue, and then turn out not to be parallel.

There's a better way. The drawings here show how to do a neat, strong job using a single piece of wood to make two jaws.

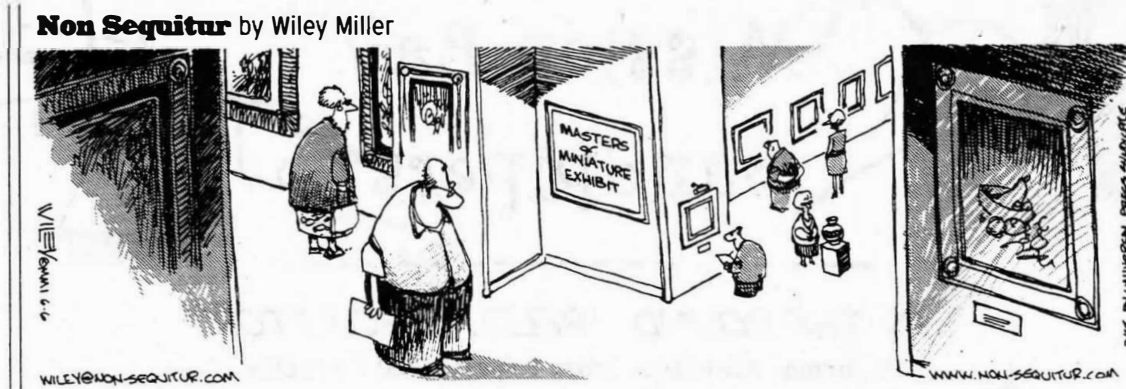
Start by drilling a hole the diameter of the mast in a blank the thickness of the jaws (*figure 1*). The slot in the boom or gaff can be made with a hand saw of the right-size kerf, filed out with a nail file if necessary. Or you can use a band saw, holding the spar against the fence for a first cut and against a shim carpet-taped to the fence for a second pass to reach the desired slot size.

Glue the parts together, mark the shape of the jaws on the blank (*figure 2*), and cut them out with a scroll saw. Finish with a half-round file. This work is easier because the spar provides a handle to use as you shape the jaws. The process provides a joint of great strength with the illusion that the jaws have been fitted perfectly to the curve of the spar (*figure 3*).

For gaffs that set on the mast at an angle, you can thicken the outer end of the jaws by gluing another piece of wood to the blank before drilling the hole. Shape the jaws to the necessary angle with a razor saw and files (*figure 4*).

—Bill Forbis

## Masterpieces in Miniature



Members of the Ship Modelers Guild have been enjoying volunteering at the special exhibit downstairs in the Berkeley. One of the enjoyable experiences is chatting with all of the curious little children who are just tall enough to observe what the modeler is doing at the work table. George Ryan discovered that the kids love to handle things so he made up one of the inexpensive little children's kits from the museum gift shop, painted it colorfully and found it to be a big hit with the little ones. JJ

# Some Things Just Take Time.

7-8-01 By Hans G. Merten, Member of the San Diego Ship Modelers' Guild

For the past two and a half years, I've been building the *Berlin*, a 17<sup>th</sup> century (1674) frigate, built in Zeeland, a town in the Netherlands, for the then Archduke of Prussia. When I first got this expensive kit from Corel, I decided not to use the poorly fitting metal tag-ons that came with it. Instead I was going to carve my own perfect little figures, encouraged by reading how everyone can learn how to do it. Well, easier said than done. Lack of progress with carving is the main cause for the long delays in completing this model.

I tried and tried, didn't give up easily, in fact I think I have not given up yet although it may look like it. But, there are two insights I gained from struggling in my attempts at carving. First, I am not a natural born sculptor and second, I was convinced there is no wood in existence for easy sculpting of tiny little figures for period ships.

I don't even want to mention tools. Each time I discovered a new knife, chisel, magnifier and so on, I just had to have it because I thought, that'll do the trick, only to be disappointed later. When I saw a demonstration of those little 400,000 rpm air powered turbines, I was certain, there was the answer. Actually the price for the kit, around \$350, looks pretty cheap now, by comparison.

As I was trying out the various types of wood suitable for carving, I became a good customer of Warner Woods West. I also came to realize that there really was not a lot to choose from and the wood I tried did not seem to work for me. So, I began to wonder how do people decide on what wood is good for carving or not? It seemed to me it all was handed down somehow in books or by word of mouth. When was the last time someone found a new wood that is good for carving? Clearly, nobody is experimenting anymore.

Well, here was a chance for me to do original research. So I decided to start my own test program of all of the wood types in my realm, namely my backyard. Each time I trimmed a tree or shrub with branches thicker than one inch, I saved a couple of pieces, tagged them and put them in my special drying kiln, otherwise know as my garage.

Of course this was not a high profile project, and as time went on I kept forgetting about it only to be reminded occasionally by my wife, of that unsightly pile of wood in the garage. After about a year I thought maybe it's time to do some testing. From the start it was pretty discouraging. Ever tried to carve with Bottlebrush wood, Mediterranean fan palm, Eucalyptus citriodora, Hibiscus, Plum wood, Peach wood or Pepper tree? I quickly regained new respect for stuff written in books. But then, what about that last piece, a piece of Oleander? As I began testing, I could hardly believe it, here was something very promising. It wasn't long before I realized that "Eureka", I had found it.

## *NERIUM oleander*

*Evergreen shrub for desert and hot interior valleys. Grows up to 12 feet high with pink or white flowers. Moderate to fast growth. Branches (stems) to over 3 inches in diameter. Common in Southern California.*

This wood is the best wood for carving small figures I have come across. It is beige-white in color, has a superfine grain is medium hard, keeps a good edge, doesn't split easily, no discernible change due to change in humidity and has an excellent feel to it while carving. It also is bug proof because:

*All parts of the plant are poisonous if eaten. Caution children against eating leaves or flowers; don't feed clippings to animals; don't use wood for barbeque fires or skewers. Smoke can cause severe irritation.*

*(When carving this wood with a dust creating power tool wear a dust mask)*

Encouraged by the discovery I proceeded to carve my first successful figure, the lion used as the figurehead, not perfect but encouraging. That was about a year ago and the figure has held up very well, no sign of warping, shrinking or cracking in spite of severe changes in humidity, 15% to 90% over prolonged periods of time.

With half of my handicap resolved that leaves the part of becoming a wood sculptor, that is, acquiring a learnable skill. Lets see, I'm 65 now, another 2 years, hey, I think the *Berlin* is doable yet.

☺ HGM

*Note: To the best of my knowledge, Oleander wood is not commercially available*

FROM THE NEWSPAPERS

## In 2002, 35 of the World's Tall Ships Will Race from Japan to Puget Sound

"The Puget Sound area will be the finish line next summer in the first-ever race of tall ships across the Pacific Ocean from Japan," says a copy of the July 7 issue of the Seattle Times that drifted into the Montana office of this newsletter.

"The 2002 Tall Ships Challenge is being organized by the American Sail Training Association, based in Newport, R.I., which planned similar events last year in New York and other East Coast cities, and this summer in the Great Lakes.

"The race will start in Japan next July and may stop in Dutch Harbor, Alaska, for supplies along its northern course to the Pacific Northwest, said Bob Sittig, director of Seattle's Maritime Heritage Foundation.

"It's going to be an absolutely spectacular event," Sittig said. Invitations have been extended to dozens of vessels around the world, but he expects about 25 to 35 to sail into Puget Sound on Aug 15-19, 2002."

"From Puget Sound the fleet will sail down the Pacific Coast for similar events in San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego, Sittig said."

The article adds, incidentally, that the event "is providing a deadline for the construction of a new Wharf at South Lake Union, where the Maritime Heritage Foundation plans to develop a new Maritime Museum. The wharf will be needed as moorage for some of the smaller visiting ships."

## The Commander of the *Indianapolis* Is Absolved After Three Decades

Lots of Guild members know the story of what The New York Times calls "one of the most horrific events in American naval history," the sinking by a Japanese torpedo of the U.S.S. *Indianapolis* on July 29, 1945. "About 300 of the crewmen were dead within minutes," the Times recalls. "Some 900 other men, including the captain, Charles B. McVay III, leaped into the sea.

"Floating in the Pacific Ocean under a broiling sun, delirious from thirst, nearly 600 died over the next four days. Many were killed by sharks. By the time a patrol plane found them, just more than 300 were still alive. One was Captain McVay, who was court-martialed after the war and found guilty of endangering his vessel by failing to steer a zigzag course to avoid torpedoes."

Never having recovered from being forced to take the rap, McVay shot himself to death in 1968. Last fall, 33 years after he died, Congress passed a resolution absolving him from blame, and a few weeks ago a memorandum affirming this exoneration was inserted into his file, even though the guilty verdict remains in it.

Why the flip-flop? The answer to that question stems

from another question. Why did the Navy wait four days before rescuing the *Indianapolis* survivors?

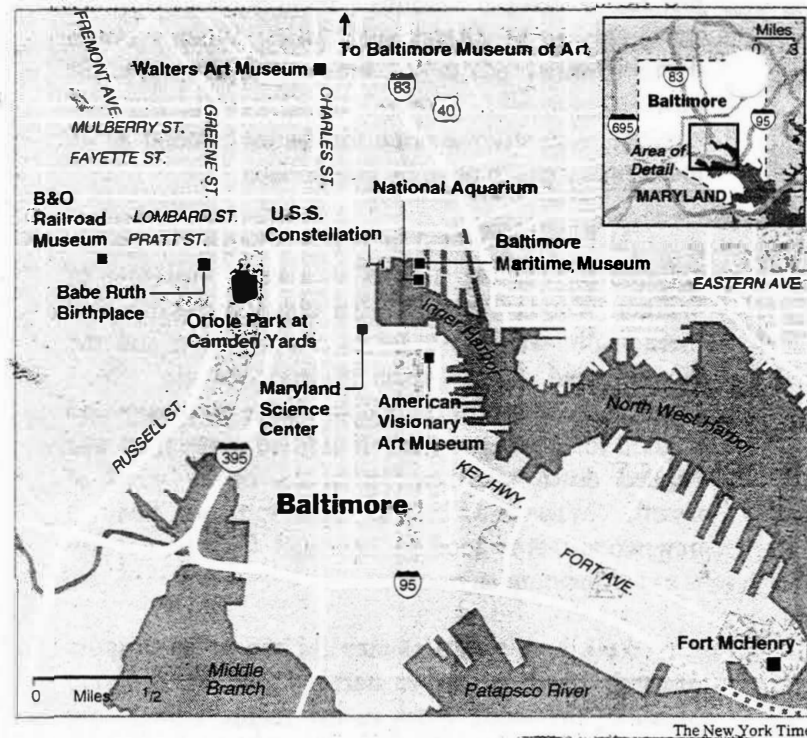
Historians using declassified documents zero in on a fascinating explanation. When torpedoed the ship had just delivered to Tinian island the final components of the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima eight days later. They speculate that the slowness of the rescue was connected to the secrecy surrounding the mission.

For that reason too, says the Times, some historians have suggested "that senior Navy officers knew there might have been a Japanese submarine in the area but did not warn the cruiser out of fear of disclosing that the Navy had broken Japan's naval codes."

As for the central charge that McVay had failed to zigzag, his defenders "note that he had been given discretion—not ordered—to steer a zigzag course and had done so for a time, and that he had been advised that there was little threat of enemy submarines."

One witness at McVay's trial argued that whether the captain did or didn't zigzag was irrelevant. He was Mochitsura Hashimoto, commander the submarine that sank the cruiser, who said his torpedoes would have scored no matter what.

"Our peoples have forgiven each other for that terrible war," he said in 1999, a year before he died. "Perhaps it is time your peoples forgave Captain McVay for the humiliation of his unjust conviction."



For Guild members who may find themselves in Baltimore, this map shows the relationship between the U.S.S. *Constellation*, the Baltimore Maritime Museum and the Inner Harbor. In case you want to catch an Orioles game, Camden Yards is within walking distance.

*Even if you're not planning on entering the Mariners' Museum's 1991 Scale Ship Model Competition, here are some useful tips from its Curator of Ship Models on the most . . .*

## Common Errors in Ship Models



by Alan Frazer

Dana Wegner, Curator of Ship Models, U.S. Navy Sea Systems Command; Robert Sumrall, Curator of Ship Models, U.S. Naval Academy; and Philip Lundeberg, Curator Emeritus, Naval History Division, National Museum of American History, judged our 1985 competition. They recorded their comments, pro and con, about each entry, and it's from these remarks that I've summarized the negative ones in hopes that they'll be used constructively to evaluate and improve your own work. Interestingly enough, negative notes didn't preclude a prize; many of the following flaws were on award-winning models!

The most prevalent problems, found in numerous models and in every class, were lack of symmetry and unfair lines. Hull forms most commonly suffered, but so did railings, transoms, spars, and elsewhere. Other trouble areas were:

### General

- 1) Inconsistent quality among different parts, details, or paint areas within the model.
- 2) Unsuitable materials for the part.
- 3) Dust.
- 4) Starting from poor kits.

### Research

- 1) No report submitted.
- 2) Lack of research evidence to support certain modeling decisions.

### Framing and Joinery

- 1) Incorrect or irregular frame spaces.
- 2) No deck camber (applies also to solid hulls).
- 3) Crooked or uneven parts.
- 4) Sloppy or poorly fitted joints.
- 5) Hatches not square.
- 6) Wood warping or seams opening (especially boxwood).
- 7) Visible glue spots or adhesive showing through paint.

### Planking and Plating

- 1) Copper plates lack nails.
- 2) Run of plates or planks incorrect.
- 3) Poor fit of planking at rabbets.
- 4) Strakes asymmetrical at stem or elsewhere.
- 5) Deck not nibbed, treenailed, or should be double fastened in larger scales.
- 6) No plank butts, or improperly placed.
- 7) Uneven nibbing or seams.

### Details and Fittings

- 1) Parts out of scale, anachronistic (especially anchors), incorrectly detailed, or wrong for type of vessel or locale.
- 2) Detail inadequate to chosen scale.
- 3) Grating holes too big.
- 4) Gratings and other serial parts not uniform or evenly placed.
- 5) Corrosion on metal parts (tell the judges if something like this is intentional!).
- 6) Touch holes missing or too large.
- 7) Cannon shot not sized to bore.
- 8) Poor carvings or figures.

### Spars

- 1) Not tapered.
- 2) Masts out of line.
- 3) Spars warped or sprung (again, tell the judges if you did this on purpose).

### Paint, Lettering, and Finish

- 1) Poor surface preparation (wood grain, roughness, or raised fibers show through paint).
- 2) Rough, uneven, or mottled paint.
- 3) Finish too glossy or too dull.
- 4) Colors anachronistic, garish, or wrong for the part.
- 5) Color separation lines uneven, blurred, or asymmetrical.
- 6) Lettering uneven or the wrong style for period or place.
- 7) Bright metal where not appropriate.
- 8) Natural wood finishes may be historically inaccurate for vessel.

### Rigging, Sails, and Flags

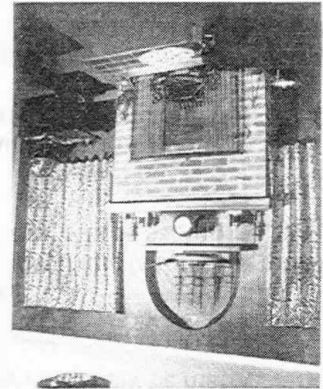
- 1) Lines too white.
- 2) Synthetics *look* synthetic (should be toned).
- 3) Lines wrong size or all the same size.
- 4) Wire servings.
- 5) Wrong leads.
- 6) No seams in sails.
- 7) Flags stiff, crude, garish, unnatural, or ugly.

What about the positive comments? Listing them would be pointless unless you could see each model and be told how the particular result was achieved. To receive the complete rules for the Mariners' Third Scale Ship Model Competition, write to: Ship Model Competition, The Mariners' Museum, 100 Museum Drive, Newport News, Virginia 23606-3798. ⚓

# The Guild's First Field Trip

by Robert Hewitt Page 6

Step into Captain Al's Study P. 8



Bill Forbis' Shop Tip for Making Gaffs P. 10

San Diego Ship Modelers' Guild  
1306 N. Harbor Drive  
San Diego CA 92101



## SAN DIEGO SHIP MODELERS' GUILD

Guild Master	Jacki Jones	/redacted/
First Mate	K.C. Edwards	
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.