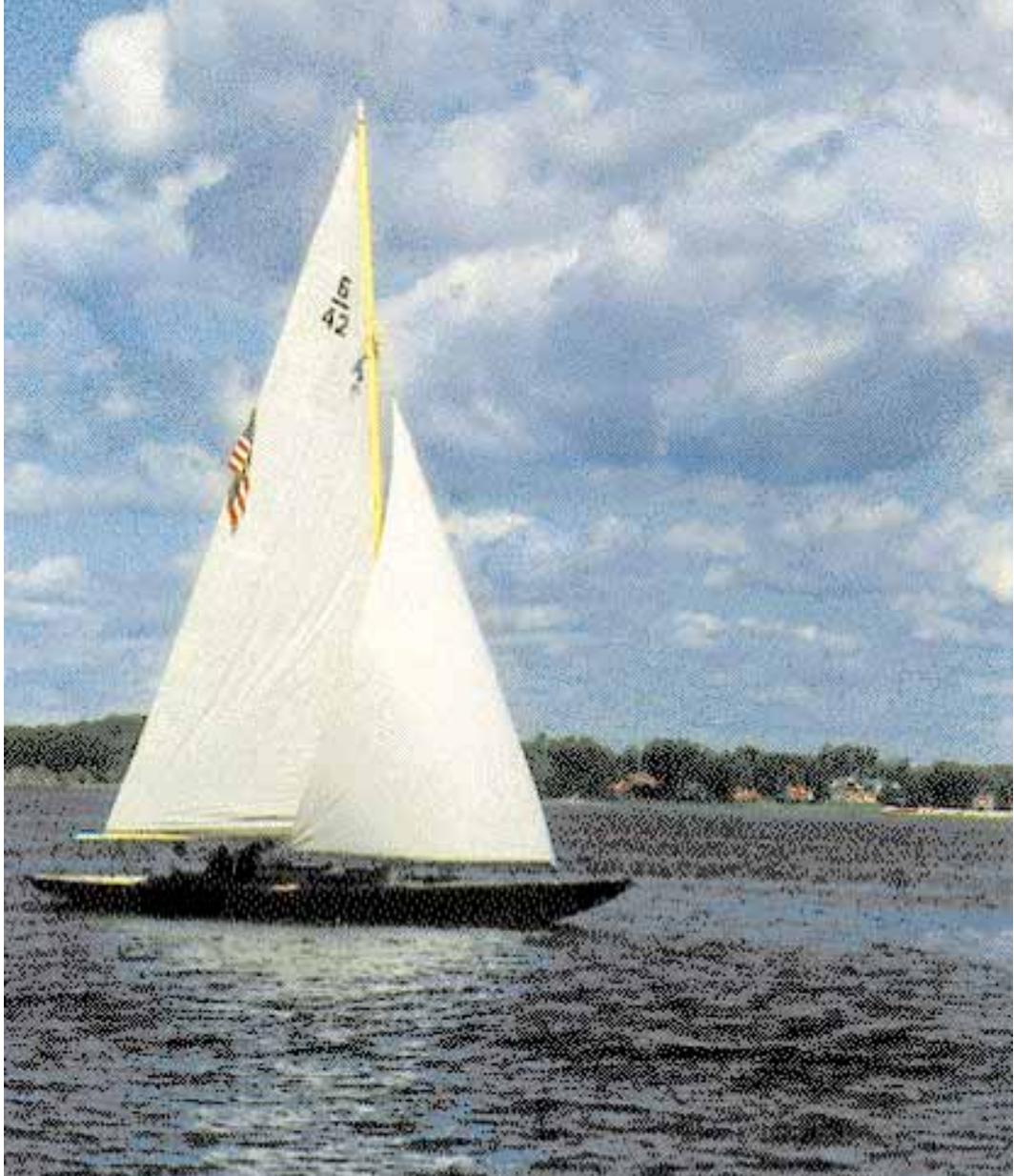


SCENES FROM THE LAKE

halleck cummings 1995



HARBOR WATCH

SCENES FROM THE LAKE '95
h a l l e c k c u m m i n g s



HARBOR WATCH

Reprinted from Harbor Watch, volume 4.

© 1995, Harbor Watch Publishing
Burlington, VT

All Rights Reserved.

The electronic edition designed by
Hessam Ashrafi

Contents

◆ Shipwrecked on Lake Champlain	4
◆ Water-Borne Butterflies	9
◆ Bygone Boat for the Ninties	13
◆ Champ Has Left	17
◆ The History Of Shelburne Shipyard	20
◆ Why Do They Do It?	24
◆ Mountain Dancer Goes for the Bubbly	27
◆ Big, Fast Boats From Vergennes	30
◆ The Good Ship Lollipop	33
◆ <i>Lil Toot</i> Comes To Life	35
◆ Preserving The <i>Ticonderoga</i>	38
◆ The <i>Seal</i> on Otter Creek	42
◆ Up a Lazy River	45
◆ Teaching Boats	48
◆ Valcour Island: Well Worth A Visit	52
◆ Mountain Dancer Sails Again	56
◆ Yes, Virginia, There Was a Captain Mallet!	58
◆ More About Captain Mallet	66
◆ The <i>Ticonderoga</i> Is Together Again	68

Shipwrecked on Lake Champlain

May 25-31, Volume 4, Number 1

This is a cautionary tale intended for new boaters, boaters new to Lake Champlain and anyone else who might be planning to venture out on her waters. Lake Champlain looks easy from an overlooking window or even from the shore. In many ways it is easy. There are no tides, no currents, and apart from the ferries, very little commercial traffic. You can usually see both shores from the water. Even the weather gives a warning at least half an hour before it makes any dramatic changes most of the time. The Lake is thoroughly charted and well marked with navigation aids. Despite all of these qualifiers, she is a large body of water, and like any large body of water, she demands respect and caution from her users.

I had both sail and power boat experience on the Chesapeake Bay and the Long Island Sound since I was a kid. However, that experience was twenty years before I bought a 22 foot sail boat to use on Lake Champlain. My son had learned some sailing in day camp and urged me, as only twelve year old boys can urge, to buy another sail boat. I rationalized the purchase as being a good summer activity for the children and a way to have family fun.

A little less than a year later, we set off for a week's vacation on this 22 foot sail boat. The "we" in this case were myself, an adult female companion, my 12 year old son, and my 9 year old daughter, each with matching age/sex friends plus a chocolate lab.

When you divide 22 by 6, the result is less than four feet per person, not counting the dog. This trip created a new definition of "closeness". It was the last week in August, a very hot, 90 plus degrees, week in August. The original plan had been to make a round trip to Montreal

in this week. But, the weather was so hot and the daytime sun was so brutal, this plan was abandoned around Valcour Island. Valcour offered nice swimming and cool woods as a relief from the heat.

We finally left Valcour Island on Thursday morning and made it far enough up the Richelieu River that we were off the top end of the charts for Lake Champlain. We spent Thursday night at a pleasant anchorage on the Richelieu and began the trip home on Friday morning. Around the middle of the afternoon it was clear that a large weather change was moving in from the West. We got our anchor down in Deep Bay just before a crashing thunder storm hit and a cold front moved across the Lake. We spent that Friday night in the shelter of Deep Bay.

Saturday morning was rainy, with strong cold wind out of the North. The temperature had dropped from ninety to fifty. We motored out of Deep Bay and turned north again when we passed red nun buoy #2 . We had to go back north to Isle La Motte to search for a piece of gear we had lost the day before. This detour took us over six long, wet hours to get back to where we started from that morning. We decided to press on, figuring to make it to our home mooring in McNeil Cove, Charlotte around 8:00 that evening and end our cramped, and now cold and wet, vacation trip.

We had tried to use the sails earlier in the day, but the wind was too strong and fluky, so we decided to continue to use the noisy outboard that, besides the noise, also set the whole boat into vibration with its single cylinder. I was alone in the cockpit most of the time because the weather was so miserable that no one else wanted the tiller.

We continued on our steady five knots per hour progress southward through the afternoon. We passed the old lighthouse on Colchester Reef around 4:45. Just

before 5:00, I saw the dim shape of a green can buoy rolling in the waves. I looked in the small chartbook I had with me in the cockpit and decided to go to the West, or to the left of the can. I yelled down into the cabin to have someone check the big chart to find out just which can I was looking at. The big chart was rolled up behind the seat that people were using and took some time to access.

While they were scrambling in the cabin to get at the big chart, I thought I saw another green can to our left (West). Just as I was wondering about my decision to go to the left of the first can I saw, a big wave hit us from behind and planted us firmly onto Colchester Shoal.

The sudden stop and horrible noise brought everybody into the cockpit. Attempts to back us off the rocks with the engine were completely futile. As the waves crashed against the boat and the wind howled, it became very clear that we were in very big trouble. There were almost no other boats out that miserable day and none of the ones that were out were venturing close to our position. We did have the required Coast Guard equipment on board. We all put on our life jackets and we had smoke flares and an orange emergency banner.

Everyone sat up on the high edge of the cockpit in the pouring rain. The boat had taken about a 25 degree list to the starboard so the high side was to the wind which meant we got the rain on our backs instead of our faces, but the boat was still rolling back and forth in the wind and the waves.

It was getting severely battered and starting to take on water. The motor got knocked off the transom and was washed away. The entire rudder post assembly was getting pounded undone from the hull and the deck. After about two hours of rolling and pounding, the boat sank far enough to get wedged between some rocks that

stopped the rocking. At that point we went back into the cabin to get out of the rain. We all sat on the galley countertop. The dog huddled across from us on the top of the dinette table that was almost under water.

We had tried yelling, I had stood on the deck holding the orange banner and we had set off the smoke flares. No one was close enough to hear the yells or see the banner and the smoke from the flares was instantly whipped away by the wind.

As it began to get dark, we got pretty scared. As the light faded, our fear level increased. But before it was completely dark and we completely panicked, a flashing blue light appeared through the rain and load hailer called to us. Someone in a camp on the New York side had seen the boat listed over and had called the Coast Guard in Burlington. Shortly after that call came in, another boat had also called us in. But, the Coast Guard didn't know our situation. They had not know to bring the rubber raft that they would need to approach the shoal. So, they had to go back to the station to get it. After what seemed to be a very long wait, the Coast Guard returned and ferried us off the shoal over to the launch. Once we were safely on the launch, they took us below and wrapped us in dry blankets and gave us hot coffee to drink.

When we got back to the Coast Guard Station in Burlington, the station crew was very gracious to us in our distress. They gave us dry clothes to put on and more coffee and soda to drink and candy bars to eat. We called for rides home. We were very glad to be back on land again. In all, we had spent about four very long hours stuck on Colchester Shoal.

The boat was pulled off the next day and towed into Shelburne Shipyard. I sold it to someone who rebuilt it and is very happy with the cheapest sailboat on the Lake. The boat spent last summer on a mooring by the Burlington Boathouse. If anyone remembers seeing a

small white sailboat with a blue topping stripe, that is the boat of this story.

The moral of this story is; dangerous, life threatening accidents can happen on the normally tranquil waters of Lake Champlain. The Coast Guard said that Colchester Shoal alone collects between thirty to forty boats each year. The rest of the moral is that a VHF radio or some other ship to shore communication device should be on every boat and you should know your location on the Lake at all times. And that, is the happy ending to the story. See you on the Lake!

Water-Borne Butterflies

June 1-7, Volume 4, Number 2

If you're standing on the shore, windsurfers look like big butterflies flitting quickly across the water. Watching these sailors on a very windy day at Sandbar State Park, the sport looked very appealing. A friend of mine, who has the money to buy what he wants, has moved from a large sailboat, to a Sunfish, and finally to windsurfing. He explained it as a movement toward simplicity and direct involvement between a sailor and his machine. These sentiments are echoed in an editorial in a recent issue of *American Windsurfer* magazine, by Scott See, the executive director of the American Windsurfing Industries Association: "...windsurfing, it is as limitless as the wind. And pure....(W)ith windsurfing, the wind is in your hand. You direct its power. You and the wind. Windsurfing, the purest form of sailing."

My two commentators explained that the techniques for windsurfing are fairly simple, once they've been mastered. They were adamant in saying that lessons from a qualified instructor are the best way to start, and after watching a videotape on windsurfing for beginners, I have to agree. The dance between the sailor and the sail has to become a learned set of automatic responses to changes in the wind.

The dance floor is small but dynamic. The sailor moves back and forth on the board as well as from side to side, and circles the mast to change direction. The learning process clearly involves a lot of time on the board and a fair amount of time in the water. According to another long-time windsurfer, the learning curve has some definite plateaus, which give the novice personal satisfaction as he or she progresses to higher skill levels. Done correctly, the sport does not require more than a

SCIENCE FROM THE LORE



normal amount of upper body strength, despite appearances to the contrary. Part of the learning curve is becoming able to use the wind to get the mast and sail upright and for a lift out of the water.

The sport was invented by Holye Schweitzer sometime in the late sixties in California. It took off in the late eighties, when Schweitzer's company, Windsurfer, decided to license its patents, and the number of competitors blossomed. Many of the companies that got into the business were marginal (and so were their boards) or just not able to get it right, and, as a result, a lot of participants poured a lot of money into the water. The sport went into a decline, as people tried it and moved on to something else.

Right now, the sport has stabilized at a much smaller level than its heyday years. It came to Vermont in the late seventies through the efforts of Gordie Sadler, when he started Sailworks and began giving lessons and selling boards. Sailworks went through the boom and bust cycle with the sport. According to Dave Peck at Sailworks, the Burlington area had the most boards per capita in the U.S. in the late eighties. Now the local popularity of boards has declined to the point where only Sailworks is actively promoting the sport hereabouts.

Chiott Marine still sells boards, sails, accessories, and equipment. Their policy is to buy last year's, or older, model boards and sell them at reduced prices. Bibs Francis says they plan to stay in the business for as long as there are buyers. There is also a lot of used equipment around, and Sailworks has an annual swap meet on the weekend before Labor Day.

An obvious problem with going windsurfing is no wind/no windsurfing. The boards simply don't go unless there's ten or more knots of wind. For families, the second drawback is that a windsurfer carries only

one person. One solution to both problems would be to include windsurfing as a part of a wider range of outdoor activities. In Vermont this might translate into Bungee cording a board to the rails and using it when the big boat is anchored, or strapping it to the top of the car along with the bikes, and going to a pond for a picnic ride, and sail.

Because the sport involves getting wet, water temperature is another obvious problem. With this in mind, I asked a couple of local windsurfers about the length of the season in Vermont, since Vermont water temperature mirrors the air temperature, although with a narrower range. The first one said, "We go as long as we can," and the second one said, "We start as soon as we can." In Vermont, this translates into from sometime in May till sometime in October for most sailors. Last October, the water stayed warm through the end of the month, which is longer than usual.

The hardy start in April, and the very hardy have been known to go in January. Protection is needed most of the time. This means a dry suit when the water temperature is in the 30s and 40s, moving to long and shortie wet suits as the temperature warms up through the 50s and 60s. There's a brief spell, when the water hits the 70s, when a suit isn't necessary. This usually comes for a few weeks in late July and early August. As with any sport where there's the risk of hypothermia, it is always better to err on the side of more protection rather than less. In fifteen years of windsurfing on Lake Champlain, there have been no serious accidents, and no lives lost.

Like any sport, windsurfing has its own vocabulary. There are all the basic sailing words, like mast, boom, and jibe. The boards are referred to by length, with longer boards used in light winds and by beginners, and shorter boards in higher winds and by more

experienced sailors. The sails are referred to by number, again bigger numbers for light winds and small numbers for higher winds. Wind, with all its little tricks of speed and direction, is a prominent topic when you're talking with windsurfers. Even the personal ads have their own nuances, like the person who writes: "No wind whiners or toe draggers allowed."

For those who are interested in getting into the sport on Lake Champlain, Sailworks offers a \$99 introductory package, with unlimited lessons and equipment use for one season. In addition, the money will be credited toward a used or new equipment purchase from Sailworks. And everyone can appreciate the spectacle of the bright sails with their boards and sailors, skimming the waves.

Bygone Boat for the Ninties

June 8-14, Volume 4, Number 3

Ray Sargent knew what he wanted to do. He wanted to create a boat that evoked the style and romance of the mahogany runabouts that are such a joy to behold in their gleaming elegance. But Ray Sargent wanted his boat to be practical and easy to build and within the reach of an average budget. He had the engineering skills from 25 years at Simmonds Precision, the boatbuilding skills from working as a loftman at Shelburne Shipyard for Jerry Aske after W.W.II And he has the love of boats and the water, with the patience that love requires, to make what he wanted to do a reality.

The boat he has created is a 15 foot sport runabout that will carry three people. Its varnished mahogany topsides makes it look like it was built in the Thirties in a classic shipyard. His boat was built in a one car garage in North Hero by one person. He worked by himself with some help from his wife, Betty. The boat was assembled on what he calls a strongbox. The strongbox acts as a holding jig and as an armature so the boat can turned so that it can always be worked on from an upright position. When the construction phase requiring the strongbox is completed, it becomes a workbench for the rest of the project.

The fifteen foot length for the boat was chosen for its maneuverability on the water, its economy of operation and construction and because that length will fit in a small garage and can be towed by today's cars. The boat is built from plywood with no compound curves and the joining is by the "stitch and glue" method using epoxy and fiberglass tape. The design entails just three bulkheads and two fore and aft stringers. He wanted to make the boat a project that someone without

prior boatbuilding or woodworking experience could accomplish and end up with something they would be proud of.

The plans call for a bottom of marine fir plywood covered by mahogany veneer plywood, sides and transom of mahogany plywood with mahogany veneer and a deck of mahogany plywood with an Okume veneer. Framing is Alaskan cedar and the keelson is white ash. The total costs for wood are estimated at \$1633.

The boat is powered by a used Subaru engine. These engines are plentiful in junkyards and are fairly cheap. He choose this engine for its availability, it low weight and because its horizontal layout allowed for a low profile when installed in the boat. The engine is mounted backwards in the boat to keep the center of gravity forward and to take the drive out from the center of the boat. The conversion of a car motor for marine use required fabricating a wedge shaped block to level the carburetor, adding a raw water pump with a strainer, an oil cooler and a heat exchanger to cool themotor, changing to electronic ignition and adding a safety switch to keep from starting in gear and fabricating an exhaust system starting with two stainless steel manifolds exiting into a hydro-lift muffler. He used two trash cans from Ames as the mold for the hydro-lift muffler casing.

The rebuilt Hurth HBW-150-1.5 marine transmission at \$969 was the most expensive single component of the drive system. The power goes out from the transmission through a belt drive to the propeller.

An interesting part of the design, which strongly reflects the character of the designer, is the amount of sound deadening built into the boat. The engine compartment is lined with a lead/foam composite and two mufflers are used. Even the ventilation intakes have

sound baffled boxes to reduce noise. The end result is a very quiet boat that does not intrude upon others unlike the throaty runabouts of yesterday or the bellowing cigarette boats of today.

Ray Sargent, and his wife, lived year round, for nine years on Pelots Bay, on a fifty foot River Queen houseboat. They had the help of a bubbler and a Honda generator. They now live onshore in a small house with a huge two story front window overlooking the Bay. The house has marine items everywhere you look. The man loves boats and he loves his life. The first adjective that comes to mind to describe Ray Sargent is “gracious”. We were welcomed into his home with charm and enthusiasm. He is selling a kit to prospective builders of his boat which consists of a ten page book of drawings, a complete parts list and detailed instructions for \$145. The drawings almost came to life under his hands as he went over them at his kitchen table. The isometric renderings seemed to leap from the page. The electrical system is diagrammed out instead of being just a schematic representation. The whole kit is closer to a work of art than to a set of mechanical drawings.

Everything he does is imbued with the same kind of enjoyment of creation and attention to detail found in the plans kit. He built a tramway to move people and stuff from the parking area at the top of the hill down the side of hill to the dock steps.. It looks like a two person school bus stop and runs on two little rails with a electrically winched cable pulling it up and letting down the slope. The boat lives on a covered boat lift. The hand wheel for the lift has been converted so that it is turned by a small, surplus electric motor driving a rubber wheel. The total cost for the conversion was about \$35. He said the reason for the conversion was because he saw his older neighbors “huffing and puffing” to get their boats up and down by hand and he

thought he would electrify his for later on. He was born in Burlington, VT in 1917.

The freshly tuned and painted bright red motor fired up on the first turn of the starter. Noise almost disappeared with the closing of the engine hatch. He backed the boat out of the lift and turned it into the Bay. It lifted quickly and easily onto plane with no fuss. It cut through a couple of turns with no skidding or hopping. Unfortunately, the ride was cut short because of rain and because my dog did not obey “stay” and was following us. Luckily, the Sargents are also dog lovers and understand this kind of thing. For the short ride however, the boat was very well behaved and handled beautifully.

The plans kit is available by sending \$145 to Bristol Engineering, Pelots Point, North Hero, VT 05474. Vermont residents need to add \$7.25 sales tax and International purchasers need to add U.S. \$11.

Champ Has Left

June 15-21, Volume 4, Number 4

I met him for dinner one night. The kids behind the counter at the local Lee Zachary's pizza place recognized him, and he went over, shook hands and talked about Monday night football.

When he was a kind, he would sit at the picnic table under the tree in the back yard of his parent's home in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and read every word of the sports section in three newspapers every summer morning.

At the age of eight, he decided that he wanted to be out on those ball fields. But, he was never good enough to make a professional team. He did have a high school history teacher who wanted to retire to Burlington, Vermont. And he did read about a prehistoric monster that was supposed to be living in Lake Champlain.

He took that legend and figured that it had to be a sure fire money maker. His idea put him behind the handle bars of an ATV, wearing a neon green monster suit, driving all around Centennial field last baseball season.

He would drive around that field during the game with the sweat pouring into his eyes from the heat inside that costume. After the game, he would stay and sign autographs until the line came to an end. He made people laugh and he made people happy, both at the ballpark and at appearances all over the state. But, he left Vermont without making the money he came here for.

Dean Schoenwald's trouble began last January. He first came to Vermont to see if he could be a mascot for the Vermont Teddy Bear's and Kevin Le Page's car racing, but they already had a mascot. Someone suggested that he should try the new baseball team, the

Vermont Expos. He knew Chris Corley, who was then the general manager for the Expos, from their National Hockey League days when Corley was a rep for Bauer skates. He met with Corley and a contract was signed on February 24, 1994 by Schoenwald and Corley. This first contract was prepared and signed while Ray Pecor, the owner of the Vermont Expos, was in Florida. This first contract was not satisfactory to Pecor and a second contract was signed on May 5, 1994 by Dean Schoenwald and Ray Pecor.

The May fifth contract provided Schoenwald with \$8,000 for costume costs, \$1,500 for two month's salary and \$300 per game. It further provide help in getting businesses to provide vehicles and motel rooms, "reasonable efforts to help sell, display and promote his Champ Mascot merchandise" and "to not interfere with the sale of Champ Mascot merchandise by Dean Schoenwald".

In return, Schoenwald was to design a Champ character, build a Champ character, debut same and work diligently until about September 4, 1994, "promoting the Champ character and using the mascot to help attain a higher profile for the Vermont Expos Baseball team and its 1994 schedule throughout the region" and perform at all 38 regular season and playoff home games. The contract states that the Expos could only use the "Champ" for baseball related appearances, at a lease cost of \$1.00 per year from 1995 through 2000, while Schoenwald retained all other rights to the mascot and character.

That four page document, which should have benefited both parties, has multiplied itself into several pounds of paper now residing in the Chittenden County Superior Court as docket number 1302 94 Cnc. The points in contention between Schoenwald's Lake Champlain Monster Company and Pecor's Vermont

Expos are the ownership of about \$18,000 worth of T-shirts and other merchandise, the processing of mail order sales and the efforts the Expos actually expended to help sell Champ merchandise.

There is now doubt that the Champ character with Schoenwald inside helped promote the Expos. Fans loved him and kids stood in line after the game for his autograph. The intensity of Schoenwald the performer may be part of the reason for Champ's demise. He figures that he is one of the top three team mascots in the country and when he is in his character his real identity becomes submerged. He is his character, the performance is him and almost nothing is too outrageous for his character. The same artistic temper and intensity that worked so well for Champ on Centennial field may be part of the reason that Schoenwald has trouble in dealing with people day to day. He clearly had no motive to destroy Champ. Champ was to be his ticket to success, but it turned into a legal quagmire.

Regardless of the outcome of the legal battle between Schoenwald and Pecor, it is fair to say that both sides will actually lose more than they will gain and that Vermont has lost a great mascot. Opening night for 1995 Vermont Expos will be missing the Champ that the fans loved last year.

The History Of Shelburne Shipyard

June 22-28, Volume 4, Number 5

The Aske Years

Jerry Aske, Jr. is the son of a midwest family and the current Shelburne Aske. He grew up in Shelburne Shipyard during its Navy contract years of World War II and found him self firmly wedded to the shores of Lake Champlain as a result.

The Shelburne Shipyard is and has been the largest yard facility on the Lake. According to [the] *History of Shelburne Shipyard and Its Shipbuilding Activities During World War II and the Korean Conflict*, a booklet written by Jerry Aske and Gardiner Lane as a course paper for the Maritime Museum, it got started as a shipyard in the early 1820's. (This booklet is available at the Shipyard for \$2.95. The money goes to the Maritime Museum.) Records show that the newly chartered Lake Champlain Transportation Company built the steamship *General Greene* at the shipyard site in 1824 and 1825. Land transfer records show a parcel of land on Shelburne neck passing from the brothers Robert and Lavater S. White to Cornelius P. van Ness in 1828. Van Ness was a stockholder in Lake Champlain Transportation Company. He transferred the parcel to Isaih Townsend, one of the original directors of the Company in 1833. Townsend promptly merged his new shipyard with the Company, in whose ownership the Shipyard was to remain for 113 years.

The list of steamboats built by the Shipyard is impressive. They were:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year Built</u>	<u>Length</u>
General Greene	1825	75
Winooski	1832	136

Name (continued)	Year Built	Length
Burlington	1837	190
<i>Saranac</i>	1842	166
United States	1847	240
<i>Boston</i>	1851	127
<i>Montreal</i>	1856	224
Adirondack	1867	251
<i>Vermont II</i>	1871	272
<i>Chateaugay</i>	1887	205
<i>Vermont III</i>	1903	262
<i>Ticonderoga</i>	1906	220

The coming of the railroads forced the demise of steamships as commercial freight carriers on the Lake. Only the *Ticonderoga* remains as an exhibit at Shelburne Museum. The rest were stripped of anything useful and tied up to the shore at the south end of the Bay, where their hulks still remain. Fixtures from the one of the heads on the Chateaugay are now in an upstairs bathroom of Aske’s Shelburne home.

The Aske family entered the history of the Shipyard at the beginning of World War II. Jerry Aske and George Donovan of the Donovan Contracting Company in St. Paul, Minnesota were looking for boat building production sites and the city of Burlington was looking for defense contracts. “Shuttling back and forth between hotel rooms at Burlington ‘s Hotel Vermont and Burlington Hotel on Vermont Avenue in Washington, D.C., Aske managed to negotiate a lease for the Yard, submit a bid for two Submarine Chasers that Champlain Transportation Company had been invited to bid upon, and line up a work force, suppliers, and sub-contractors.” (from Aske and Lane) The next few months were spent in a circle of bureaucracy that had been initiated by Senator Austin. The Senator was afraid the 40 cents an hour wage at the Shipyard was too high for the Burlington area and lure all of the Burlington workers over to Shelburn to build boats.

The contract was finally awarded and the keel was begun on SC 1029 on April 29, 1942, with Senator George D. Aiken driving in the first spike. *USS SC1029* and *USS SC1030* were launched on August 31, 1942. They were the first Navy warships constructed on the Lake since Commodore Thomas MacDonough's fleet was built in the Vergennes's yards in 1814. These two ships served the Navy well with the commander of SC1029, Lt. Allen writing "Mr. Donovan, you and ... all of your shipyard crew can well take pride in the job you did on this ship." (from Aske and Lane) The Shipyard went on to build torpedo lighters, which were 85 foot wooden barges, four yard tugs and three more sub chasers. These three sub chasers were lost during a typhoon on a convoy run to Murmansk.

After the War, ownership of the Shipyard passed from the Company to Jerry and Wendell Aske on January 1, 1946. The yard went from defense work to building private yachts and mobile homes. In 1952, with the Korean War underway, the Shipyard was awarded a contract to build seventy-three 35-foot "Admirals' Barges" or "Captain's Gigs". One of these boats went on to serve Admiral Roper, commander of the last battlewagon group and father of Marty (Mrs. Jerry) Aske. Next was a contract to build 467 36-foot LCVP's (Landing Craft Vehicle and Personnel). This contract was completed in 1958, despite some contetemps with local fishermen during the trail runs for these boats.

Jerry Aske, Jr. returned to the Shipyard in December, 1957, leaving the Army and his Porsche Speedster behind. He and his father wanted to quit defense work in favor of the private boating industry. Brother Wendall disagreed with this decision and sold his interest to the father and son.

Shelbune Harbor Marina was built in 1959 and won the Inland Waterway Guide's "Best All-Around

Marina” for that year. In 1965, the Pembroke Boat Company set up a production line for its 23 footers at the Shipyard, continuing the boat building tradition.

In 1968, Shelburne Shipyard was purchased from the Aske’s by Horace Ransom and Robert Montgomery and in 1971 it was sold to Steele and Terry Griswold.

The Aske’s live and operate a small docking operation at what used to be the south end of the Shipyard. Their home, a former shipyard work shed, dates back at least to President Lincoln’s time.. When they took off the siding to rebuild, they found a post and beam structure underneath along with a newspaper in the wall that had an editorial about the chances of Lincoln’s reelection. Aske’s childhood growing up at the Shipyard and his stint as a deck hand on the Ticonderoga have settled him into a life that has them summering here and wintering in San Diego.

His facility is a model of a relaxed, low key operation. A few years ago, when Vermont first started licensing and numbering boats, Governor Bob Stafford received VT 1 for his boat. A client from New York City noticed the boat number and a somewhat battered old Lincoln in the parking lot with a VT 1 license plate. He mentioned to Aske that in New York, the governor had NY 1 on his limo. Aske assured him , much to the New Yorker’s amazement, that Vermont followed the same practice as New York for both car *and* boat numbers.

Why Do They Do It?

June 29-July 5, Volume 4, Number 6"

Clorox bottle", exclaimed Mike Munson and his wife simultaneously. They were in the process of shopping for a boat and this particular occasion occurred while they were sitting at the dinette table of a Cape Dory. They just couldn't do it. They just couldn't bring themselves to buy a boat that was not made of wood.

If you have driven along Lakeshore Drive in Colchester past the Champlain Marina sometime during the past eight months, you may have noticed a clear plastic igloo with a wood frame at the top end of the yard. Curiosity compelled me to stop and take a look. Upon finding a white hulled wood sailboat inside, I had to find out more about the story.

Ellida is Munson's current boat. She is the boat that living inside the clear plastic igloo at the top end of Champlain Marina. Ellida is a 1958 Ohlson 35 yawl built in Sweden. George O'Day originally put this class together to compete against the Concordia class. They were built into the mid sixties and went up to 38 feet in length. Its has classic long skinny lines. The 9'2" beam gives the boat her classic long and skinny lines. Munson bought Ellida a little over twelve years ago. This is the first year that she has spent the season out of the water during those twelve years. This year was chosen, in part, because the Munsons have a new child so this seemed like a good time to work on the boat rather than to sail it. This way the girl and the rebuilt boat can go into to the water and grow together.

After you walk through the door of the igloo, the first thing you notice about Ellida is the gaping hole interrupting the graceful flow of her bottom lines. Closer

inspection reveals that the hole is only three fairly short planks that are missing.

The next major piece that isn't there is the deck. When you climb up on the slightly shaky scaffolding that is around the boat to take look from higher up, you find yourself looking right inside the boat. The view that you get is like looking at a interior plan view come to life.

Munson is an architect by profession. He has owned, and worked on boats and sports cars for a long time. He says his woodworking skill level is high enough "to know when to call Nick Patch for help". Although the boat was in fair shape when Munson bought her and a new transom was part of the purchase price, he has done some woodworking every year and has refinished the entire boat and more in his twelve years of owning the Ohlson.

Sitting in the main cabin, even with its current open air look, the difference between wood and plastic become apparent. The interior has a warmth imparted from being surrounded by wood that is more than just a built in interior. From the deck ribs overhead down, and out, through the keel below, all you see is wood. Looking out through the gap between two hull planks is completely foreign to the fiberglass mind but perfectly normal in a wood boat. The lines of the hull joints give the eye an explanation of the shape of the boat and its flow through the water that a plastic hull does not have. This may be why a wood boat is more pleasing to the eye.

Munson thinks that he will probably always have at least on wood boat. He went from an 18 foot wood sailboat to a 35 foot wood sailboat when he bought Ellida. He also currently owns a 21 foot Richardson. When pressed hard however, even a devout wood boat person like Munson will admit to the practicality of

fiberglass. For his “leave it behind and do it cruise” he would choose a Block Island 40 yawl!

Mountain Dancer Goes for the Bubbly

July 6-12, Volume 4, Number 7

The Ethan Allen Regatta at the Malletts Bay Boat Club was advertised as a fun race for cruising sailboats. In a heated editorial conference at Harbor watch, it was decided that the crack team would spend part of their Fourth of July going for the best prize - a bottle of champagne to be awarded to the last place boat. We all felt adequate to the task.

Race day dawned bright and clear. NOAA was predicting 10 to 15 knot winds out of the south for the broad Lake. That meant that Malletts Bay should have some wind that was more or less out of the south.

Pre race boat preparation was intense. When the crew arrived at Mountain Dancer, PFD's were assigned, lunch and drinks were put in the ice box, and the cockpit speaker was plugged in for the stereo. An inventory of prior racing experience revealed a wide range of time on the course. One crew member had crewed once at LCYC. It was the first time on a boat for another crew member. The captain had last raced on a Rhodes 19 in Port Jefferson, NY harbor in August, 1972. It was the first race for all of the other three, four if you count the dog, crew members.

We knew we were off to a good start when we tried to leave our slip at Malletts Bay Marina with a stern line still tied to the dock. In our fever pitch of excitement, we dieseled past the Boat Club, but we quickly realized our mistake on the far side of Coates Island. We turned around and found the committee boat after only one wrong try.

With the general idea of where we were supposed to start firmly in mind, we put up the sails. Because of the light winds we used the big , 160, genny. This sail completely obscures the front view of which ever side it

is flying on resulting in sailing half blind. But, we were only half blind.

We sailed around, trying some practice tacks and the captain made a really big discovery. The wind in Malletts Bay is very fluky and weird. All those little pieces of real estate that stick out into the water play around with where the air is going and how fast its getting there.

The course for the race was a start near the Colchester town beach, over to a mark in Niquette's Bay, then a reach to Beer Can Island and back to the committee boat by the town beach.

The ten minute horn went off at 1250 and we were in a pretty good position for our one minute, ten second handicapped start. At 1257 we were not in such a good position. We made our start around 1309, but we did manage to miss a boat coming through the start line on a port tack as we went through on a starboard tack.

The knotmeter on the boat was out for repair, so in order to judge our speed, one crew member, two if you count the dog, would jump in the water and swim after the boat. Her reports were invaluable inputs in guiding the sail trim.

There was some initial discord and squabbling over which boats we should follow and just where Niquette's Bay and the first mark actually were. These were resolved and harmony once again reigned among the crack Harbor watch crew as we tried to keep air in the genny on the down wind run.

After the turn around the first mark, the captain thought he could make it past a little point of land without first tacking down. He was wrong. By the time Mountain Dancer made it past that point, all the other boats in the race were somewhere in the distance. By the time we rounded the mark at Beer Can Island, the rest of the boats were nowhere to be seen.

Now that we had the race course to ourselves, we were able to settle down to business and have lunch. As the committee boat and the end of the race came into view, we tried to decide how many tacks would be needed to get us over the line. We revised this number upward several times.

As we went past the committee boat for our finish, we inquired about our position. Dave Ellis, the race chairman assured us that we had the champagne firmly in hand. With that good news we sailed over to the Boat Club to receive our hard won prize and the tumultuous accolades that would salute our effort.

The other racers did not disappoint us. The Harbor watch racing team got was the first to get their prize. The only thing was, they kept referring to Mountain Dancer as "the school bus". But, as they say, 'winning is everything' .

Big, Fast Boats From Vergennes

July 13-19, Volume 4, Number 8

Just about everybody in Vergennes seems to know Howard Miller and his boats. "I bought my dealership from him" was the comment Tom Denecker of Denecker Chevrolet made when he saw the Harbor watch issue from last year with a picture of Howard Miller and the SNAIL on the front page.

Miller is a man still very much involved with machines that go. His kitchen table had a car magazine, a motorcycle magazine and a motor boating magazine taking up most of the surface the evening I talked to him. His sunroom is filled with show and racing trophies that he has won over the years. The main racing cup lists BOLO BABE or SNAIL winning the Lake Champlain powerboat race from 1950 to 1959. Miller drove SNAIL to win the last four years of her racing career.

He had shown two of his boats, the SNAIL and Moonshine II on Saturday in the Antique & Classic Boat Show on Saturday, July 8. He bought these two boats at an auction in 1968. The auctioneer was a friend of his and called him before the auction to tell him that the boats had not been included in the inventory list that had been published for the auction. When Miller got to the auction, there was only one other boat collector there, "young Jake DeForge from Malletts Bay". De Forge got the Chris Craft Cadette that he wanted and Miller got the two boats he was after plus some other stuff for \$2100..

Moonshine was pretty much in the same condition then as she is now. SNAIL needed to be rebuilt. Miller stored her at Valez Marina in Port Henry, New York until he was approached by the Turcotte brothers in 1984. They restored her and she went back into the water in 1986 at the First Annual Champlain Antique & Classic

Boat Show where she won the People's Choice Award and Best of Class. The Turcotte brothers took the measurements off SNAIL and acquired the rights to manufacture under the name of the Garwood Boat Company and are now making new Baby Gars in Watervilit, New York.

Miller keeps his boat collection in a long shed. He said he has had to add on to the shed three times as his collection grows. "I keep buying boats to sell but then I never do sell them." The shed houses the two 33 foot Baby Gars, BOLO BABE and SNAIL. BOLO BABE is looking in need of work. Moonshine II, his 26 foot, front engined hydroplane is in the shed. He said that a former owner, one of the DuPonts had added three feet to the middle of the boat making her very awkward to turn. The boat has had a variety of engines including two Miller Indy engines bolted together, a Chrysler Hemi, and the current Miller Special made up from two engines out of a Cigarette.

The shed is also home to two 1948 Chris Crafts, a 17 foot runabout and a 24 foot pocket cruiser. In the back of the shed, he has a W.W.I Liberty aircraft engine, two spare supercharged Allison aircraft engines and two 500 hp Ford tank engines. These are only the larger items that are stored in his shed. The complete list of what is in that shed would fill the rest of this paper. He still has plans to get a few more items like a Hispano-Suiza engine and another Baby Gar that have been sitting over at the Valez Marina in Port Henry for about 25 years. He wants the engine as a spare for Moonshine. He also has his eyes on a 500 hp Packard aircraft engine. When I asked him where he was going to get parts for these engines, he said "the same place I get parts for the Liberty engine, I make them".

Miller is another person with a wealth of stories about the people and boats of Lake Champlain. He has

plans to share part of that wealth with future generations. He has willed his two Baby Gars to museums, BOLO BABE is going to the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and SNAIL is going to the museum in Clayton, New York. Lake Champlain has been and still is his favorite place to boat.

The Good Ship Lollipop

July 20-26, Volume 4, Number 9

A Sailing Daycare Center

Joy Pratt, owner of the Good Ship Lollipop Daycare, was born into a sailing family. Her father was a sailor and his father was a sailor.

Her sister, Bonnie Shore, was a National Women's Sailing champion and a co-founder of the Shore Sails Company. When Joy was six months old, she was out on her father's Star in a bassinet. She spent a couple of childhood years living a forty-some boot sailboat in the Hudson River while her father taught the owner how to sail. He helped found the Hewlett Point Yacht Club when the family lived on Long Island and then the Spofford Lake Yacht Club when the family moved to New England. In her childhood, she crewed for her father all over New England on the racing circuit, winning the New England districts several times.

In high school she went to the Vineyard Sailing Camp run by the Girl Scouts. There, she went from being a crew member who went along on her father's boat because she was needed, to being a skipper in her own right who wanted to compete. When she came home from camp, her father recognized the change and gave her opportunities to skipper. She went to the camp for another four years and then became a sailing counselor at the camp when she was in college. She went on to be a sailing counselor in Maine and then to being head of a sailing unit at a camp on Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire. Joy was also the head on the small crafts program at a camp on Lake St. Catherine in Vermont. She enjoyed the teaching and watching her students become sailors. From her experience, Joy is of the opinion that some people have the instincts to become

sailors and others just do not have the innate ability to relate a boat to the wind.

After graduating from U. Mass, and spending a year in Europe, she and her father went full out on the Lightning Regatta circuit for the summer. However, her interest in competition waned when she joined with her family delivering a 36 foot boat up the length of the Inter Coastal Waterway from Hilton Head to New York. She discovered the adventure of cruising during that trip.

She now runs a Family Daycare for children aged about 2 to 10. She tries to take them out on her McGregor 22, Joyful, once a week during the summer. She sails toward Schuyler Island with them and turns around and heads back home. She has found that a lot of tacking with daycare age children doesn't work as well as reaching. Joy gets a lot of satisfaction from taking her children out on Joyful. Even the most active children are quiet and respect the experience of being out on a sailboat. Each of them has a turn on the tiller so they can actually feel like they are sailing the boat.

In her free time, Joy continues to fulfill her love for adventure and cruising. She has recently sailed to Fort Ticonderoga and has been as far north as the Great Chazy river, as well as the points of call in between. Valcour Island with its picturesque cove and scenic hiking trails is her favorite retreat. Joy feels Vermonters are very lucky to have the Lake Champlain cruising grounds on their doorsteps.

Lil Toot Comes To Life

July 27-August 2, Volume 4, Number 10

Bob Vogel Builds a Tug Boat

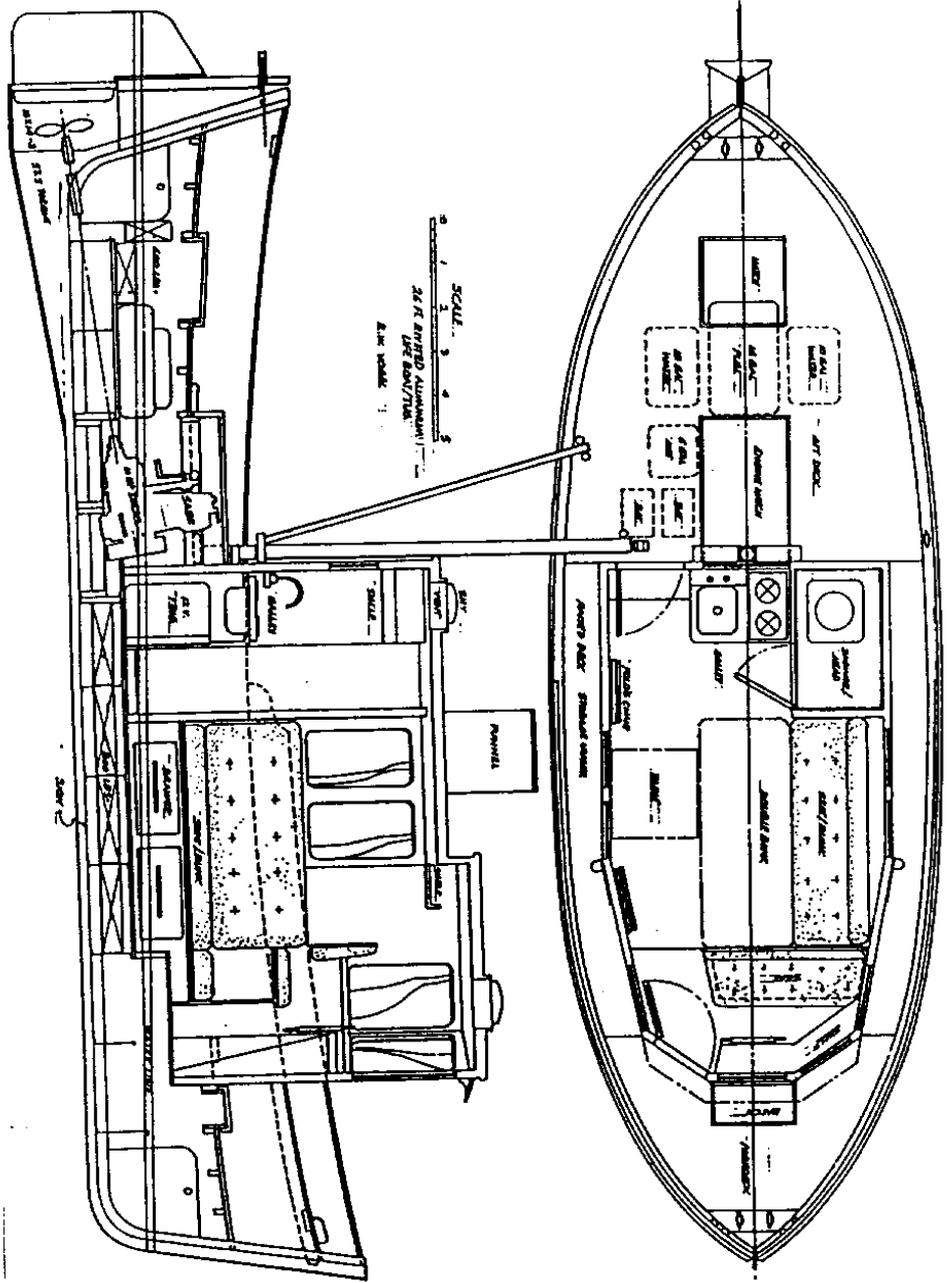
Some of you may remember the children's book about the tugboat "Lil Toot". Bob Vogel not only remembered it, he built himself a Lil-Toot.

Vogel is the person who created the small book of charts for the Lake that is so handy in the cockpit for those boaters whose velocity on the water does not get very far into the double digit numbers, if it gets there at all. That book came about from an idea he developed for his own use in a small sailboat cockpit. The latest version is in color, has a compass rose on each page, small scale latitude/ longitude lines and the maps overlap each other as you move through the pages. It is well worth the \$22 price.

Vogel is now retired from his profession as a technical illustrator. He worked for G.E. for many years and was also on his own. His work has been very diverse. He drew weapon systems for G.E. and he drew the trail maps you see for most of the large Vermont ski resorts. When he first came to Vermont in 1946, and decided to stay, he worked with Bill Hazelett at the Tick Tock Shop.

He has always liked to sail. In fact, he arrived in Vermont via a sailboat. He has had a long time interest in sailing canoes, both for racing and for cruising. He was responsible for getting Bob Schumaker of Canoe Imports, and then Mad River Canoe, interested in these quick, but hard to sail, craft.

The idea for actually making the tugboat he always wanted came about from desiring more creature comforts than their Catalina 22 could provide. As he and his wife got older, the notion of a boat with standing



headroom, a nice galley area and a head where you could stand up and even shower, became more and more appealing.

The current Lil-Toot started out as a 26 foot aluminum lifeboat from England. Its capacity was rated at 49 persons, which impressed his neighbors the day he trailered it home. When it returned in the spring after having been sandblasted and painted over the Winter, Vogel started to turn his plans into reality. He built it with a starboard alley, a center galley area and bunk/seat and head, with shower, to port. The pilot house is forward of the main cabin and one step up. The pilot house also has an exit to the foredeck. There is a large aft deck with a lazerette and the engine hatches.

One of his biggest problems was the location of the engine bed and the through hull hole for the propeller shaft. He ended up offsetting the shaft to clear the on piece stem post keel/keelson and sternpost that came with the lifeboat. The power plant that Vogel choose for his tug is a single cylinder 10 hp diesel from the Norwegian SAAB firm. This is not he same firm as the Swedish car maker. It turns out that SAAB means "husky" in Norwegian.

Most of the material for the deckhouse came form a local yard. The lead for the ballast came from some scrap linotype that Vogel melted into the shapes he needed. Despite Lil-Toot not being a "cost is no problem" project, she is a very attractive boat. She has a red bottom with green sides and a white boot top. Her topsides are cream and there is the funnel that all tugboats have to have. Vogel can sit on the deck of his house and proudly watch his latest creation swinging on her mooring.

Preserving The *Ticonderoga*

August 3-9, Volume 4, Number 11

A Top-Down Restoration Project

The steamship *Ticonderoga* has been the last of her kind. She was the last steamship to slide down the ways at the Shelburne Shipyard in 1906. Today, she is the last surviving example of a vertical engine, walking beam, side-wheeler steam ship still in existence.

Through her years, she has acquired many friends. Ralph Nading Hill is one friend. He launched the campaign to Save the *Ticonderoga* from economic ruin and the wreckers torch in 1950. He created the Civic Betterment Fund. "Each person donating ten dollars or more would receive a certificate making him an Honorary Mate of the Ti, signed by the captain and pilot and decorated with a picture of the boat, as well as two tickets good for any excursion during the coming season...The money would then be loaned at no interest to the Fisher Steamboat Company (current operators of the Ti) to discharge its obligations, and the Civic Betterment Fund would take the first mortgage on the boat." (from *The Story of the Ticonderoga*, Ralph Nading Hill, 1953, 1957.)

The efforts of Hill many others and the Civic Betterment Fund kept the Ti in operation for the 1950 season. In late December of that year, the boat was purchased by the Webbs for Shelburne Museum. The Museum operated the Ti for the 1951, 1952 and 1953 seasons. Operating proceeds during the 1953 season lead to the decision to retire the boat. She lay at her mooring during 1954 while the Museum decided what to do to preserve the boat. It was decided to move her almost two miles inland to a site on the grounds of the

Museum. This engineering feat took place over the Winter of 1954-1955, and is a story by itself.

The whistle of the Ti last blew on November 6, 1954 at 1010 as she was backed out of her berth at the Shelburne Shipyard for her last trip. If Chip Stulen has his way, her whistle will blow again when the current restoration project is completed. He is the project manager of a six man crew working on saving the Ti one more time. J. Warren and Lois McClure made a \$1 million donation in 1992 to restore and preserve the Ti. Stulen says this gift came just in time in the life of the boat. There had been several less than perfect repairs to the boat that were threatening to turn her into a rotting hulk.

The crew, Chip Stulen, Tom Hill, Rob White, Peter Tomasi, Mike Fineran, Zack Patten and Clem Thompson started working on the restoration project in April, 1993. His plans call for the project to be completed in another two years.

They started at the top and are working the way down. The sun and the elements are now the primary enemies of the boat instead of the water. She now has a permanent orientation to the sun and she no longer rolls to shed rain and snow. The hurricane deck was originally painted canvas over a tongue-and-groove base. Preserving this uppermost deck was one of the many decisions that had to be made regarding authenticity versus longevity. The canvas over wood deck required constant repair and maintenance. When the Ti had her full crew, this upkeep was possible, but not in her current situation. The crew removed the old decking. Each nail hole in the deck beams underneath was drilled out and injected with epoxy to preserve the wood. Where the beams were too far gone, new pieces were scarfed in. New Douglas fir planking was put down and covered with two layers of marine mahogany plywood

laid on the diagonal and epoxyed to the planking. On top of this, they epoxyed, and then painted, two layers of synthetic fabric. The result is a tough, weather tight membrane that is able to resist heavy foot traffic, including high heels, and looks very much like a painted canvas deck.

The crew is taking no shortcuts this time. They are using tremendous amounts of labor and skill to keep the Ti looking as original as possible and to make her last as long as they know how. The project has received a lot of support from local and national companies as well as from private individuals. It has also received a lot of volunteer time and effort. And, because there are many people still around who sailed or worked on the Ti, the project has gotten a lot of historical information that otherwise would have been lost. Some old honeymoon pictures showed the acid etched pattern in every other windows around the turtle deck. The Ti's last captain, Martin Fisher, spent three long days with the crew going over some of the things he remembered about the boat. The crew could not find any gold leaf in the "Ticonderoga" lettering on the pilothouse. He told them that the last time the sign was painted, they couldn't afford the gilding.

Stulen came to the project from his own boat shop in Michigan. He had married a Vermonter, and after 17 years in Michigan, she decided it was time to return to Vermont. He is immersed in his work. His office is a virtual Ticonderoga museum by itself. The drafting table holds the boat plans that were re-created by Ray Sargent. On the wall, there are photographs of the boat, there Ti T-shirts and posters. One poster lists some of the "Friends of the Ticonderoga Restoration Project". They include 3M Company, Barrett's Tree Service, Bethel Mills Lumber, Blue Flame Gas, Burlington Rent-All, Diamond Chemicals, Inc., Eastman Kodak Co., Green

Mountain Power Corp., Gougeon Brothers, the Glidden Company, S.T. Griswald Co. K Mart Corp, Moore's Lumber and Building Supply, Lightworks, Inc., Morse Lumber and Millwork, Portland Glass, Queen City Steel Co., Vermont Tent Co., Yandow Sales and Service, as well as others. There are more companies who have given that are not on that list, such a Conant Custom Brass. The helped to reconstruct the port binnacle lamp in the pilothouse."

I am sure that the hard realities of trying to run a steamboat in the second half of the Twentieth Century will gradually fade with the years and leave us with the most exhilarating recollections of transport by sidewheel steamboat. I think we owe a great deal to the Shelburne Museum, which has made it possible for us to have more than pictures to remind us of it - a superb specimen, in iron, brass and paneled wood, of the great North American steamboat for all future generations to study and enjoy" (Ralph Nading Hill, *ibid.*) We can also thank the McClures, all of the other supporters and Chip Stulen and his crew for preserving the Ti for us and for future generations.

The Seal on Otter Creek

August 10-16, Volume 4, Number 12"

He's a hard working guy.", said Howard Miller about Tom Eriksen. Tom and Shelly Eriksen were looking for a way to stretch the number of months that they could make an income from either working on the water or on boats and still live in Vermont. Tom Eriksen has only worked on boats or the water and that is all he ever wants to do. His main business is running Tom's Marine, a boat repair service on Basin Harbor Road in Pantown. They came up with the idea of running a narrated tour of Otter Creek. They figured other people were doing it on the Lake, so why not on the river they knew so well. Shelly Eriksen asked her mother about the idea, and her mother also thought it was a good idea. And, since Shelly always listens to her mother, they went ahead with the project.

They thought about getting a pontoon boat, but rejected it as not fitting the historical character of the river. One can well imagine Commodore MacDonough looking askance at a pontoon boat talking about his fleet on Otter Creek during the War of 1812. They found a boat in St. Augustine, Florida through an ad in Boats & Harbors that looked suitable. Tom Eriksen went over to check it out on his way to the Datona 500 this Spring and ended up buying her. The Seal is a 40 foot boat that started out as a Coast Guard cutter. She was built in 1951 in North West Harbor, Maine. She can carry up to 33 passengers and is powered by a 671 Detroit Diesel driving a single screw. She has a small galley and, of course, a head. During part of her career, Seal was a commuter boat in Boston Harbor. The Eriksens had her trucked up to Vermont in April.

The tour starts at the Seal's dock on the south side of the river, across from the old shipyard site and the

refurbished city dock. The trip is 14 miles in total, down Otter Creek and out into the Lake to turn around and then back up the river. While they are out in the Lake, they point out Kingsland Bay State Park to the north and the Maritime Museum and Basin Harbor to the south as other nearby attractions. It takes two and a half hours in total. During the trip down the river, there is historic and wildlife narration about Otter Creek. The river is teeming with wildlife and steeped in history. They have seen a bald eagle and a gray egret as well as the more common heron and kingfishers. There are turtles galore as well a beaver, muskrat and otters.

They originally set up the tour schedule to meet the Sugarbush train and the Vergenne's cow shuttle bus, expecting these to be people who would also like to take a river tour. That expectation has not worked out. Almost all of the passengers, as far as they know, have been tourists who came for the river tour or who were visiting with friends or relatives and the tour was something to do. They have had a wedding and a retirement party on the boat and they ran a special seven hour trip on the Fourth of July. One thing all of the passengers have in common, is they enjoyed the trip according to Shelly Ericksen.

Right now, there are two trips scheduled for every Sunday, one at 1400 and other at 1800. Weekday trips are according to demand. They plan to run the trips through the middle of October. The second trip on Sunday, will get moved earlier as the days get shorter.

They have had people from Mexico, Wales, California and other places. The river trip is fascinating whether you come from Burlington or Bagladesh. It is a trip that people who are used to the Lake will find completely different. Otter Creek is a very lazy, relaxing river with low banks, not much current and gentile curves. Regardless of where you come from, take the

trip, you'll enjoy it. For more information, call 802-475-2465.

SENIOR CITIZEN SERVICES

44

Up a Lazy River

August 17-23, Volume 4, Number 13

As you turn into Otter Creek from the Lake, the world changes dramatically. The eight-mile trip to the city of Vergennes is like a voyage on a slow, meandering river in the South. You almost expect to see alligators plop into the water as you pass. The north bank of the river rises sharply for several feet, like a levee. The south bank has a very shallow slope. Trees line both sides of the river, providing shade and habitat for a variety of water birds. Instead of alligators, the banks are home to blue heron, kingfishers, a pair of white cranes, and wandering deer. The trees are dense enough to break whatever wind was blowing on the Lake, and the river current is slow through the brown water. The dominant sounds are birds and your boat's engine

There are hazards in the river that need to be avoided. At the mouth of Otter Creek, a ridge of rock protrudes from the north bank about twenty or thirty feet into the river. There are logs, floating and semi-submerged, along the route. The lowest water depth we saw on the meter was seven feet with the Lake's level at 95.6 feet. However, it is definitely advised to stay in the center of the channel and to keep a sharp watch.

The speed limit for the river is 5 mph, and there are No Wake Zones posted at the numerous docks along the way. It is also polite to slow for the anglers along the bank.

As we rounded the last bend in the river, just after the old Eriksen's Crows Nest Marina shed, the city of Vergennes presented us with a surprise. Instead of the nearly deserted, crumbling concrete bulkhead we expected to tie up to, we found that the city had installed

new, floating docks on both the north, downtown, side and the south, park, side of the river, and that ten other boats had already tied up. We ended up anchoring in midstream, just past the last dock. The city is also providing a shuttle bus service, with fares by donation, into town for those who don't want to make the three-block, uphill walk. These changes are a vast improvement over what had been there before, and, according to a spokesperson for the city, they seemed to be attracting a lot more boat traffic up the river.

For boaters coming upriver from the Lake, the river ends at the bowl below the massive falls on Otter Creek. These falls now power a hydroelectric plant; historically, they provided the economic base for the creation of the city. The first sawmill was built at the falls in 1765, and the town grew rapidly after the Revolution. It was organized as a city in 1794, according to Ralph Nading Hill ("Lake Champlain, Key to Liberty", 1977).

Vergennes became a shipbuilding center, and by the time of the War of 1812, it had a rolling mill, eight forges, two furnaces and a wire factory. (Russell P. Bellico, "Sails and Steam in the Mountains", 1992). This is where Commodore Thomas MacDonough built the fleet that defeated the British at the Battle of Plattsburgh, in the Summer of 1814. His flagship, the "U.S.S. Saratoga", was built in forty days from her keel laying on March 7, 1814. Other ships were built in record time at the shipyard, in order to assemble a fleet that could challenge the British. The shipyard was located at the site of the concrete bulkhead, where there is a small park and a stone monument commemorating the efforts of that distant war.

On the corner where the road from the dock intersects Main Street stands the Bixby Memorial Library, a large, imposing building, almost foreboding with its classical architecture. The traditional park in the center of town has a big marble monument to

Commodore MacDonough and his exploits, and an old-fashioned wooden bandstand.

The Vermont Pasta Company restaurant is located in the old hotel on the park. Main Street also has two pizza places; a liquor and beer store; Main Street Bistro, with its handwritten menu (the most expensive entree goes for \$14.50); a Methodist and Episcopal church; and the Vergennes Opera House, which a local group is actively trying to restore. There is also a general store across the street from the Library that opens early, so you can pick up the paper or whatever before you leave in the morning.

Watching the Main Street activity from an outside table at one of the pizza places on a warm Saturday night reminds this viewer of scenes from "The Last Picture Show", except that the buildings are a lot older. (According to the plaque on the law offices of Ouimette and Runcie, their building dates from 1795.) This trip up the river with a dinner on Main Street is a fine weekend boating adventure.

Teaching Boats

August 24-30, Volume 4, Number 14

New Boates

Boats are mechanical things, just ask anyone who has had to fix one. Like most mechanical things, the ability to use them properly comes through a teaching and learning process. Very few people have the innate ability to sail or to build a boat.

The Winds of Ireland and the Burlington Parks and Recreation Department in cooperation offered, for the first time, a course in large (30 plus feet) sailboat handling. The instructors for the course are Robin Jeffers and Paul Smith. Jeffers holds a 50 ton Coast Guard license for Sail Auxiliary and has 20 years of experience cruising Lake Champlain and the Caribbean as well as live aboard experience. Smith, has 22 years of sailing and racing experience and has been teaching the sailing courses at the Community Boathouse for 3 years. The boats used in the course are the Winds of Ireland Hunters based at the Boathouse.

The course was scheduled to meet four hours a night for five nights. The syllabus is comprehensive. The broad areas covered were: anchoring, mooring, docking, navigation, reefing, provisioning, ships systems, weather, safety, chartering, the dinghy and further study.

The classroom was the big Winds of Ireland Hunters. The night I sat in on the class, they were using the 33 foot Limerick. The instruction situation was real life, out on the boat. The instruction method was no loud voices, praise and lots of patience. For anyone who has learned to sail under a different method, Jeffers and Smith's style was a vast improvement. In addition, they teach from experience. When Jeffers is talked about

provisioning a charter boat, she used example of what she had done and how it worked. One anecdote she mentioned was packing the frozen food for the trip with dry ice and spending a couple of hours in the bathroom at Logan Airport trying to get rid of the dry ice the airline wouldn't accept.

There were four students in the course; Scott Liebel, Scott Thompson, Ron Caldwell and Jeff York. They all took the course "because I wanted to learn how to sail a bigger boat".

There was no wind on evening that I sat in, so all of the maneuvering was done under power. The first lesson was bringing the boat onto a mooring. We took Limerick outside the breakwater and used a racing mark as a practice buoy. Each of the students got to make a pass. Docking came next. First they brought the boat up to the face dock at the Boathouse, then bow first into a slip ending with backing into the slip. Again each student had the wheel for a pass while the others practiced jumping onto the dock and setting the lines. It was fun to watch the student's confidence build as the evening progressed. The feeling of teamwork also built during the evening. And, under the skilled teaching of Jeffers and Smith, there were no crunching sounds in any of the 12 docking passes.

The course is designed to prepare its students for chartering. It also gives them the experience of sailing a big boat. The course will be offered again, next June. They plan to either move the time to weekends to make it easier for couples with children or other weekday time demands or to offer both weekends and weekday evenings depending on the number of people who are interested. If the course sounds like it would be something you would find useful and/or enjoyable, look for the announcements in Harbor watch. You could

also contact Jeffers at 802-863-5090 and ask to be put on a mailing list.

OLD BOATS

History can be a valuable teaching tool. The Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and the Lake Champlain Basin Science Center are building a 20 foot replica of a Burlington Sharpie. Construction was begun at the Maritime Museum and the project was moved to the Science Center when it opened. Douglas Brooks is the boatbuilder in charge and he has three young people referred by the Vermont Department of Employment and Training working with him and learning woodworking and traditional boat building skills. Brooks has his own boat building shop in Portland, Oregon where he specializes in historic replicas.”

Like many types of early yachts, the sharpie originally developed as a workboat. They were first built around New Haven, Connecticut in the early 1800’s for the oyster fishery. Their shallow hulls allowed them to skim the mudflats in search of oysters and their speed gave the owners an advantage in getting the catch to market. The use of the sharpie spread to the Chesapeake and even to the Gulf Coast. The use of the sharpie spread to the pleasure boats. Their simple shape made them inexpensive and relatively easy to build, and their speed inevitably led to the development of racing classes.

Sharpies were introduced to Lake Champlain in the late 1870’s. The Reverend W.H. Murray, writing for *Forest and Stream* under the name ‘Adirondack’ Murray, extolled the virtues of the sharpies and began building them in Burlington. Soon the Sharpie Yacht Club was formed which later merged with the Burlington Yacht Club. The Burlington builders were known for their experimental sailing rigs in an effort to

make the boats even faster. Soon sharpies up to 50 feet were being built for racing and family cruising. The cost of these larger boats spurred the development of smaller, more affordable classes in the 20-24 foot range." (from Nineteenth-Century Yachting on Lake Champlain in a press release from the Science Center.)

The sharpie is a very simple boat. The ribs are from oak, the planking is white pine and the mast is spruce. They are flat bottomed with a simple hull shape. Despite their simplicity, Brooks believes they could give any modern boat on the Lake a good run. He would like to see a sharpie challenge develop with about a 35 foot boat. He can see that developing into a rebirth of a sharpie fleet racing on the Lake.

The project is open to the public at the Science Center. The sharpie is being built under a cover on the parking lot side of the Center. People who go to see the project are invited to suggest names for the completed boat. Some of the names in the book so far are Frankie the Boat, The Moonshine, Sounddollar, Coo Coo and Stardust.

The public is also invited to the launching scheduled for Monday, September 4, at 1100. Boaters are invited to escort the sharpie on her maiden voyage down the Lake to Basin Harbor where she will spend the winter at the Museum. If you can't make the launch, but are out on the Lake that day, wave to her when she goes by.

Valcour Island: Well Worth A Visit

August 31-September 6, Volume 4, Number 15

Valcour Island is a popular destination for boaters speaking both major languages heard around the Lake. In the spirit of no summer would be complete without a Valcour piece, this week's Scenes recycles a story from last year with a few updates.

The Americans and the British are tied at one apiece for naval battles around Valcour Island.

On the morning of October 11, 1776, Benedict Arnold's small fleet lay in wait in the channel between Valcour Island and New York as the British sailed by in the main channel. The British fleet discovered the American force after it had passed by the island, and was forced to turn into the wind to engage the Americans. However, Sir Guy Carleton and Captain Thomas Pringle had twice the boats and twice the firepower of the Americans, and there was no doubt as to the outcome of the battle. The remains of Arnold's battered fleet slipped away under the cover of heavy mist during the night and fled south, trying to seek the protection of Fort Ticonderoga. Their luck ran out on the morning of October 13, as the fog lifted and a strong, cold wind blew from the south. The "Lee" was run ashore at Split Rock and destroyed, while the "Washington" and four gondolas made it to Arnold's Bay, where they were scuttled and burned.

The next round went to the Americans, even though the British had a slight superiority in tonnage, men, and cannons. On Sunday morning, September 11, 1814, the U.S.S. "Saratoga", commanded by Commodore Thomas MacDonough, and H.M.S. "Confiance", commanded by Captain George Downie, exchanged broadsides. The "Saratoga" had her starboard guns eliminated in the duel but was able to kedge around and bring her port

battery to bear on the “Confiance”. The “Confiance”, with her anchor cable shot away, could not turn. Faced with the overwhelming odds of the “Saratoga”'s fresh port guns, and with her Captain killed in action, the “Confiance” was forced to strike her colors. (The above is adapted from “The Lake Champlain and Lake George Valleys”, Wallace E. Lamb, 1940.)

Today, Valcour Island is a quiet state park managed by the New York Environmental Commission. It's a fun place for the family to visit. Even the place names are romantic – Smugglers Bay, Sloop Cove, Paradise Bay, Tiger Point, Spoon Bay. All of these are on the east side of the island. The west side is generally more shallow and exposed to the south at Bluff Point which does have some water, but it too has romantic place names like Indian Point and Butterfly Bay and an old abandoned lighthouse. There is a group in Plattsburgh working to preserve this lighthouse and occasionally they have an open day at the lighthouse.

Smugglers Harbor is at the southern end of the eastern side island and is the smallest. The southern pocket of Smugglers has the deeper water, but it shelves to rock ledge on the island side and to a rocky bottom on the Lake side. It can be tricky to get a grip on the rock, and on our last visit, we needed three tries. To prevent swinging, a stern tie-off to the iron rings on the shore is necessary. Depending on where you anchor, about 200 feet of line may be needed. The northern pocket is shallow, and suited for shallow draft boats.

Smugglers Harbor is the most secluded of the three anchorages, and seems the most like a tropical island (except for the cold water and lack of palm trees). On the shore, there's an iron-fenced enclosure, a monument to four Canadian Imperial Force sailors from World War I: J. Ray Allen, J. Campbell MacFarlane, J.E. Jysle Millen, and D.N. Campbell Ross. It is also a monument to

"Kathleen 1889", and to the Captain of the sailors' ship, Gerald Walker Birks, O.B.E., 1872-1950.

In both location and size, Sloop Cove is in the middle. It has deep water in its middle, and shoals as you approach the beach on the island. The bottom tends to be weedy, with mud and sand. There are fossils to be found in the rock ledges on the north tip of Sloop Cove, and there's rock climbing there, with neat stuff to be found as you walk along the rocks.

Spoon Bay is at the north end of the east side of the island and is the biggest anchorage. It also has the nicest beach. We have never anchored in Spoon, but I think the bottom is mud/sand and probably weedy.

At each of the anchorages, the Park Service has provided a one-hole privy. There is usually toilet paper, but bringing your own is a sure bet. At the Sloop Bay site, there are some broad leafed ferns which I'm told work quite well, too.

There are well marked yellow plastic disks nailed to the trees on the walking trails (no bicycles allowed) on the island. There is a perimeter trail around the whole island, and two cross island trails, Nomad and Royal Savage, the latter named after Benedict Arnold's flagship, which was sunk early in the battle. The walking is generally easy, with a variety of trees and plants. Except for people, there is almost no animal life to be seen on the island, and there are few bugs around that bite animals, which makes the walking even easier.

The south end of the island is covered with dense pine which has choked out everything else. As you go toward the middle and inland, the pine is mixed with oak, and at the north end there is a profusion of old and new hardwoods, and some cleared patches. There are ferns and other plants everywhere to enjoy on your walk.

There is plenty for the nature lover to look at on Valcour Island (also called Almost One Rock according to the information board in Butterfly Bay), as well as picnic areas, camping and fun in the water. It's definitely another good weekend trip.

Next year we will get over to the west side of the island and try to visit the lighthouse so as to be able to include those perspectives on Valcour when we rerun this story next year.

Mountain Dancer Sails Again

September 7-13, Volume 4, Number 16

Once again, Mountain Dancer was talked into going racing. This time it was the Automaster/Mercedes-Benz MS Regatta. A worthy cause to coax a boat that just doesn't understand going around in geometric shapes back out again. Mountain Dancer, thinks go from A to B, start somewhere and end up somewhere else not go nowhere except where you started from. Oh well, it was for a worthy cause and NYNEX Yellow Pages had sponsored us and that seemed like a perfect match, yellow boat, yellow pages.

The major coup of the day came at the very beginning. We pulled up to the face dock at the boathouse to pick up the rest of the crew and Alden Pellett, staff photographer for the Burlington Free Press came up and asked if we were the press boat. Since there are very few other boats on the Lake that look like Mountain Dancer, (one other, but its white with a blue boot top stripe and lives a Marble Island.) I figured that someone had set up the Harbor watch boat to be the official press boat. It made sense to me, so I said "Yes". He put his gear and himself on board where he remained until we got back to the Boathouse much, much later. But, he got some great pictures of the race including the one that appeared on the front page of the Sunday, September 3, edition of the paper.

We picked up the rest of the crew and motored out to the start area between Proctor Shoal and Juniper Island. The wind was light out of the north and the northwest. Mountain Dancer is good in light winds if the engine is on, otherwise, she is not so good. This was an omen of things to come. The starts were delayed by about 15 minutes from the published time and our actual start was delayed by about 5 minutes from the rest of

our class because we were somewhere else instead of the start line. Another omen.

The crew for this race was much more highly trained in sailboat racing than the crew for the last race. There was only a brief discussion among the crew members about which side of the boat was the starboard side and it was resolved correctly. In fact, this effort was so serious that the stereo was never turned on. That's real dedication to racing.

Things didn't go too badly at first. In fact, we even seemed to pass some of the other boats in our class. Of course, we weren't real sure about which class we were actually racing against. We started with the classics. A discussion with the Bombard family aboard Black Rose netted the opinion that the boat was not a classic but that the skipper was. We had originally intended to be in the non-spinnaker cruising class, which is where we ended up.

Things started to go downhill (not a real racing term) when we consistently found ourselves where the wind wasn't. Even when we managed to find some wind, it struggled to make it into the double number range. Twelve knots was about the most we saw. Mountain Dancer stops yawning around 10 knots.

The outcome of the story is, once again, Mountain Dancer was the last boat over the finish line. The committee boat blew its horn to mark our crossing and started to pull up its anchor as we turned on the diesel to get over to the BBQ.

Some of the conversation at the BBQ was interesting. One person was talking about the expense and trouble he went through to lighten his boat by 500 pounds. Mountain Dancer could do that just by taking off the dishes, pot and pans and the stereo gear. She is just not cut out to be a racing boat.

Yes, Virginia, There Was a Captain Mallet!

September 14-October 4, Volume 4, Numbers 17-19

History seems to agree that Malletts Bay is named after Captain Jean Pierre Mallett, also spelled with one t. Beyond there is a lot of differing thoughts as to how he came to be on Malletts Head and what it was that he did there. There is also dispute as to when he was there.

The **Burnham Memorial Library in Colchester** has in its collection copies of *Green Mountain Whittlin's*, Volume XXIX, 1977-1978, A publication of the **Green Mountain Folklore Society** in which there are two papers on the subject of Captain Mallett. To give the story a wider circulation and, perhaps, to generate some additional information about the Captain, the papers are reproduced here as they appear in *Green Mountain Whittlin's*, less their footnotes.

The Legend of Captain Mallet

(Editor's Note: The following paper on the mysterious Captain Mallet, late of Colchester, was written by Mary Wheatley in 1977 for a Folklore English class taught by Prof. Richard Sweterlitsch at the University of Vermont.)

The legend of Jean Pierre Mallet, alias Captain Mallet, is surrounded by much uncertainty in the minds of Colchester residents. There are few historical facts known about this eccentric wayfarer; most of what can be narrated are those passed down from generation to generation.

A few articles and documents form the basis of fact concerning the life of Jean Pierre Mallet. The first of these is to be found in "Colchester Old Home Week and One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Town's

Settlement, which states that Colchester was one of the New Hampshire Land Grants and was chartered in June 1763 to Edward Burling and a party of others. The first persons to settle in the town were Ira Allen and Remember Baker, in the fall of 1771.

Many of the early records of the town are in the writing of Ira Allen proprietor's clerk. These are well preserved and legible at the present time. At the time that Baker and Allen located here a Frenchman named Mallet lived on Mallets Head. There is no record of where he came from or when he came.

The *Vermont Historical Gazetteer* presented the following on the life Captain Mallet:

In the meantime a mysterious creature of the name of Mallet, a Frenchman, resided on Mallet's Head — but when and by what authority he settled there, we have no account. But that he was there before the Revolution, and had been there for many years before, is evident.

He was an old man when he died and had passed over ample time in the period of his life to have gone onto the Head, under the old French grants, before the conquest of Canada and the close of the French War. Or he might have squatted on the Head while the French jurisdiction extended over the country and found no occasion to give up his safe retreat on change of masters. His improvements must have been earlier than those under the charter; but all that remains of him is the old cellar and the name he left to the point and the bay where he lived."

The following brief statement is found in the *History of Chittenden County, Vermont*:

Captain Mallet as he was called by everyone was one of the first settlers in town. No one knows where he came from, but he built a log cabin on the shore of the bay which bears his name, long before the Revolution. Here he lived a strange sort

of life, hermit or host as it happened, and died a very old man in 1789 or 1790.”

In a book titled *Lake Champlain - Key to Liberty* the following is narrated:

A short distance north of Colchester Point, another vestige of French settlement is found at the head of Mallets Bay. Here was the home of Captain Mallet, of whom little is known; a Frenchman, he had probably settled there under a French grant many years before the Revolution; he was known to be there from 1774 until his death in 1789 or 1790. Captain Mallet (whose name probably should be written 'Maillet' or 'Malet') was apparently a man of considerable independence of spirit; he feared no one and acknowledged allegiance neither to the English King nor the American colonies. It seems that he never accepted the Treaty of Peace which gave control over his lands to the English; his sympathies were on the side of the rebellion, for he welcomed spies and smugglers into his home and all through the Revolutionary period.

Beers Atlas also contains some interesting information about Mallet. Of interest to me was the following excerpt about his life:

In the meantime a mysterious person by the name of Mallet, a Frenchman, resided on Mallet's Head, but who he was, and where he came from, and when and by what authority he settled there, we have no account. But that he was here during the Revolution, and had been for many years before is evident. He was an old man when he died in 1789. The clearing about his house had the appearance of being very ancient and must have been earlier than those under the charter. All that remains of him is a very old cellar and the name he left to the point and bay where he lived. For seven years, from the Spring of 1776, the town was abandoned by settlers, save the venerable Captain Mallet, as he was called, who remained undisturbed by the British or Indians, acknowledging allegiance to no one, keeping a tavern for spies or smugglers and fearing neither principalities or powers.

One document which I was shown was a letter written to the Coates family from Persac, France, in 1894. The English translation follows:

Persac, March 30, 1894

Dear Sir:

The Diocese of Burlington informed me that I should get in touch with you. I am searching for the area where my great uncle died in order to have a death record. His name was Jean Pierre Mallet; he owned goods, lands, a hotel, a river which bore his name, and left apparently, a great fortune at his death. Could you, sir, tell me about him and inform me about the life he led there? I would be very happy and very grateful to you.

Sir, I am counting on you to get in touch with me sometime for I would be very interested in hearing his story.

There was a Mallet train leaving the factories of Montreal or Clagary around 1832.

Finally, sir, I thank you in advance for being so kind as to answer me.

If the foregoing is found in the sate of Vermont, it should not be too hard to find a record of death and all other details concerning the death and burial.

Accept, sir, my heartfelt thanks.

Madame Mallet Roit

à Persac Vienne

France

The above excerpts and letter are included in this paper to illustrate the factual history as far as I can discern about Captain Mallet. But as can be seen, even the reported facts are very contradictory. Thus, they contribute more by way of background than actual fact.

The interpretation of the legend is widely varied, as can be seen in the following conversations with some Clochester residents. Recent owners of the Marble Island Resort on Mallet's Head received some of their version of Captain Mallet's life from the previous owner, Mrs. John Paul Jones. She conveyed to them that Captain Mallet was not a pirate, but in actuality was a framer.

Fred and David Fayette are the present owners of the resort, and according to them, Captain Jean Paul Mallet was born in Lussac-les-Chateau, France and traveled to Canada. He left Canada and settled on the land now owned by the Marble Island Club, located on Mallett's Head (approximately 1774). Here he built parts of what was known as the Marble Island Tavern Hotel on the headland. A variety of reasons are given for why he settled at the Head. It is claimed he was of independent nature and spirit because he feared no one, acknowledged allegiance neither to the King (England) nor to the American colonies. It appears he didn't accept the Treaty of Peace which gave control of Mallets Head to the British during the fighting.

The Fayettes believed Mallet built his lodge to supply the British and Continental smugglers alike, so that they all could find food and lodging at his hotel. He also charged duties for boats going in or out of the area. This is presumably how the Captain made his fortune, and this is presumably the gold he buried on or near the island.

Mrs. Jones told them that Captain Mallet was a farmer because it is assumed he maintained well over 400 acres of land, and he raised cattle on a large scale. His land may have surpassed that of the Head area. Perhaps if this was true he would have settled under the French Raimbault Grant, which was composed of an enormous amount of land and could have easily encompassed the whole of the Malletts Bay area. Presumably he died in 1843 on the island near the resort.

(Or he died in 1789 or 1790, "a very old man" as the Vermont books say. His age does jibe, either; his great-niece says he was born in 1770 and left France in 1789; the Vermont sources say he settled on Malletts Head "long before the Revolution." Is there any chance Captain Mallet left a son by same name in France, who later came to America to join his father?—*Editor*)

**Yes, Virginia, There
Was a Captain Mallet!**

At the resort I met Sue Systema, who works there as custodian. She said many of the workers at the resort have searched for the treasure which Captain Mallet buried, and they have found a pound and a half of gold. Also, there is a belief among the workers and members of the resort that when a rainbow appears across the lake, the treasure is buried at the end of this rainbow.

Continuing my search for information about this particular figure, I met Mrs. Gladys Nichols, who offered to share her theories about Captain Mallet. Mrs. Nichols moved to the Malletts Bay area in 1925. She and her spouse bought a farmhouse at this time, but it burned in 1948. She built a new farmhouse on the same plot of land. Presently she is 78 years old, a member of the Malletts Bay Club, and resides next to Brown Ledge Camp. She heard about the legend of Captain Mallet from hearsay in the area. She speaks:

I have always assumed he lived over yonder behind the barn, heading towards the Spaulding shoreline. There is a clearing on top of the mountain over there, and I presumed that Captain Mallet built his homestead up there. Every year the children of Brown Ledge Camp attempt to retrieve the mysterious missing treasure. They go up to the clearing by the maple groves and dig for hours upon hours. Every year since I have been here they have found only insignificant artifacts, such as rusty pieces of iron, broken bottles and rocks.

She believed Captain Mallet came to this area because it was isolated and secluded and this would allow him to carry on his clandestine activities, such as being a pirate, and this area would provide a good place to smuggle goods in and out onto Lake Champlain. She pointed to a jagged cove out on the lake and remarked that the cove provided an ideal breakway from the wind, and was an excellent place for a pirate like Captain Mallet to carry on his corrupt activities.

Mrs. Nichols has always been interested in the legend and believes he was a pirate from France, who settled on the rise beyond her farmhouse and made his profits from the occupation of smuggling. She also feels that these profits are buried around her homestead.

I first talked to David Coates, son of William Coates, who lent me the use of the very old letter written to the Coates family by the great-niece of Captain Mallet in 1894.

I later interviewed William Coates, who has been living on Coates Island all his life, and his forefathers before him. He said that as a young boy, intrigued by the many superstitions of Captain Mallet, he often journeyed to the Head in quest of treasure. On one occasion, he remembered, he dug up several brass buttons, and ran to show them to his father. His father told the young lad that the buttons belonged to Captain Mallet, and he has long since misplaced them.

My next step was to interview George Porter, the proprietor of Captain Mallet's Steak House, to see if he had any information to offer. New to me was the existence of a peg leg supposedly belonging to Captain Mallet, and Porter said the leg could be found at Harbor Hideaway, a restaurant on the Shelburne Road.

The manager at Harbor Hideaway told me the peg leg of Captain Mallet was on display in Montreal. He described the leg to me and told me how it was found. He said the leg was found by some people who were digging for artifacts on Mallets Head. Here they discovered an old cedar peg leg. The leg was one which replaced the entire leg and not just the lower portion, as usually thought of, and because of where it was found it was presumed to be Captain Mallet's. To authenticate the leg they took it to be dated and found it to have originated in the 1700's. After that they put it in the Harbor Hideaway, which is a museum-type restaurant.

This piece of evidence, however, has not been conclusively linked to Captain Mallet.

From all I have found about the legend of Captain Mallet, I am sure of but one thing—he did exist. What he did in the Mallets Bay area is still a mystery in my mind because all of the evidence seems to be contradictory and ambiguous. The questions still abound: Was he a pirate, hermit, smuggler, innkeeper or farmer? Did he have a peg leg? Is there a treasure?...etc...

I sincerely doubt anyone will ever find the entire truth about Captain Mallet.

More About Captain Mallet

September 28-October 4, Volume 4, Number 19

By **Jeanette Pyle**, Burlington

Back in the 1950's, I believe, Don O'Brien of Burlington wrote a "Vermont Vignettes" column for the *Burlington Free Press*. One of these columns relates some developments in the Captain Mallet story as told him by Albert J. Gravel, a former mayor of Winooski.

In 1939, Gravel said, when he was mayor, he got a letter from Elie Thibaud of Vendee-sur-Mer, France, asking for information on what had become of the fortune and lands of Pierre Mallet.

M. Thibaud indicated that Mallet's holdings were considerable. A map enclosed with the letter indicated that Mallet's holdings were considerable. A map enclosed with the letter indicated all the land adjacent to Mallets Bay, and included the Four Brothers Islands, which on this map, were very close to Mallets Bay, not out in the middle of Lake Champlain.

Gravel checked with Hemenway's Gazetteer and Thompson's Vermont, discovering that Ethan Allen and Remember Barker had bought the land from the Winooski River to the Lamoille River. Then, as O'Brien writes:"

One day, Allen and Baker set out to explore their holdings. Arriving at Mallets Bay at about the spot where the Lake Champlain Club (now the Marble Island resort) now stands they came upon a very old recluse. They demanded what right he had on their property.

He said he was Pierre Mallet, that he'd come down from Canada in a canoe, found the peace and the solitude to his liking, and stayed. Since the man was so old, Allen and Baker decided to let him settle there.

About 1792, Allen returned to the spot and found the cabin in ruins. There was no trace of Pierre Mallet."

Gravel wrote this to Thibaud and got a letter back in which Thibaud presented other claims and as Gravel said, "Promise me a share in the plunder if I would tell him where the gold was and help him in claiming title to the land."

Thibaud was a persistent correspondent Gravel said, but the onset of World War II brought the matter to a halt. But Gravel added a postscript:"

However, I did come across an item that a certain Pierre Mallett had absconded from France with the regimental funds in his charge in Napoleon's army.

According to this, he had landed in New York State and joined the Bailey Gang who lived in a swamp near Schenectady and made a living out of horse stealing.

Ethan I informed my friend Thibaud of this he hastened to reply, saying his ancestor was a very honorable man and that I must have the wrong party."

Any reader who knows anything about Captain Mallet is invited to send us a letter with the information. We will be glad to publish the letter and to forward it to the Burnham Memorial Library to include in their collection.

The *Ticonderoga* Is Together Again

October 5-12, Volume 4, Number 20

The steamship *Ticonderoga* is the last of her kind. She was the last steamship to slide down the ways at the Shelburne Shipyard in 1906. Today, she is the last example of a vertical engine, walking beam, side-wheeler steam ship still in existence.

Through her years, she has acquired many friends. Ralph Nading Hill is one friend; he launched the campaign to save the *Ticonderoga* from economic ruin and the wrecker's torch in 1950 and he created the Civic Betterment Fund. "Each person donating ten dollars or more would receive a certificate making him an Honorary Mate of the Ti, signed by the captain and pilot and decorated with a picture of the boat, as well as two tickets good for any excursion during the coming season...The money would then be loaned at no interest to the Fisher Steamboat Company (current operators of the Ti) to discharge its obligations, and the Civic Betterment Fund would take the first mortgage on the boat." (from *The Story of the Ticonderoga*, Ralph Nading Hill, 1953, 1957.)

The efforts of Hill, many others, and the Civic Betterment Fund kept the Ti in operation for the 1950 season.

In late December of that year, the boat was purchased by the Webbs for Shelburne Museum. The Museum operated the Ti for the 1951, 1952 and 1953 seasons. Lack of sufficient operating proceeds during the 1953 season lead to the decision to retire the boat. She lay at her mooring during 1954, while the Museum decided what to do to preserve the boat. It was decided to move her almost two miles inland to a site on the grounds of the Museum. This engineering feat took

place over the Winter of 1954-1955, and is a story by itself.

The Ticonderoga last blew its whistle on November 6, 1954 at 1010, as she was backed out of her berth at the Shelburne Shipyard for her last trip. If Chip Stulen has his way, her whistle will blow again when the current restoration project is completed. He is the project manager of a six man crew working on saving the Ti one more time. J. Warren and Lois McClure made a \$1 million donation in 1992 to restore and preserve the Ti. Stulen says this gift came just in time in the life of the boat; there had been several less than perfect repairs to the boat that were threatening to turn her into a rotting hulk.

The crew - Chip Stulen, Tom Hill, Rob White, Peter Tomasi, Mike Fineran, Zack Patten and Clem Thompson started working on the restoration project in April, 1993. Their plans call for the project to be completed in another two years.

They started at the top and are working their way down. Instead of the water, the sun and the elements are now the primary enemies of the boat. She now has a permanent orientation to the sun and she no longer rolls to shed rain and snow. The hurricane deck was originally painted canvas over a tongue-and-groove base.

Preserving this uppermost deck was one of the many decisions that had to be made regarding authenticity versus longevity. The canvas over wood deck required constant repair and maintenance. When the Ti had her full crew, this upkeep was possible, but not in her current situation. The crew removed the old decking. Each nail hole in the deck beams underneath was drilled out and injected with epoxy to preserve the wood. Where the beams were too far gone, new pieces were scarfed in. New Douglas fir planking was put down and

covered with two layers of marine mahogany plywood laid on the diagonal and epoxyed to the planking. On top of this, they epoxyed and then painted two layers of synthetic fabric. The result is a tough, weather tight membrane that is able to resist heavy foot traffic including high heels and looks very much like a painted canvas deck.

The crew is taking no shortcuts this time. They are using tremendous amounts of labor and skill to keep the Ti looking as original as possible and to make her last as long as they know how. The project has received a lot of support from local and national companies, as well as from private individuals. It has also received a lot of volunteer time and effort. And, because there are many people still around who sailed or worked on the Ti, the project has gotten a lot of historical information that otherwise would have been lost. Some old honeymoon pictures showed the acid etched pattern in every other window around the turtle deck. The Ti's last captain, Martin Fisher, spent three long days with the crew going over some of the things he remembered about the boat. The crew could not find any gold leaf in the "Ticonderoga" lettering on the pilothouse. He told them that the last time the sign was painted, they couldn't afford the gilding.

Stulen came to the project from his own boat shop in Michigan. He had married a Vermonter and after 17 years in Michigan, she decided it was time to return to Vermont. He is immersed in his work. His office is a virtual Ticonderoga museum by itself. The drafting table holds the boat plans that were re-created by Ray Sargent. On the wall, there are photographs of the boat, Ti T-shirts and posters. One poster lists some of the "Friends of the Ticonderoga Restoration Project". They include 3M Company, Barrett's Tree Service, Bethel Mills Lumber, Blue Flame

Gas, Burlington Rent-All, Diamond Chemicals, Inc., Eastman Kodak Co., Green Mountain Power Corp., Gougeon Brothers, the Glidden Company, S.T. Griswald Co. K Mart Corp, Moore’s Lumber and Building Supply, Lightworks, Inc., Morse Lumber and Millwork, Portland Glass, Queen City Steel Co., Vermont Tent Co., Yandow Sales and Service, as well as others. There are other companies who have given which are not on that list, such as Conant Custom Brass. They helped to reconstruct the port binnacle lamp in the pilothouse.”

I am sure that the hard realities of trying to run a steamboat in the second half of the Twentieth Century will gradually fade with the years and leave us with the most exhilarating recollections of transport by sidewheel steamboat. I think we owe a great deal to the Shelburne Museum, which has made it possible for us to have more than pictures to remind us of it - a superb specimen, in iron, brass and paneled wood, of the great North American steamboat for all future generations to study and enjoy” (Ralph Nading Hill, *ibid.*) We can also thank the McClures, all of the other supporters and Chip Stulen and his crew for preserving the Ti for us and for future generations.