



# Forecastle Report

Newsletter of the Midwest Model Shipwrights ♦ www.midwestmodelshipwrights.com ♦ January 2010

## ● Scuttlebutt ●

Commodore **Sid Wotman** opened the meeting with 28 hands present and then proceeded to hold a confirming vote for the slate of Officer candidates for 2010. The vote having been unanimous, our new Commodore, **Tim Riggs**, was "read in" and took up his new command.

**Gus Agustin** also took up his new duties as Flag Captain with the balance of last year's staff returning for another tour.



2010 Officers & Staff

Lets give three cheers, mates, for our outgoing Commodore, **Sid Wotman** and for the able leadership he provided during his stint on the quarter deck: *hip, hip, hurrah; hip, hip, hurrah; hip, hip, hurrah!*



Once again our annual **PIZZA & FLEA MARKET** meeting was a big success. Everyone ate their fill, saw some great models, had a block sanding demonstration by Bob Sykes and shopped the flea market with lots of joy. What more can be said of a really fine evening? Except to say: "Let's do it again next year"! For all those mates who couldn't make it to the meeting, we'd like you to know that we truly missed you and hope to see you with us in 2010. Have a great New Year!



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### 2010 OFFICERS & STAFF

President (Commodore)	- Tim Riggs.....	(847) 697-9552
Vice Pres (Flag Captain)	- Gus Agustin.....	(847) 398-5208
Treasurer (Ship's Purser)	- Ken Goetz .....	(847) 678-4249
Secretary (Ship's Clerk)	- Jim Merritt.....	(847) 888-3882
Editor (Signals Officer)	- John Mitchell .....	(847) 392-2259
Photographer (M. Chief)	- Leon Sirota .....	(847) 541-6285

## January Meeting Notice

### "IRON CLADS"

A Video Presentation

If you ever had an urge to build a model of an historical "Iron Clad" war ship from the mid 19th century or if you just have an interest in that period, our video presentation will fill in a lot of blanks for you. Come prepared to be thoroughly entertained.

Also planned for the evening will be a session entitled "What You Got For Christmas Under the Tree", or "What was in Your Christmas Stocking". If you got something neat that you would like to share with your mates, bring it along for a "Show & Tell"....we'd all like to see your new stuff.

P.S. We promise the video recorder will work this time.

Our next meeting will be at 7:15 p.m. Wednesday,  
January 20, 2010  
At the Community Presbyterian Church  
407 Main Street in Mount Prospect

## Well Done, John!

By Bob Filipowski

History was made at the December Shipwrights meeting when John Mitchell received a certificate of merit for his work as editor of the Forecastle Report. John is the first Midwest Model Shipwright, other than a commodore, to receive this award, and deservedly so. No position within a model ship club is more demanding on a continuous basis than the editor of the newsletter. In this digital age, this document can project an image far beyond the limits of our own membership. For five years, John Mitchell has consistently produced a product that we can all be proud of, and has created a positive awareness of what our organization is about among other model ship building clubs. We thank you mate, for a job well done!



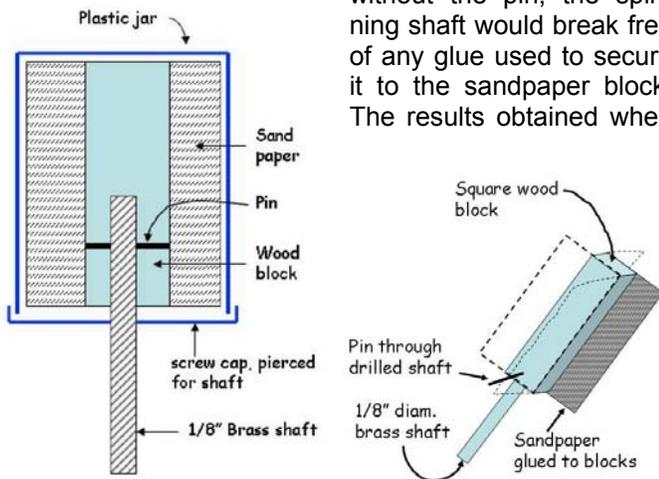
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**Bob Sykes** gave us a demonstration of the block sanding device he built using a "Model Shipways" kit (*Block Buster—High Speed Block Shaper #MS27 @ \$9.99*) as the basis.



The only modification he needed to make was pinning the sandpaper block to the center shaft; without the pin, the spinning shaft would break free of any glue used to secure it to the sandpaper block. The results obtained when



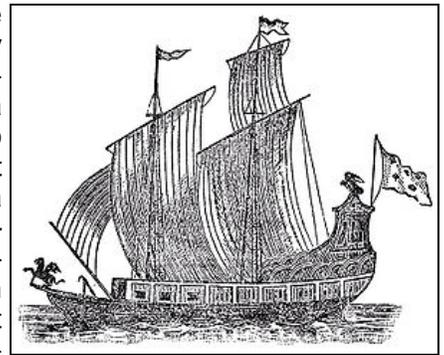
commercially made blocks were sanded down were quite good; the edges being rounded off in a very authentic manner and with a lot less work than doing a large quantity by hand. Thanks, mate, for giving us a good look at this neat accessory.

**Kurt Van Dahm** gives us a heads up on an exciting program taking place at the *Chicago Maritime Center* on Thursday, January 21 at 7:00 PM. **Richard Gross**, an historian for *Great Lakes Exploration Group*, will give a presentation on the subject: "Mystery of La Salle's Historic Ship". After closely examining primary source documents, including La Salle's letters and the official record of his explorations from 1679 to 1681, a new perspective has emerged concerning what *Le Griffon* looked like, its cargo, and the events surrounding its disappearance. Sounds like a great evening. You can contact the CMC at 312-421-9096 or at [chimaritime@gmail.com](mailto:chimaritime@gmail.com).

**Gerald Reed** tells us of a near-disaster in his workshop. Seems Gerald failed to extinguish the candle he used for burning CA off needle applicators when he left. The candle burned down and set fire to items on his work bench. Smoke, fire and, thank goodness, the smoke alarm, which helped save the day, resulted. Flames were extinguished just in time. Thanks, mate, for your valuable heads up.

## Le Griffon

*Le Griffon* ("The Griffon") was built by Rene Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle in his quest to find the Northwest Passage to China and Japan. *Le Griffon* was the first full-sized sailing ship on the upper Great Lakes of North America and led the way to modern commercial shipping in that part of the world. The ship was constructed and launched on Cayuga Creek on the Niagara River as a seven-cannon, 45-ton barque. La Salle and Father Louis Hennepin set out on the *Le Griffon's* maiden voyage on August 7, 1679 with a crew of 32, sailing across Lake Erie, Lake Huron and Lake Michigan through uncharted waters that only canoes had previously explored. La Salle disembarked and on September 18, 1679 sent the ship back toward Niagara. On its return trip from Green Bay, Wisconsin, it vanished with all six crew members and a load of furs.



*Le Griffon* is often mistakenly called the first ship to be lost to the Great Lakes. Actually, the first ship was another built by La Salle, called the *Frontenac*, a 10-ton single-decked brigantine or barque. The *Frontenac* was lost in Lake Ontario, on January 8, 1679.

*Le Griffon* may have been found recently by the Great Lakes Exploration Group (<http://greatlakesexploration.org>) but the potential remains are the subject of lawsuits involving the discoverers, the state of Michigan, the U.S. federal government and the government of France.

Name:	<i>Le Griffon</i>
Builder:	French explorer La Salle
Launched:	1679
Fate:	Disappeared on the return trip of her maiden voyage in 1679
Notes:	First full sized sailing ship on the upper Great Lakes

### General characteristics

Class/type:	Barque
Tons burthen:	45 tons
Length:	30 to 40 feet
Beam:	10 to 15 foot
Sail plan:	Single mast with several square sails
Armament:	7 cannon
Notes:	Led the way to commercial shipping in the upper Great Lakes

The above information was found on the web at [Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](http://en.wikipedia.org) (<http://en.wikipedia.org>).

## ● Ships on Deck ●

**John Pocius** certainly qualifies as our resident artist, given the beautiful carving and decorating he has been doing on his bust figures of "Pacific Northwest Native Americans". The latest in his series are the *Haida* and *Tlingit* (work in progress) busts, which are the equal to his *Aluet Sea Otter Hunter*, completed in 2009. Scale on these are all at 1:9.



Skull figure



All these were made from "Magic Sculpt" and the starting point is a basic skull figure to which the anatomy and decorations are added. The clay is baked at 170° F for 10 –15 minutes to make it harder and easier to carve. Other figure items were carved from boxwood.

Now John says it's back to doing ship models when these are completed.

They are all a joy to see, mate.

**Bob Sykes** has been working on the *HMS Cruiser* by "Calder Craft" (1:64) and the results are very much up to his high standards.



The cannon mountings are very well detailed, but Bob says his use of "Krazy Glue" let him down, as all the guns pulled loose and had to be redone.

In addition to not adhering properly, the glue had a tendency to turn milky looking once set. A better choice for him is "Sobo" glue. Copper plating is also planned, but the method of plate attachment will be a challenge. He has some pre-dimpled copper sheets but isn't sure they look authentic. Looking good, Mate.

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*Ships-on-Deck, continued from Page 3*

**Gus Agustin** is working his way up from the keel on his 1:384 scale *St. George*, ca 1701. The first project was the lower section of the hull, which appeared in our November issue. Now Gus is working on the upper section and the decks. The upper section was carved out of a solid piece of basswood both inside and out. Lower deck beams were made of cherry wood and the deck planks of box wood.



Finally, the gun ports were cut in by first drilling the solid block clear through and then squaring the holes with a small file once the hull had been carved. In order to do the carving on the upper hull, using an "XACTO" knife and a "DREMEL" drill, it was necessary to install temporary cross braces to prevent the hull from caving in (removed once the deck beams had been installed).

Once the outer hull is planked, the basswood will not be seen, nor will the lower deck. Gus says he may build his next model as a cut-away to show a lower gun deck.

Thanks to the perfection of his construction techniques, Inspiration for which came from the "Donald McNarry" method and from "Phil Reed's" new book, work on this model is progressing much faster than he expected. Just goes to show how a little planning will make even the most complex job an easy task.

Your work gives us all the urge to go "Miniature", mate. You are winning a lot of hearts and minds, for sure.

**Helmut Reiter** says he can see the end of his journey in sight. Everywhere you look on his model of *La Belle* (1:36) you see a true "Meisterstück", a masterpiece. It is really "candy for the eye". With only two yards left, he is

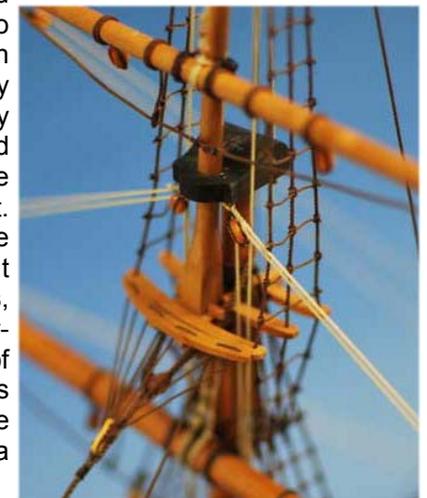


all but finished. To simulate free hanging rope, a challenge of



realism, he coated them with clear, flat acrylic and let them dry under (horizontal) tension. The result looks like ropes having the weight to cause them to hang naturally. Foot rope

supports were mounted through holes drilled into the yards and then made to look like they were tied to the yard by later wrapping the yard with rope to simulate the normal attachment. Helmut used the "MoRope" product throughout. Thanks, mate, for all your thorough descriptions of the many techniques you developed. We think you could write a book on this.



## Remembering 2009

The year 2009 was highlighted by a number of new launchings during our "Ships-on-Deck" which certainly deserve our accolades. Here, then, are some of the fine results of a truly productive year of modeling:



**Kurt Van Dahm's** tug *Redondo*, (1:19.2) was completed in January and appeared in our February issue.

No news on how seaworthy she was, but Kurt did install RC gear and was planning on sailing her.

**Tony Sergios** completed his "Model Shipways" kit of the *HMS Bounty Launch* in January, as well, and the boat appeared in our February issue.

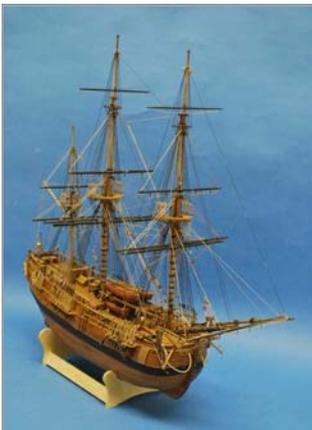


**Tony** also finished his



"Midwest Products" model of the *Chesapeake Bay Skipjack*, which appeared in our March issue.

**Bob Sykes** was one of our more prolific modelers this



past year, having shown us four previously completed models and two done this year: the *USS Constellation* (1:85), shown in March, and the *HM Bark Endeavor* in December. An impressive pair in anyone's book.

**John Pocius** produced a remarkable work of art of historic significance with his bust figure of an *Aluet Sea Otter Hunter* ca 1850. Other figures on this theme are in the works for completion in 2010.



**Bruce Hoff** was turning out some very beautiful brass cannon this



year; a Civil War field gun barrel display and a naval



Dahlgren gun with carriage.

**Gus Agustin** gave us the 1:192 model of the *HMS St. George*; the result of 1500 hours of work over one and a half years. A true prize winner worthy of the title "masterpiece".



**Steve Wheeler** finished his *Hunting Launch and Punt* and had a prize winner, to boot. Thanks to Steve for keeping us so well informed on his progress this year.

**Bob Filipowski** finished off his prize-winning half-hull model of the *Clipper Ship Staghound* (1:96). The model also provided the basis for a fine presentation on how to split a solid hull.



**Jim Merritt** worked a little bashing miracle on his 1:54 "Mamoli" kit of the *Yacht Mary*. Many highlights included a huge quantity of trenails, a finely turned base and a scratch-built set of gudgeons & pintles.

**Tim Riggs**

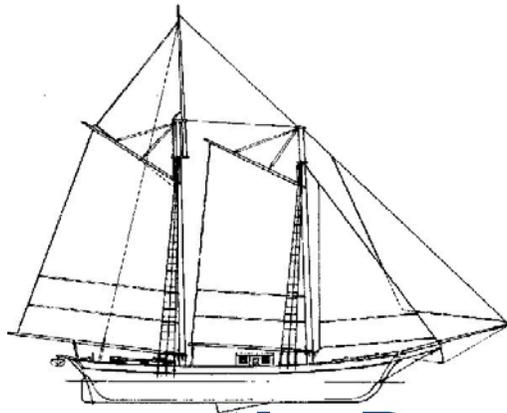
worked his magic on another beautiful model with the resin kit of the *Yangtze*



*River Gunboat USS Panay PR-6* (1:192) by "Iron Shipwright". She was a truly new adventure for Tim this year.



John R. Mitchell, Editor  
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