



# Forecastle Report

Newsletter of the Midwest Model Shipwrights

May 2009

## ● Scuttlebutt ●

### FROM THE COMMODORE'S CABIN



The evening of April 15th was an outstanding meeting as well as a diversion from the inevitable "death and taxes". Crowded as it was, we later found the extra tables, the camaraderie carried the day. Thirty one may well have been our largest turnout, plus the addition of two new members this evening, our growth in the past two or three years has been phenomenal. But, equally importantly to membership growth, are the models on display during Ships-on-Deck; they indicate a growth over the years in skills, building topics and innovations, which are primary goals of the club. We should be aware of the importance of the "Forecastle Report" with its much copied layout and photography. The off-night and weekend mini-meetings, thanks to Ray and Bob F. are wholly important to skill building. The meeting program topics are presented with skill and obvious finite preparation. We should pat ourselves on the back for being able to help without being critical, a skill which makes old and new members able to bring models and questions without hesitation. Finally, kudos and credit should be given to my crew, who keep the club on a steady course. The preceding points, all together, make it possible for me to indicate with pride being identified as a **Midwest Model Shipwright**. *Commodore Sid Wotman*

We welcomed two new members, **Ralph Sykes** (brother of Bob) and **Tom Wilcox**. We know everyone will do their best to make them feel right at home.



The *2009 Nautical Research Guild (NRG) Conference* will take place in Buffalo, NY, October 6th to 11th and will be based at the Walden Millennium Hotel. Special hotel rates of \$99.00 plus tax have been negotiated for those identifying themselves as NRG members when making reservations (800-323-3331). The special rate expires on September 6, so it will pay to be an early bird.

In keeping with recent conferences, there will be a

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## May Meeting Notice

### "Stern Lanterns"

By Doc Williams & Helmut Reiter



Doc and Helmut are going to show us, by word and example, exactly how they go about creating some really beautiful and authentic ship's stern lanterns. Come prepared to ask them a lot of questions and get your nose right into their work - you won't regret the time you'll spend together. Guaranteed!



Fifth in our new series, **Historic American Warships**, features the battleship *USS Maine*, whose sinking created the Spanish-American War slogan "Remember the Maine". Read about her on page 5.

Our next meeting will be at 7:15 p.m. Wednesday,  
May 20, 2009

At the Community Presbyterian Church  
407 Main Street in Mount Prospect

Thursday symposium and the traditional Saturday conference. In addition to those two technical sessions, tours will be offered on Tue, Wed, Thur (spouses), Fri and Sat (Spouses).

Tours include a Toronto, Canada, museum housing the Thompson Collection of 100+ ship models. For those not willing or able to cross to Canada, an alternate tour of the Naval and Military Park home of the WWII Croaker submarine, the Sullivan's Destroyer and the Little Rock Cruiser has been laid on. Other tours are a State Park, a sulky horse race, a modern art museum, a botanical garden, a cruise on the Erie Canal and Niagara Falls itself.

Registration forms are on the web at [www.thenrg.org](http://www.thenrg.org).

## ● Stopping Deadeyes ●



**Bob Filipowski** certainly didn't disappoint us with his presentation on stopping deadeyes. His careful preparation and excellent photos of his work mirrored the kind of results we've come to appreciate in his ship modeling. Bob's summary appears on p.2. Thanks Bob, for going the extra mile.

## Stropping Deadeyes for Small Scale Models

The April presentation featured a tried and true method for stropping small scale deadeyes. Bob Filipowski admitted that nothing he was going to show the membership was revolutionary, but that it would certainly be of interest to newer members.

The Power Point started out by describing various deadeye assemblies used during different periods in history. Bob stated that the presentation would focus on the more simplistic version that was popular in the 19th Century.

The first step involved annealing a pre-cut piece of wire, which made it more pliable. A candle worked well for this purpose. Filipowski demonstrated two variations for crimping the wire around the deadeye, but stated that he preferred the version described here.

After cleaning the wire, it is wrapped around the deadeye, and held in place with the help of some plastic beads. Using needle nose pliers, the wire is then crimped as tightly as possible against the deadeye. Fine wire salvaged from an old transformer (.005" diameter) is then tied around the two legs of the strop. This type of wire normally has a coating on it that prevents solder from sticking to it during the soldering process.

Flux and small bits of solder are then laid along the strop. If Britannia deadeyes are being used, a heat sink will be needed to prevent the deadeye from melting.

(Notice the fine tipped tweezers in the photo.)

Heat is then applied with a low wattage iron, starting at a point furthest from the deadeye, and moving toward it as the solder begins to melt.

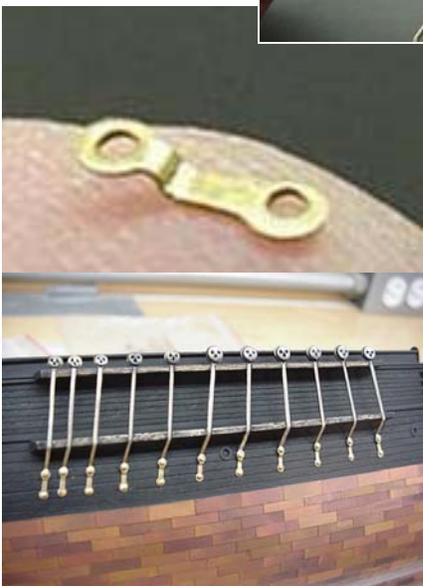
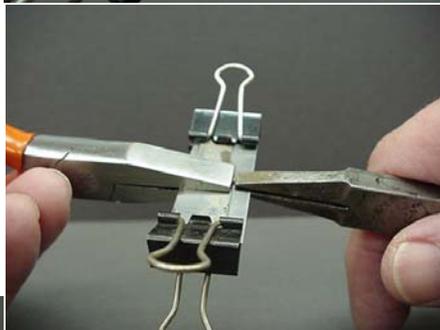
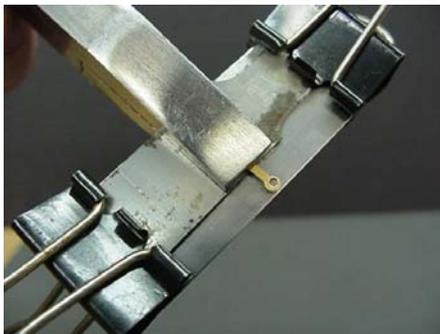
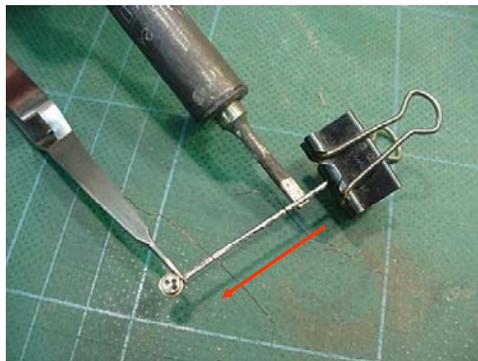


When cool, the assembly is filed down, which removes the transformer wire and flattens the surface of the strop.

A common device used on deadeye assemblies was the preventer plate.

These had a small offset that compensated for the thickness of the chain plate. On his *Staghound*, Bob used a commercially available fitting for this purpose. The offset was accomplished by clamping two used knife blades together, so that a step existed between the top and bottom blades.

After making sure that the preventer plate was flat, it was held on top of the upper blade with a pair of duck-bill pliers, so that it overhung the edge of the step enough to create the offset. A second set of pliers then compressed the overhanging portion and created the offset. Bob cautioned everyone that getting the second set of pliers too close to the step could create a



shearing action, which would cut the fitting in two!

As far as the *Staghound* is concerned, two different thicknesses of wire were used to strop the deadeyes. Consequently, the offset for some of the preventer plates had to be decreased.

The rest of the installation was pretty straight forward. ❖

● **Ships on Deck** ●

**Bob Sykes** surprised us with a completed model of *HMS Bounty* (1:48) built from a kit by Artisania Latina. All the



details included in this kit were nicely built into the model in a seamless way. Beautiful job, mate.

**Helmut Reiter** continues adding the standing rigging to his 1:36 scale *La Belle* in his usual, meticulous way. The futtock



shrouds were especially well done and not without a lot of trial and error, according to Helmut. The end justified the means, mate. Nicely done.



**Gus Agustin** has been adding detail to the bow of his 1:192 scale *HMS St. George*, ca. 1701. Gus re-worked the head timbers & rails 3 times to get them to look right. The grating was installed & seats of ease were glued in place. A short bow



sprit was made, gammoning cleats glued on and the gammoning put on. His plan now is to work his way to the stern to complete the model. Small packages create the most work, we'd say. This is going to be another masterpiece for sure!

**Paul Garvin** brought in a very beautifully done model of the New York Pilot Boat *Phantom*, which he had made some time in the past. This model has surely weathered extremely well, maybe due to its having a solid hull? (Sorry, no photo available).

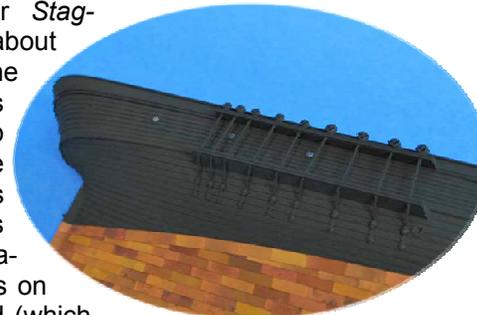
**Bob George** brought in a book entitled "Rigging Period Ship Models" by Lenard Petersson. This is the kind of book every modeler would love to own. Bob says he swears by "Renaissance Wax" by Cutlery Specialties, 6819 SE Sleepy Hollow Lane, Stuart, FL 34997 to provide hull finish protection. Lastly Bob extolled the virtues of "Loctite" super glue gel. Thanks, mate, for the great tips.

**Pete Pennigsdorf** brought in his summer fun, a pond boat *A Footy*. (Sorry, no photo).

**Doc Williams** has been busy on his 1:24 scale *Hartman Tug* with the deck beams and deck installed, the power train completed and the steering mechanism in. Work is also progressing on installation of the hawse holes. This is a big kit and so none of the work is microscopic, for sure, but it is all coming together beautifully, mate.



**Bob Filipowski** has his 1:96 scale half-hull model of the clipper schooner *Staghound* just about completed. The upper hull was painted after Bob added all the chain plates (subject of this month's presentation) and now it's on to the figurehead (which must be hand carved - another adventure all together). We're all pulling for Bob to have her completed for the Manitowoc contest!



**Jim Merritt** has been busy finishing off the hull on his

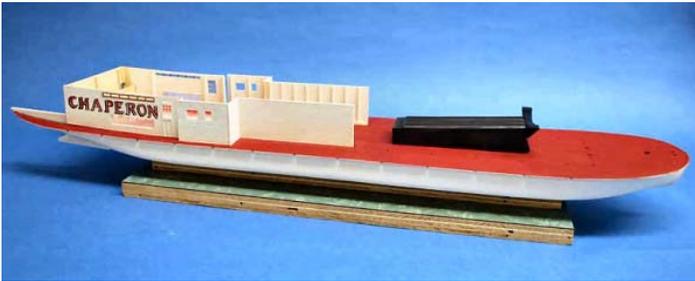


1:54 "Mamoli" kit of the *Yacht Mary*. All his work on the many treenails really paid off in a beautiful looking hull, which has been finished with a "general finish" urethane stain. This is one very impressive kit bashing, mate.

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

**Kurt Van Dahm** has made excellent progress on the new "Model Shipways" kit of the 1884 *Steam Serrnwheel Packet Boat* (1:48). Part of the reason she's going to-



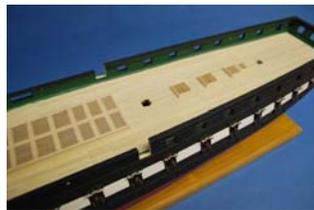
gether so fast is the excellent materials assortment and finish (part is due to the master modeler Kurt, to be sure). Kurt is very impressed by the attention to detail in this kit.

**Walt Philips** continues to add detail to his scratch built *Emma C. Berry* (1:32). Walt's model is being built using the "Lankford" plans included with the "Model Shipways" kit but includes many modifications and "liberties" to suit



the builder. And why not? It is easy to see what joy this project is bringing to Walt and is reflected in the excellence of his work and the fun details he is adding. It's a joy for us too, mate.

**Ken Goetz's** 1:76 model of the *USS Constitution* is looking better and better at every viewing. The work he has done on the outer hull is flawless and the work he is now doing on the spar deck planking adds to our appreciation.

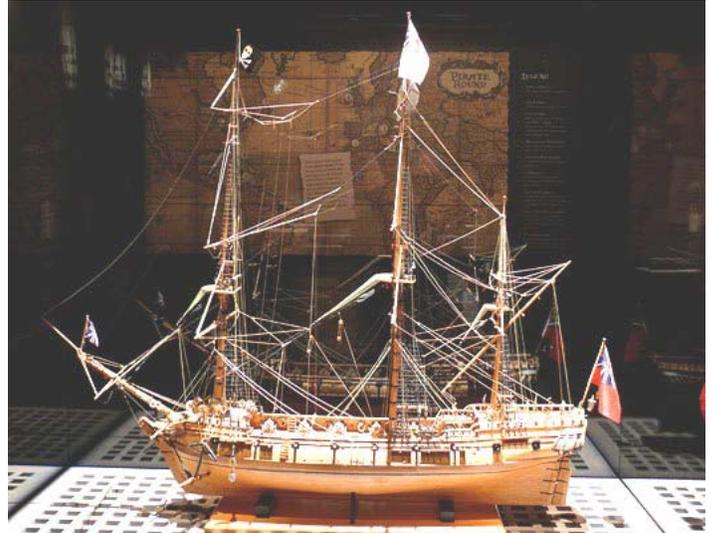


## PIRACY—The True Story

By Bob Filipowski

Growing up, two of my favorite movies were *Captain Blood* and *Sea Hawk*. These Errol Flynn movies portrayed piracy as a swashbuckling, romantic adventure, which may have been partly responsible for my eventual interest in model ship building. Unfortunately, Hollywood has always had a knack for putting their own spin on history.

The special exhibit currently being featured at the Field Museum of Natural History, "Real Pirates: The Untold



Story of the *Whydah*, From Slave Ship to Pirate Ship" does a very nice job of showing what life under the "Black Flag" was really like. The exhibit starts out with a brief history of the slave trade since the *Whydah*, as a slaver, was on the return leg of her maiden voyage to Africa and the Caribbean when captured by Sam Bellamy, and his flotilla of small pirate ships.

Although the exhibit has a substantial amount of artifacts on display, be prepared to do a lot of "wall reading" if you want to learn about piracy in general, and Sam Bellamy's crew and ship in particular. This facet of the exhibit really isn't conducive to having little ones in tow, since they will probably want to keep moving.

The model of the *Whydah*, which appears to be in 1/4" scale, is strictly conjectural, and represents an early 18th century vessel of about 300 tons, mounting 18 cannons. The rigging is nicely done, although the blocks are of the Italian "square" variety. Some aspects of the hull and deck furniture could have been better, and I was especially disappointed with the transom. Overall, the model could be rated as a 6 or 7 at best. I found it interesting that the vessel sported both English and pirate flags.

I have to admit that the guns that were exhibited caused me to wonder. Classified as "4 pounders", they seemed unusually large (6 or 7 feet long), and appeared to have a bore size of almost 4". Some light research on my part



seemed to indicate that a gun that size with such small shot could have been a possibility.

When the *Whydah* went down off Cape Cod in 1717 she was carrying the plunder from an estimated 54 ships. Most of the treasure has yet to be recovered, but some of it is being exhibited,

and makes for a very impressive sight. One large display case contains a chest overflowing with silver coins!

An especially nice aspect of the exhibit for the children in particular is a series of



full size rooms portraying pirate life in the 18th century. "Peopled" by full size manikins in period dress, the scenes include crewmembers below deck on board the *Whydah*, a sailor enjoying a tankard of grog and the company of a wench at the local pub, and Sam Bellamy in his cabin on board his flagship.

The wreck of the *Whydah* was buried under 30 feet of sediment when discovered, which presents an interesting problem as far as recovering artifacts is concerned. Many items are encased in a

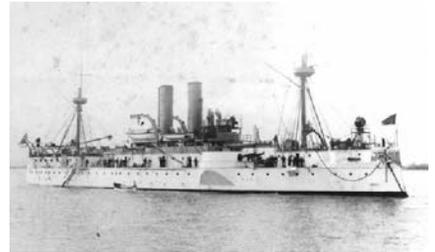
rock-hard material called concretion. Special x-ray machines were used to determine what each recovered lump contained. The artifacts could then be removed by soaking them in a special solution, or carefully removing the encrustation with dental picks and rotary power tools.

If you're interested, there's still time to see this unique exhibit. "Real Pirates: The Untold Story of the *Whydah*" continues through October 25th. It's well worth seeing, matey ... aaargh!



## ● *USS Maine* ●

*USS Maine*, a second-class battleship, was sent to Havana in January 1898 to protect American interests during the long-standing revolt of the Cubans against the Spanish government.



In the evening of 15 February 1898, *Maine* sank when her forward gunpowder magazines exploded. Nearly three-quarters (266) of the battleship's crew died as a result of the explosion.

The cause of the explosion was almost certainly spontaneous combustion of its ammunition, but the US accused the Spanish of sabotage and the Spanish-American War began under the slogan "Remember the Maine".



Designation: Second-class battleship (originally designated Armored Cruiser #1)  
Builder: Brooklyn Navy Yard  
Laid down: 17 Oct 1888  
Launched: 18 November 1889  
Commissioned: 17 Sept 1895  
Fate: Sunk by explosion 15 February 1898 in Havana harbor.

Length: 319 ft.  
Beam: 57 ft.  
Draft: 22 ft.  
Displacement: 6,682 tons  
Speed: 17 knots  
Crew: 374 officers and men  
Armament: 4 x 10 in. guns, 6 x 6 in. guns, 7 x 6 pounders, 8 x 1 pounders, 4 x 14 in. surface torpedo tubes

In May 1898, three months after the explosion, the US attacked the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay, sinking all the ships. Two months later, they destroyed a Spanish force of four ships and two torpedo boats off Santiago, Cuba.

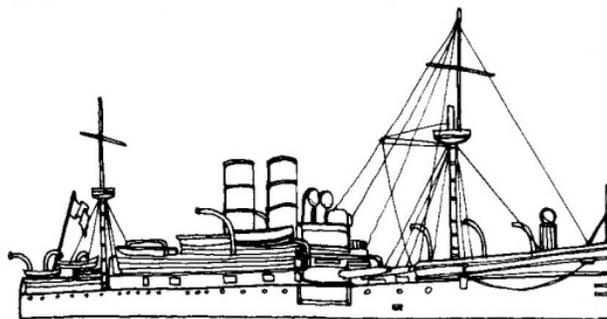
Peace was finally arranged on Dec 10 under the Treaty of Paris, under which Cuba was freed from Spanish rule, Puerto Rico and Guam were ceded to the US, and the Philippines were surrendered to the US for \$20 million.

More detail on likely causes of the explosion on board the *Maine* can be found in the 1976 book *How the Battleship Maine Was Destroyed* written by Admiral Hyman G Rickover .





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