



# Forecastle Report

Newsletter of the Midwest Model Shipwrights

November 2009

## ● Scuttlebutt ●

**C**omodore **Sid Wotman** opened the meeting promptly at 7:30 with 25 members present and, with no guests to welcome, continued with an inspired call for all to support the Tri-Club Association Symposium. We were reminded just how valuable it was for the area's modelers to meet, renew acquaintances, see other modeler's work and participate in the very helpful roundtables and presentations being planned.

Tri-Club Treasurer, **Bob Filipowski**, reported that there were 36 paid participants for the Tri-Club Symposium scheduled for Saturday, November 7 (see Oct newsletter for details). Anyone not registered was encouraged to sign up now. You can attend by paying an additional \$5.00 at the door, but it is asked that you let Bob know you are coming so that enough food can be ordered.

Our Purser, **Ken Goetz**, reminded us that our 2010 dues are now payable; still a bargain at \$20 when you consider all the perks. Send your check to: Ken Goetz, 3302 Sarah St., Franklin Park, IL 60131.

**Tim Riggs** is looking for his missing DVD of the movie "Billy Budd". If you borrowed it, could you now return it to Tim. Thanks, mate.

**Jerry Reed** asks those planning to attend his Round Table on "Tips & Tricks" at the Tri-Club Symposium to bring their tools, jigs, etc. to share with everyone -Thanks.

Party time is fast approaching, when our December meeting will be devoted to camaraderie, good cheer, a flea market and lots of **PIZZA!** Be sure and let **Ken Goetz** know, if you will attend our last meeting of the year, so he can order enough food for everyone (phone: 847-678-4249; email: [express46@aol.com](mailto:express46@aol.com)). If you "just show up" you may not get fed or someone else will go short as a result. So, be a good mate and let Ken know your intensions. Oh yes, you can also put in your request for pizza toppings—no guarantee, of course. See you there, mates.



### OFFICERS & STAFF

President (Commodore) - Sid Wotman.....	(847) 680-1256
Vice Pres (Flag Captain) - Tim Riggs.....	(847) 697-9552
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

## November Meeting Notice

### "Aircraft Carrier"

A DVD

Sit back, relax, bring your popcorn and come prepared to be entertained by an exciting DVD on the subject of "Aircraft Carriers".

Twelfth in our series, **Historic American Warships**, features the Motor Torpedo Boat (PT) designed and built in the USA to serve a unique purpose in World War II. On page 5 you can read about two of them that became famous for their exploits during the war.

To view an additional article on the recent NRG Conference written by Bob Filipowski, log on to our new web site at:

[www.midwestmodelshipwrights.com](http://www.midwestmodelshipwrights.com).

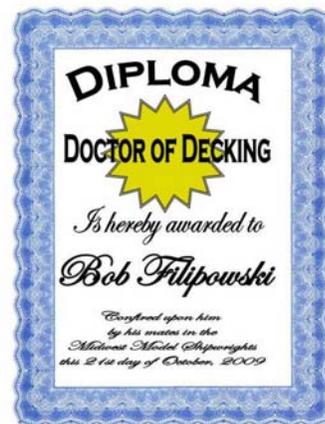
Our next meeting will be at 7:15 p.m. Wednesday,  
November 18, 2009  
At the Community Presbyterian Church  
407 Main Street in Mount Prospect

## ● Nibbing & Juggling ●

By Bob Filipowski

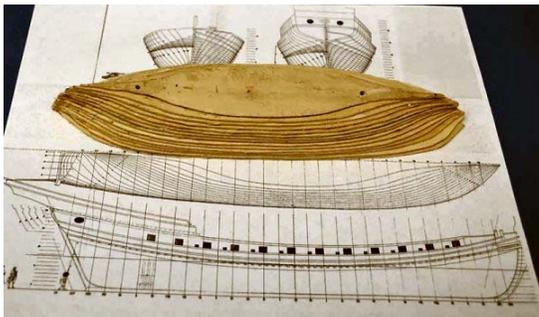
Nibbing, juggling, snipes, we got it all right from the "Decking Doctor", **Bob Filipowski** and his "Decking Doctor's Thesis" was right before us in the form of his clipper ship *Staghound*.

After a thorough review of all the technical references written on this subject (enough to know that there are multiple views on proper technique), we were given a detailed description of Bob's techniques used to install clean, attractive deck planking. While this does not look like beginner's work, it really isn't that complicated and results in a very authentic and neat deck appearance; something everyone can learn to master. See his presentation on pp.4-5.



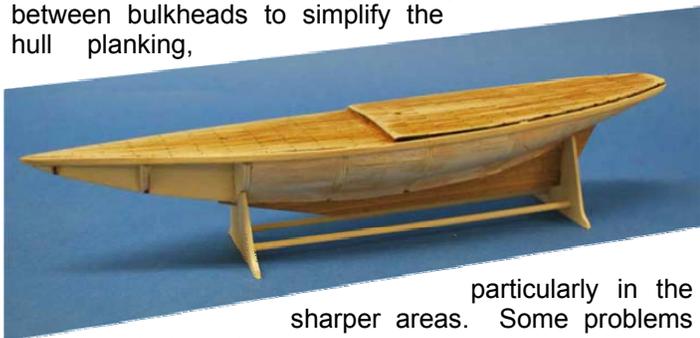
## ● Ships on Deck ●

**Tim Riggs** showed us the work he as started on *La Raquin*, a French Xebec of 1750 at a scale of 1:192. The solid hull was built up using multiple “lifts”, which have all been glued together and are ready for final shaping. The Xebec (or Chebec) was a



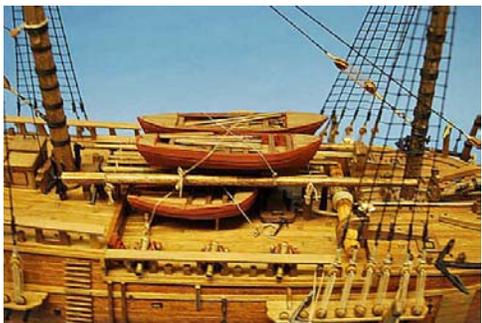
and multiple sweeps, was very maneuverable in all winds. This made it a formidable foe.

**Tony Sergios** is busy building the “Model Shipways” kit of the schooner *Bluenose* (1:100). Tony is modifying this plank-on-bulkhead model by adding balsa wood fillers between bulkheads to simplify the hull planking,



particularly in the sharper areas. Some problems with the kit were found in the dimensions of the bulwarks, which had to be scratch built to fit. Otherwise, its clear sailing with this job. Nice work, mate.

**Bob Sykes** has made amazing progress on his “Calder Craft” *HM Bark Endeavour* (1:64) since we saw it last month. Lower masts, mast tops, rigging and deck furniture have all been added. Bob scratch

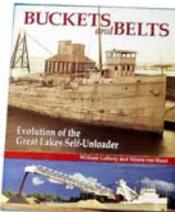


built a number of ship's boats to mount on deck but says that's an experience he'd rather not revisit any time soon. The results belie his dislike of the task, however.

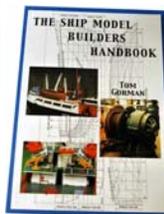
**Bob Filipowski** brought in his completed half-hull model of the clipper ship *Staghound* as an example for his presentation on nibbing. It's nice to see this model again and be reminded of what we are all striving to achieve. Thanks, mate.



**Kurt Van Dahm** gave us a rundown on several books he can recommend:



good details must read for this type model.



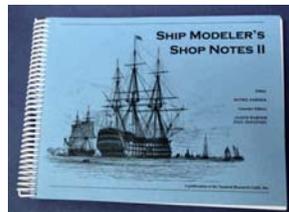
“Buckets & Belts” by Wm Lafferty gives an in-depth look at the subject of Great Lakes freighters and the cargo handling gear associated with their industry.

“Ship Modeler's Handbook” by Tom Gorman is a fine book on tug boats and other work boats, including on ship's fittings. This is a anyone into building this

Last but not least was the NRG's “Shop Notes II”, which looks like

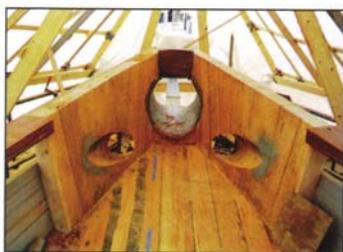


THE book to own. It is not an update of “Shop Notes I” but an entirely new publication with new information. If you have an



interest in any of these books you should contact Kurt for more information. Thanks for the update, Kurt.

**John Mitchell** has cleared a major hurdle with his scratch built model of the Great Lakes schooner *Challenge* (1:48); the piercing of the bow and mounting of the bowsprit. Aiding him on this was a photo of an actual schooner restoration project, which showed the configuration of the bow with reinforcing bow cant frames required to support the bow sprit and hawser ports. Now its on to the “easier” job of planking, a nice winter project.



## NRG Buffalo

By Bob Filipowski

Nautical Research Guild directors Mickey Martelle and Kurt Van Dahm are to be congratulated on another fine conference. The 36th edition, recently held in Buffalo, was definitely one to remember.

On Tuesday, October 6th, we boarded a bus for a trip to Toronto where we were treated to a remarkable model ship exhibit at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Donated to the museum by the late Ken Thompson, the 130 models represent a period spanning the last 350 years, and include some remarkable Prisoner of War pieces. The unique display cases with their curved glass sides and tops showcased the collection in a most artistic manner.



Wednesday, it was Letchworth State Park, which is referred to as the "Grand Canyon of the East". In spite of the overcast skies and occasional drizzle, everyone agreed that it was a sight definitely worth seeing!



From there, it was on to the small town of Arcade, NY where we boarded a 1915 vintage railroad car. Known as the Arcade & Attica RR, this excursion was very much like stepping back in time as we spent the next two hours rolling through the New York countryside.



Those that attended the Thursday symposium were treated to some excellent technical presentations on fabricating metal fittings for wooden warships, constructing ship's grating, spiling, making realistic flags, and silver soldering. With such diversified subject matter, there had to be something there for everyone! While this was going on the ladies received a dose of culture as they visited two art museums and toured the Buffalo area by bus.

What would a trip to Buffalo be without seeing one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, Niagara Falls. On Friday we loaded up the bus, and headed for a date with the *Maid of the Mist*, which gets you up close and personal with the Falls. For the first



timers in our group, this had to be the highlight of the trip! The Saturday Conference speakers, for the most part, were appropriately very Great Lakes oriented. Jim Kenard discussed the discovery and exploration of an early 19th Century Lake Ontario Schooner, which is in remarkable condition. Patrick Mathews gave a fascinating dissertation about a long forgotten fleet of tugs once owned by the Ford Motor Company, and the model he built as a result of his research. William Lafferty, co-author of the book Buckets & Belts: The Evolution of the Great Lakes Self-Unloader shared his research, and subsequent dis-

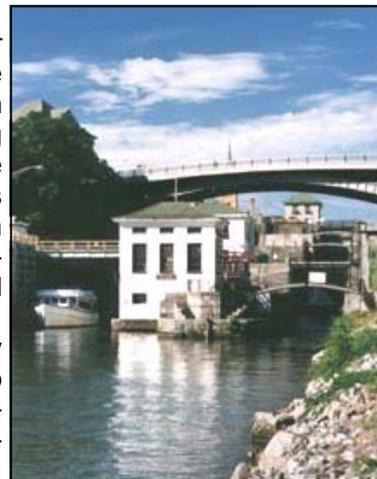


covery of the wreck *Hennepin*, which he feels was the first true self-unloader on the Great Lakes. Dan Pariser related an episode from the War of 1812 on Lake Ontario, and how the Brig-of-War *Oneida* contributed to a victory.

Presentations by David Antscherl on masts, yards and rigging, and Clay Feldman on building a "Prisoner of War" model rounded out a most enjoyable and informative symposium.

Space doesn't allow for a detailed report on the spouses' tours, which were excellent. Among them was a boat ride through some of the locks on the Erie Canal, which many of the male attendees wished they could have joined!

It would be safe to say that everyone left Buffalo with a lot of great memories, and a renewed enthusiasm for the hobby!

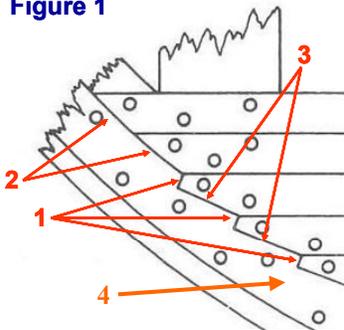


## Nibbing & Jogging

Bob Filipowski opened his presentation by stating that, depending on which author you use, you may get

different opinions on configuring deck plank nibbing and jogging. Some texts stated that the nibs (Figure 1, Item 1) should be perpendicular to the snipe (Item 3), while others favored them being right-angled to the run of the plank. The nib width also presented some confusion as it was stated in different books that this dimension should be either 1/3 or 1/2 the plank width.

Figure 1

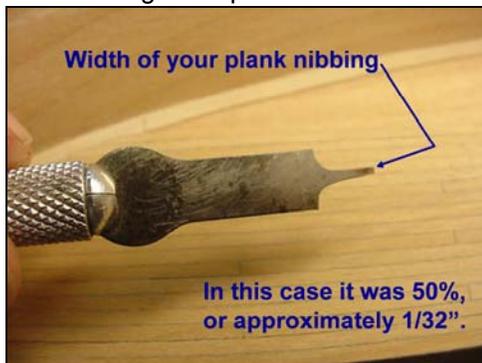


Filipowski stated that when the length of a snipe exceeded twice the width of the plank, that was the determining factor as to when a plank should be nibbed and jogged into the margin plank (Item 4). However, some authors favored the length of item 2, others item 3, and some weren't very clear as to which one they were referring to! Bob felt that using item 2 as your reference made more sense, and was easier to deal with.

He recommended fabricating a couple of tools that were

very helpful to him. The first was an Exacto chisel blade that was ground down to the width of the plank nibbing.

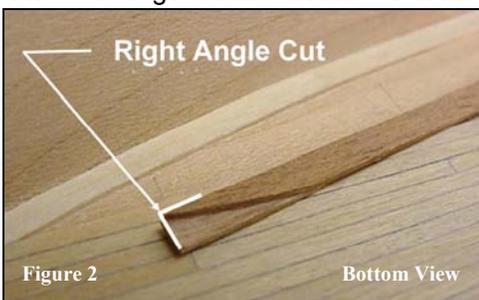
**EYE PROTECTION IS AN ABSOLUTE MUST WHEN DOING THIS!**



The second tool (Figure 2), although not absolutely necessary, helps to make your nib cuts into the margin plank a little more accurate. The longer bottom section is cut to a sharp point

leaving one edge perfectly straight, while the shorter upper, shorter piece is glued on top, and must have a perfect right angle cut at one end.

Two of these would be required, one for the port side, and one for the starboard side.



Slide the tool forward so that it seats itself in the "V" formed by the last plank laid and the margin plank. Mark that point with a sharp pencil. Now take your modified chisel blade, line it up with the pencil line, and cut through the margin plank. Make sure the chisel blade is perpendicular to the deck, and the bevel is facing away from the finished margin plank edge (Figure 3).

Line the end of your plank up with the nib cut, and mark where the margin plank edge and plank intersect (Figure 4). Mark your nib width on the plank, and remove the excess stock (Figure 5). For shorter snipes, Bob likes to use

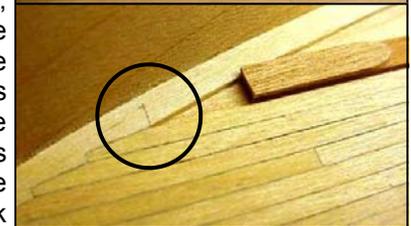
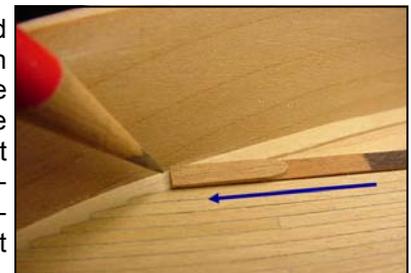


Figure 3

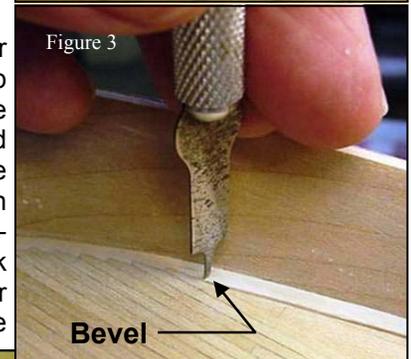


Figure 4

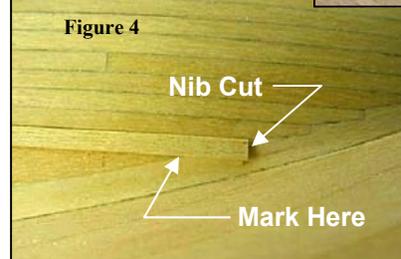
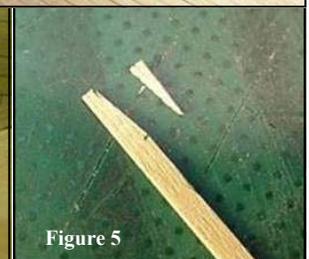
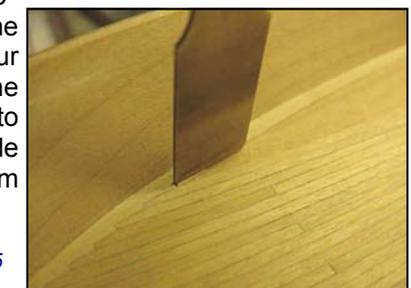


Figure 5



a 1/2" Exacto chisel for this procedure since it allows him to line up the blade edge with both marks before making the cut.

Use the trimmed plank as a template to mark the snipe on the margin plank (Figure 6). Be sure to use a sharp pencil. Take a 1/2" Exacto chisel, align it with the snipe line and make your cut. Be sure to keep the blade perpendicular to the deck with the blade bevel facing away from the margin plank.



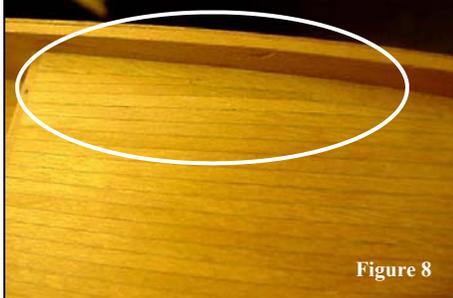
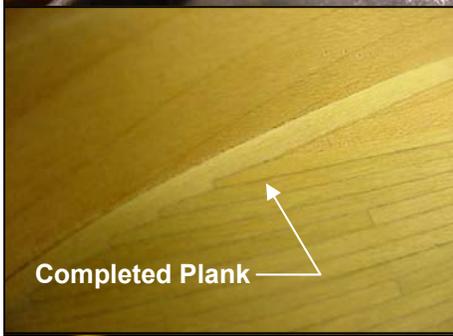
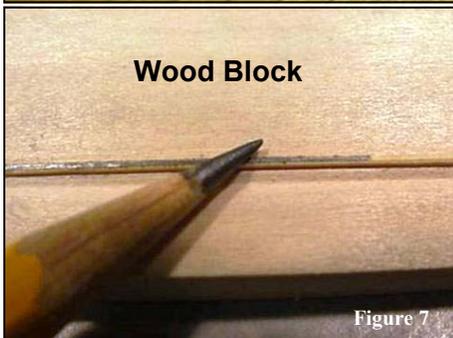
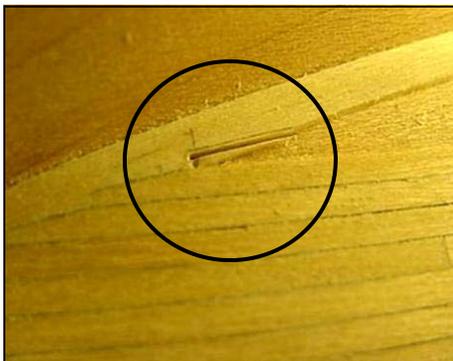
*See Nibbing & Jogging, p.5*

Nibbing & Jogging, continued from page 4

The custom made nibbing chisel works well when removing the scrap wood from the jogged area. If all the measurements were taken correctly, the nibbed plank should now fit perfectly into the trimmed area.

Before gluing the plank in place, Filipowski simulates the deck caulking by blackening the plank edges with a #2 lead pencil. A handy tool that helps accomplish this is a length of scrap wood with a shallow slit cut in it with a Preac saw (Figure 7). This simple fixture can also be used when sanding down a deck or hull plank that requires tapering.

Finally, as you approach a point on the deck where you have only three or four plank widths left on each side, it's important that you check to see whether they will come out even (Figure 8). It may be necessary to "average" out the width of these last strakes so there isn't a rather wide or narrow plank needed to complete the deck. Good advice, huh?



## ● Motor Torpedo Boat ●



**PT Boats** were a variety of motor torpedo boat (hull classification symbol "PT", for "Patrol Torpedo"), a small, fast vessel used by the United States Navy in WWII to attack larger surface ships. The PT boat squadrons were nicknamed "the mosquito fleet".

The PT Boat used in WWII was built using classic "planning-type" hull forms that were inspired by the racing boats that dominated the world boat racing circuit and set water speed records between the wars. Though often said to be made of plywood, they were actually made of two diagonal layered 1-inch thick mahogany planks, with a glue-impregnated layer of canvas in between. Holding all this together were thousands of bronze screws and copper rivets.



Of the two major types of PT Boats built during WWII, the most numerous was the 80-foot wooden-hulled craft

Name: PT-109 (PT 103 Class)  
Ordered: 1942  
Laid down: 4 March 1942,  
Bayonne, NJ  
Launched: 20 June 1942  
Homeport: Rendova, Tulagi, Solomon Islands  
Fate: Sunk 2 August 1942 by IJN destroyer *Amagiri*

Length: 80 ft overall  
Beam: 20 ft 8 in  
Draft: 3 ft 6 in  
Displacement: 56 tons  
Speed: 41 knots maximum  
Endurance: 12 hrs, 6 hrs top speed  
Propulsion: 3 x 12-cylinder Packard gasoline engines of 1500 hp each; three shafts.  
Crew: 3 officers, 14 enlisted.  
Armament: 4 x 21-inch torpedo tubes (Mark VIII), 20 mm cannon aft, 4 x .5" machineguns (2x2).

built by the Elco Naval Division. 326 of these were built, including **PT-109**, which became famous as the boat com-



manded by LTJG John F. Kennedy. Elco also built an earlier 77-foot model and one of these, **PT-41**, was to become famous as the boat, under the command of LT John D. Bulkeley, which evacuated General Douglas MacArthur, his wife and son from Corregidor to Mindanao on 12 March 1942.

The other big builder of

PT Boats was Higgins Industries in New Orleans, where 199 78-foot boats were built. (see cover)

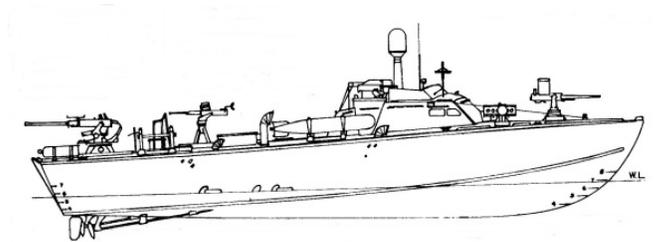
All in all, PT Boats contributed greatly to the success of the US Navy mission and played a unique roll in our county's future, as well.



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John R. Mitchell, Editor  
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