



Forecastle Report

Newsletter of the Midwest Model Shipwrights ♦ www.midwestmodelshipwrights.com ♦ August 2013

● Scuttlebutt ●

COMMODORE Bob Filipowski opened the meeting with 25 hands on board; and on a night with the year's highest temperature to date. Nice turnout mates!

With no guests or new members to introduce, we moved on to the latest modeling news.

Kurt Van Dahm gave us a good rundown on the upcoming **NRG National Conference** being held in Charleston, SC, October 16-20. Home base for the Conference will be the Crowne Plaza Charleston and the NRG has arranged great room rates for attendees (\$109 for singles, \$119 for doubles, including a morning breakfast buffet). Group Code for these rates is: **NRG**.

Wednesday's tour will be a day at Patriot's Point featuring several museum ships as well as the Medal of Honor Museum. Lunch is included in the CPO Galley on the USS *Yorktown*.

Thursday's Modeler's Seminar include sessions with Allan Yedlinsky and Wayne Kempson, coauthors of "*HMS Euryalus*", to discuss their book; Clyde Emerson discussing his award winning model of the *Navette*; Edward Tosti to discuss lofting model plans; Bob Filipowski on creating a cargo hold in a solid hull model; Joseph Lombardi discussing preserving vessels as museum ships and Loren Steffy to discuss an early model built by his father, J. Richard Steffy, a nautical archeology pioneer.

Friday's tour will be the CSS *Hunley* Museum plus a lunch stop in old Charleston and ending with a harbor cruise to Fort Sumter. Unwinding time is planned for Friday night before dinner on your own.

Saturday Technical Sessions are to be conducted by Ab Hoving on Dutch shipbuilding, Fred Hocker on shipbuilding in the Middle Ages (notably the ship *Vasa*), John Busch on the steamship *Savannah*, Michael Wall on the ships of Donald McNarry, Rebecca Ingram on a 7th-century Byzantine Shipwreck and Dr. Robert Neyland on the recovery of the CSS *Hunley*. The day ends with the Banquet and award presentations.

You should log on to the NRG web site for registration forms or call 585-968-8111.

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August Meeting Notice

Waterlines & Paintbrush Care By Kurt Van Dahm

A waterline painted neatly on your model will draw immediately attention to your hard efforts and skill like few other things. Not something to take lightly. And who better to give us guidance on this important step than our resident painting expert, Kurt Van Dahm. To finish his talk, Kurt will give us tips on how to clean up our brushes so they are ready for the next job.

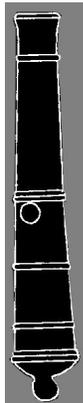
Our next meeting will be at 7:15 p.m.
Wednesday, August 21, 2013
At the Community Presbyterian Church
407 Main Street in Mount Prospect

In late news from Kurt Van Dahm, the members of the Tri-Club have received an invitation from the German cultural institute DANK Haus to attend a special event to view the "Lindhardt" model of the Battleship *Bismark*, recently donated to them. The invite is for 7:00 PM, Thursday, August 22nd at 4740 N. Western Ave., Chicago. **You will need to RSVP to 773-561-9181, if you plan to attend.** (See email flyer attachment).

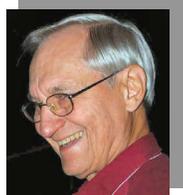
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● Blackening Metal Parts ●

By Bob Filipowski



Bob shared with us his Powerpoint presentation on blackening metal parts and, as ever, he left no stones unturned in explaining this process.



This was a return to an earlier presentation Bob gave us in 2008 on this subject but with many new refinements added to update us on the experience he has gained while working with blackening materials.

Our thanks to Bob for his efforts in working up this program and for his insightful presentation.

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Blackening Metal Parts

Model ship builders are quick to realize the advantages of chemically blackening metal parts. The process will not obscure any detail, and it affords the ultimate scale coating. Unfortunately, many attempts end in failure.

Bob Filipowski opened his presentation by explaining the three most common reasons for this. Proper surface preparation is probably number one on the list. Metals oxidize or they may have oily residue on them, which prevents the blackening agent from doing its job. Many modelers will burnish the surface of the part with fine steel wool, but this procedure doesn't always get into tiny crevasses. Also, fine photo-etched parts can be damaged if not handled carefully.

Bob recommended a product called SPAREX NO.2, which chemically etches the surface of non-ferrous metals such as silver, copper, and brass. Made by Krohn Technical Products Inc. of Carlstadt, New Jersey, this chemical has been popular with jewelry makers for years.



The membership was emphatically warned about the potential dangers of this product. Due to the fact that this material is a granular dry acid compound, personal protective equipment, which includes a dust mask (when mixing it), rubber gloves, and goggles or face shield are highly recommended. Certainly, it should always be stored in a safe place away from curious little ones.

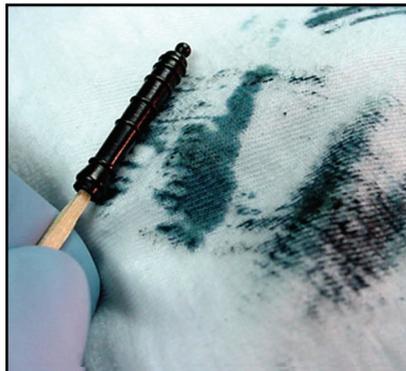


An area where Bob has had problems in the past is the blackening agent itself. A number of years ago, Filipowski tried a product called Blacken-It, which is sold by many hobby shops and catalog supply houses. The results were less than adequate, and it wasn't until he tried another agent called Brass Black by Birchwood Casey that the procedure improved. The latter

product is quite popular with gun collectors and model railroad enthusiasts. **Incidentally, both of these products are considered poisonous, and should be handled and stored with care!**

It was stated that some Shipwrights have actually achieved success with Blacken-It when it's diluted 50/50 with distilled water. Bob could not confirm this, but he surmised that the thinned solution afforded a much slower process, which improved the chemical reaction with metals. This brought the presentation to reason number three.

Poor blackening is often the result of a common attitude found among most human beings. (Mostly male.) "If a little works well, then a lot must work even better!" Well, nothing could be further from the truth. Bob pointed out that many modelers keep



metal parts immersed in blackening solution for as long as 20 or 30 minutes. This allows the agent to actually form a thick crust on the surface of the part, which easily flakes away when handled. A short soaking time of approximately 20 seconds, followed by another 20 or 30 seconds out of the bottle is usually adequate for a first application. (If the pieces are too large to fit in the bottle, Birchwood Casey can also be applied with a paintbrush).

The solution is then carefully wiped from the part with a soft cloth. An old tee shirt works quite well for this purpose. If the darkened metal does not meet with your requirements, simply repeat the process.

As stated earlier, SPAREX NO.2 is an excellent agent for removing oxidation and oily residue from metal parts, but the concentration of the solution can impact its effectiveness. The manufacturer recommends dissolving a half pint can (10 ounces by weight) in a quart of water. Depending on the size and quantity of the parts you are working with, this may be overkill. Bob's earliest experiments with this process involved a small glass jar with approximately 2 ounces of water and 4 teaspoons of SPAREX mixed in. This seemed to work well.



It was pointed out that this agent works at room temperature, but heating it to about 140° improves its effectiveness. The members were shown a very basic method of heating the solution that involved a tin can and candle. Since then, Bob has graduated to a crock pot, which is much more convenient and safer! These pots are impervious to the solution, and cost less than \$20.



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When it comes to soaking the parts, the rule of thumb is to leave them in until they're shiny. The membership was cautioned about this process and photo-etched parts. If these thin fittings are left in the solution too long, they can actually start dissolving! When ready, thoroughly rinse the parts and allow them to dry. Do not handle them without clean rubber gloves or a towel. The oil from your hands can result in a blotchy finish. Bob likes to put the fittings under a lamp to ensure that they are dry before immersing them in the blackening agent. The slightly heated metal can also assist in the process.

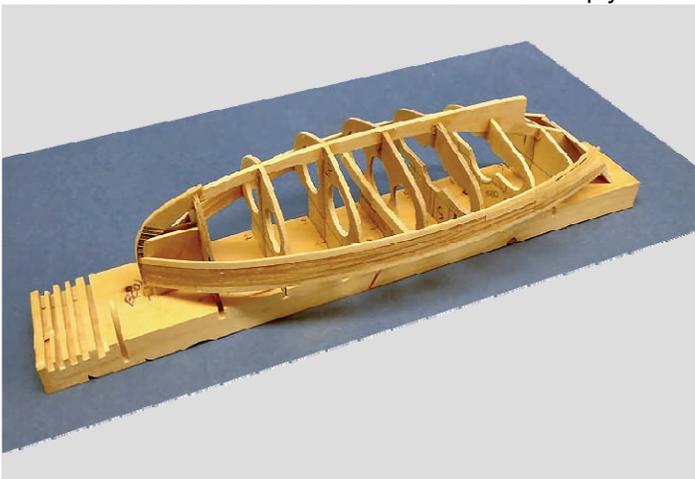


There's one other interesting phenomenon concerning this procedure. Believe it or not, the blacking agent will continue to react with the metal unless it is completely neutralized and dried. If this is not done, the object will continue to exhibit moisture on its surface. One member stated that he experienced this problem almost a year after the parts had been blackened!

Once the fittings have been allowed to dry completely, they can be buffed to a very nice luster or left a dull black.

● Ships on Deck ●

Bob Ivan started on a scratch-built 22 ft. "Martins" *Hunting Boat* that is giving him some problems due to "terrible plans", or no plans at all. This is a motor launch which resembles a "cat boat". She is framed in 3/32" plywood.



Bob designed a tool to clamp the hull planks to the bow while gluing. This one should be in everyone's tool box. Bob loves a good shape, hull shape, that is, and this model is very pleasing to his eye. Thanks for your building tips, mate.

Doc Williams has begun to tackle the whale boats for his 3/16" scale model of the whaler *Charles W. Morgan* and the process and results are quite spectacular.

The "Model Shipways" kit furnished parts to build the boats in the bread-and-butter fashion and, although Doc may not have been too keen on this approach, he has succeeded in turning out a very attractive result.

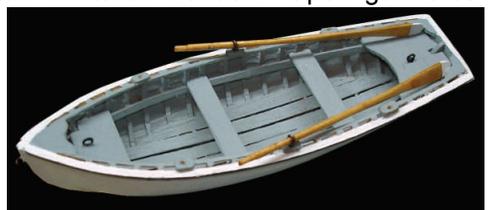


Shaping was done using a Dremel sander, scrapers, knife and sandpaper. Once shaped, details will be added to the hull to finish the interior and exterior. Great job, mate.

Allen Siegel showed us his start on the *Long Boat* project, having just completed the basic frame. Plenty of work left but plenty of help and guidance available on the hull plank spiling, as well. Keep up the good work, mate.



John Mitchell finished his first-ever 1:48 scratch-built model of a *Ship's Tender*, built using the plug method of construction. Some research was required to come up with the boat's final configuration, as this was intended for use on an 1852 Great Lakes commercial schooner. What was needed was not a longboat but a common rowboat, similar to a Boston Whitehall Tender. Open gunwales and a sharper bow were the keys to this project. The model is 4" long and scales to a boat of 16 ft.



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"Ships-on-deck", continued from Page 3

Sid Wotham has made *significant progress* on his kit of the *HMS Fly*. Last seen, the bulwarks had yet to be added and hull planking had yet to be laid. Now we see Sid well into the hull planking and his bulwarks have also been really nicely mounted.



Experiences with thin C/A glue were not very good, so Sid switched to the "filler" type of C/A. We did hear about all the problems he has encountered with gun ports, as the plans call for planking both the inner and outer sides of the bulwarks, thus covering over the gun port openings. This required Sid to re-open the ports by cutting out the newly laid planks. He applied C/A around the openings to prevent splitting.



Work is also progressing on the foredeck with most of the deck furniture complete. Some questions arose as to how to mount the guns and gun carriages on the interior gun deck and Sid is going to do this job before closing up the upper decks, contrary to the kit's instructions. We know you will prevail, mate. Your work, as ever, is very ship shape.

Glen Estray has finished his 5/32" scale model of the tug boat *Despatch #9* and she looks really great. Glen had to do considerable bashing to get it into a shape he likes, but the results justified the means. And that's it for solid hulls for Glen!



Thanks to inspiration from Kurt Van Dahm's model of the *PBR*, Glen has jumped on the same model and is busy creating a replica of the boat that appeared in the movie "Apocalypse Now". This will require some very unique changes, but we know Glen is up to the task and we're anxious to see his results.



Bob Sykes' 1:60 "Euro-model" of the French warship *Mordaunt* is nearly complete and it really does look outstanding. At this scale, this is a very substantial model



and commands a lot of attention. Some of Bob's own personal details are hard to spot but, if you look closely, you will see that he has even created functioning blocks. One neat idea was how Bob made his flag "fly". He pasted two halves of a flag over a thin sheet of aluminum foil and then shaped it by bending.



Other details are also very expertly done, such as the longboat, ratlines, gun carriage mounts and all the other deck furniture.

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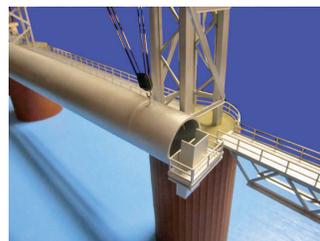
"Ships-on-deck", continued from Page 4



Viewing the stern is also a joy and the application of the kit-supplied castings has been so well done its hard to tell they aren't scratch made.

Even though this job took you a bit longer than most, the results have been well worth the wait mate.

Kurt Van Dahm has built a diorama of a barge, tug boat and complete dockside loading equipment in 1/72 scale as a demonstration to be used in a court case. We saw the barge but Kurt showed us the rest of the diorama via PC projector, as the complete setup was too big to bring in to the meeting. It was re-



markable how exactly Kurt was able to reproduce the actual items seen in on-site photos and fascinating to learn what materials were used.

The photo at right is of a "dagger box", which is a locking mechanism that has a "dagger" shaped piece of plate steel that drops down into a receptacle to lock the (barge) cover in place. Kurt made this full sized out of 3/4" Baltic birch ply for better viewing by a jury. This was a really great example of the commercial side of model making. Thanks for sharing it with us, mate.



Bob Filipowski reviewed his technique for installing the rub-



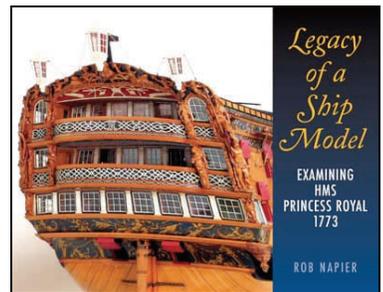
bing rails on his 1:48 kit of the *British Long Boat* and discussed some of the concerns he has in painting the hull and installing the decorative strip furnished with the kit.

"Scuttlebutt", continued from Page 1

Kurt explained that next year (2014) the NRG Conference will be set up with a tour on Thursday, modeling seminars on Friday and technical sessions on Saturday. That way, if you just want to attend the modeling and technical portions of the conference, you won't have to wait an extra day while the second tour takes place.

The **NRG Journal** has now increased from 64 to 80 pages with the addition of more modeling articles. While membership in many modeling groups is down, the NRG is making an effort to increase its numbers. With all these improvements, becoming a member (\$38 per year) is going to become more valuable for modelers in the future.

Sid Wotman has put up for sale a very excellent book entitled "Legacy of a Ship Model - Examining HMS Princess Royal 1773" by Rob Napier. This book has 224 pages with hundreds of color photos and includes a 12-min. DVD.



The book actually details the dismantling and reassembly of this historic model and gives the reader a glimpse of the hidden internal structures as a guide to how it was originally built. A model of this ship is in the US Naval Academy museum. Sea Watch Books offers this for \$58 plus \$9 shipping but Sid is only asking \$35 for his copy. See Sid, if you have an interest. Should be a great addition to anyone's library.

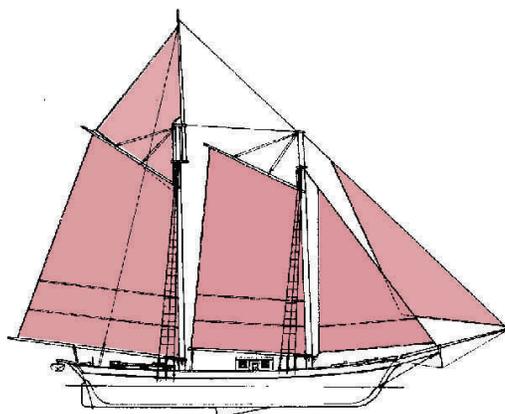
Rich Kuentler reminded us of the August 7-11 "Tall Ships" event being held in Chicago at Navy Pier. There are 20 ships scheduled to appear and this is a great opportunity to get a close up view of all things nautical. If you haven't been to one of these shows, you owe it to yourself to attend - you will learn a lot!

Bob Filipowski mentioned that the *Wisconsin Maritime Museum* in Manitowoc is holding a 70th birthday party for the WWII Fleet Submarine *USS Cobia* on Saturday, August 17th. Bob says she's looking almost as good as he did at that age ❖





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