

# *South Bay Model Shipwrights*

*Founded by Jean Eckert 1982*

*Website: <http://www.sbmodelships.com>*



## *The Foghorn*

*December 2020*



### *Future Course Headings...*

The Coronavirus pandemic continues to prevent any in-person club meetings, but **Jim Rhetta** continues to generously arrange bi-monthly Zoom meetings so we can all keep in touch and share our model building experiences. We also had elections in which the current slate of officers were all reelected to their previous posts.

At least two vaccines are now starting to be distributed, initially to essential personnel and at-risk persons. Best as I can tell, the time line for vaccine distribution to the general public is still not until the middle of next year. So, we all still must have patience, self-isolate, wear masks when out and about, socially distance, and wash hands frequently. As all restaurants are closed, there will also **not** be any Holiday Party this year.

Our next meeting will be after Christmas with the date yet to be decided. Jim will let us know more details via email. Again, it is time to keep modeling while keeping safe. And have a Merry Christmas and Happ(ier) New Years!

- **All local museums are closed until further notice due to the coronavirus outbreak.**

- **March 20, 2021 International Plastic Modelers Society (IPMS)/Silicon Valley Classic.** This annual convention has been cancelled for 2020 and has been rescheduled for next March. We'll see what happens.

- **October, 2021. Nautical Research Guild Annual Convention, Oxnard, CA.** The cancelled 2020 NRG convention has been rescheduled for October of 2021 at the **Channel Islands Maritime Museum** in Oxnard, CA.



## *Maritime Matters of the Month*

- **Vendée Globe Race (Jim Rhetta)**

During our Zoom meeting last week, Jim Rhetta discussed progress on the **Vendée Globe Race** which is the world's greatest round-the-world sail boat race done on advanced technology **monohull** sailboats of the **IMOCA 60** class, also known as the **Open 60** with adjustable hydrofoils (Fig. 1). Each of the participating boats is operated by a solo sailor non-stop and without assistance excepting in emergencies.



Fig. 1. Participant boat in the **Vendée Globe Race**.  
(photo courtesy Olympic Channel)

33 boats and their solo sailors started this race from **Les Sables D'Olonne** on the west coast of France on November 8 with the intent of racing some 45,000km (28,000 miles) around the world over some 70 to 130 days to return to their start point. As of last week, the racing group had made it through the **Cape of Good Hope** off South Africa and then travelling east through the Southern Ocean making use of the 'Roaring Forties' winds found at latitudes of between -40 and -50 degrees. As of last week, as Jim reported, the group was rounding the south coast of Australia. Apparently, one boat was hit by a very hard wave and broken in half. The sailor was rescued by the other racers.

The race will continue on around **Cape Horn** at the tip of South America and then head north in the Atlantic to return to France. This race is held every four years. So, there are more big sailing races than the **America's Cup!** I suspect these sailors will complete their route a bit faster than **Ferdinand Magellan** (who did not complete his trip as he was killed in the Philippines) and a few of his remnant crew!

- **The Fate of the World's Cargo Fleets (Ken Lum).**

According to an “**Economics Explained**” video on YouTube titled “**The Death of the Merchant Marine?**” which I saw recently, the world's merchant vessels are being used in unusual ways in the pandemic-induced economic downturn (Fig. 2). We elaborate on this in this segment.



Fig. 2. Idle merchant ships at anchor.  
(Photo courtesy SeaNews)

### **A. Economics of the Merchant Marine.**

Water-borne shipping is far and away the cheapest method of shipping a physical product from anywhere in the world to any other place in the world. According to this video, it costs £ 2,200 to ship a typical 40

ft. cargo container and its contents from the U.K. to Australia by cargo ship. By comparison, it would cost £ 3,100 to ship the same container from the U.K. overland to land-locked Switzerland despite it being 20x closer. As a result, countries like Switzerland have to base their economies mainly on services (which mostly do not require shipping anything) rather than manufacturing or resource extraction.

Furthermore, because of what is known as the **Square-Cube Law**, bigger ships carry more cargo more cheaply. So, a ship that is doubled in length, width, and height compared to a smaller design will require 4x the material to construct but be able to carry 8x the cargo (Fig. 3).

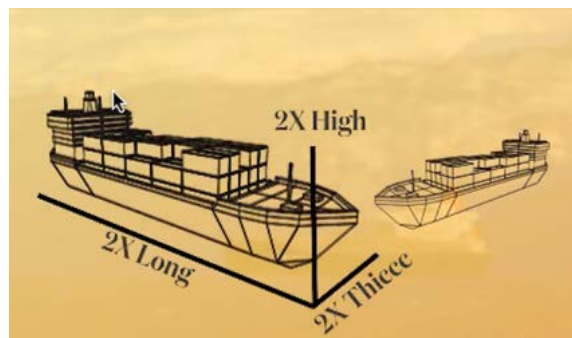


Fig. 3. **The Square-Cube Law.** A ship that is doubled in size in 3 dimensions will cost 4x the material to build but carry up to 8x the cargo. (Image courtesy Economics Explained)

Because shipping companies are paid on the basis of the tonnage of cargo they carry, there is much incentive to build ever larger ships to be used during a normal economy of high demand for carrying capacity.

### B. Merchant Ships in an Economic Downturn.

With the pandemic-induced recession, global trade has taken a big hit. As a result, there has been a sudden worldwide rise in excess capacity of large empty merchant ships of all kinds (Fig. 3).

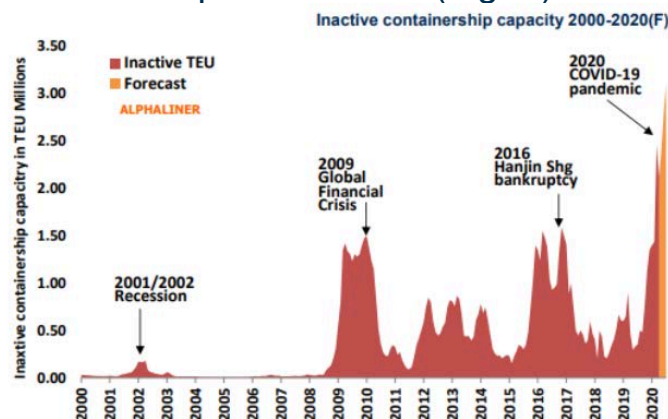


Fig. 3. History of excess ship-borne cargo carrying capacity over the past 20 years in TEUs(Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit). 1 TEU is the capacity of 1 twenty-foot long cargo container. (Image courtesy of SeaNews)

These mostly include **passenger cruise liners, oil tankers, and general bulk container carriers**. Overall, the unused container ship capacity has risen to 12 percent of the worldwide total and may go as high as 25 percent next year.

### C. The Fate of the Merchant Fleet.

So, what to do with all these empty ships? With so many ships costing their owners millions of dollars to maintain while being unable to earn any income, some decisions needed to be made. Should the world economy recover quickly, then having all these ships would enable their owners to rapidly take advantage of recovering demand. But this seems unlikely to happen due to the time-consuming logistics of vaccinating the world's population.

With the world economy appearing to be taking several years to recover to pre-pandemic levels, many **cruise ships** are being taken to ship-breaking facilities in places like **Bangladesh** to be broken up for scrap (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Ship breaking in **Bangladesh**.  
(Photo courtesy Dhaka Tribune)

**Oil tankers** are being hired out to store an overproduced worldwide glut of crude oil which, along with the reduced demand from the recession, has driven the price of oil to record lows, which does help shipping companies. As a result, oil tankers are now used to generate revenue by doing almost nothing but storage.

To adjust to the reduced demand for cargo transport, shippers are using smaller, less efficient, ships being driven at slower speeds (called "**slow steaming**") to save on fuel. **Excess cargo ships** (just like the passenger ships) are being broken up to be sold for their value as scrap. This is actually great for shipping companies as **China** has rolled out a robust **government-financed infrastructure program** that has increased the demand, and therefore, the price of iron by 300% over the past 5 years. This has been amplified by the pandemic preventing workers at iron mines from getting to work thus worsening the iron shortage. So, shipping companies are deriving another healthy revenue stream by simply using their redundant inventory of ships as a scrap metal resource mostly to supply China.

In these ways, the shipping industry hopes to survive the current crisis. Check out the video as it is short and very worthwhile.



## *Kit News (Jim Rhetta).*

We have been notified that the kit of the attached photo is available for sale to members. It is the ***Prince De Neufchatel*** in 1:58 scale (Fig. 5).



Fig.5. **Constructo** kit of the ***Prince De Neufchatel***

This is the **Constructo** kit not in production now. **Model Shipways** had another kit of this ship also not in production. if you are interested contact Joe at 714-342-0460 to make an offer.



## *Methods and Techniques to Our Maritime Madness (Ken Lum)*

- **Home-made Blockbuster.**

As I close in on finishing my **Mantua English Carronade** model, I came to the step where I needed to rig up the gun tackles used to haul the real carronade out through the gun port in preparation for firing. The

blocks I used for this were 9 mm kit blocks from **Syren Models** that needed to be assembled and their edges rounded to shape.

Rounding the blocks to shape is best done with a block sanding device consisting of a cylindrical container with a lid lined in its interior with around #200 grit sandpaper. Then a shaft is driven through the rotational axis of the cylinder that has sandpaper paddles attached to the shaft that rotates with the shaft while the cylinder is held stationary as the shaft is spun with a hand drill. All in all, this works like a rock tumbler for ship's blocks.

**Model Shipways** offers a \$10 kit of such a tool they call a "**Blockbuster**" consisting of a plastic cylindrical container and a shaft with wooden paddles that have sandpaper stuck on them (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6. **Blockbuster** by **Model Shipways**.  
(Photos courtesy **Micro-Mark**, Todd Wardwell)

Upon watching a YouTube video of this device in action, I decided to just make my own out of an empty can with a plastic lid that once held bean dip (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7. Home-made block sander made from a bean dip can.

I felt the wooden paddles in the **Model Shipways Blockbuster** were not necessary, and felt they tended to bang into the interior sides of the can and sometimes break off.

Instead, I made the paddles entirely out of folded sandpaper glued and thumbtacked to a rectangular piece of wood locked to a  $\frac{1}{4}$ "-20 threaded shaft with lock nuts on either side of the wood (Fig. 8).

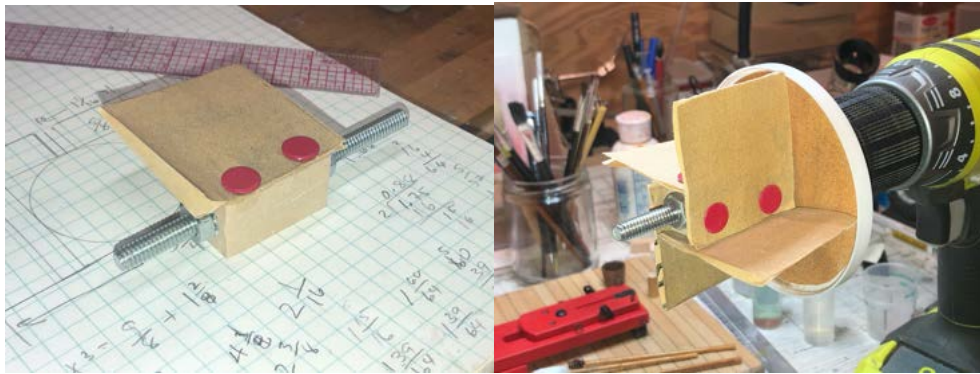


Fig. 8. Sandpaper paddle of the block sander.

This will sand the blocks smooth and rounded but be flexible enough to accommodate to the walls of the can without breaking off or causing the paddles to stop spinning.

To make the spinning process easier, I spun the device in the chuck of my **Unimat 3 lathe** while I held the can stationary with my hand and the other end of the shaft is steady-rested in the tail stock chuck without locking it (Fig. 9).

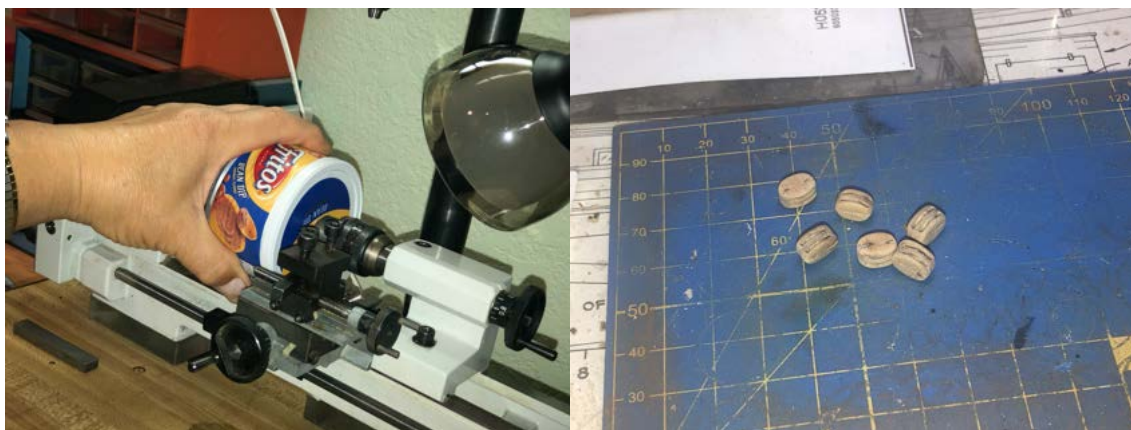


Fig. 9. Left-Blockbuster sander mounted in Unima 3 lathe. Right-Rounded model blocks after being spun in the Blockbuster.

After spinning the blocks in the container for a period of time, I would periodically stop and examine the blocks to see if I had rounded them well enough to look realistic. Then I would stain and use the blocks.





## *Under Construction at the Model Shipyard*

- **Jim Tortorici builds Model Shipways' new *USS Constitution* cross section.**

Jim has been making good progress over the last few months on a 1/76 scale model cross section of the midships of ***USS Constitution***. A view of a finished model is in Fig. 10. on the left from **Model Expo**. Jim's model can be seen in the close ups on the right and below. Looking very good! (Fig. 11, 12).



Fig. 10. Completed model of the ***USS Constitution*** cross section from the **Model Expo** catalogue.



Fig. 11. **Jim Tortorici's *USS Constitution*** cross section.



Fig. 12. Jim Tortorici's *USS Constitution* cross section.

- **Request for Another Model Restoration (Jim Rhetta).**

We have been contacted about yet another restoration of a valued ship model. It appears to be a model of the *Gjoa*, a single-masted ship used by **Roald Amundsen** and his crew to traverse the fabled **Northwest Passage** for the first time in 1903-6.

Attached are some photos of it (Fig. 13, 14), and it appears to have only slight "storm damage", but a closer look may reveal more. This does not appear to be a difficult project so we should take it on.



Fig. 13. Model of the *Gjoa* in need of restoration.

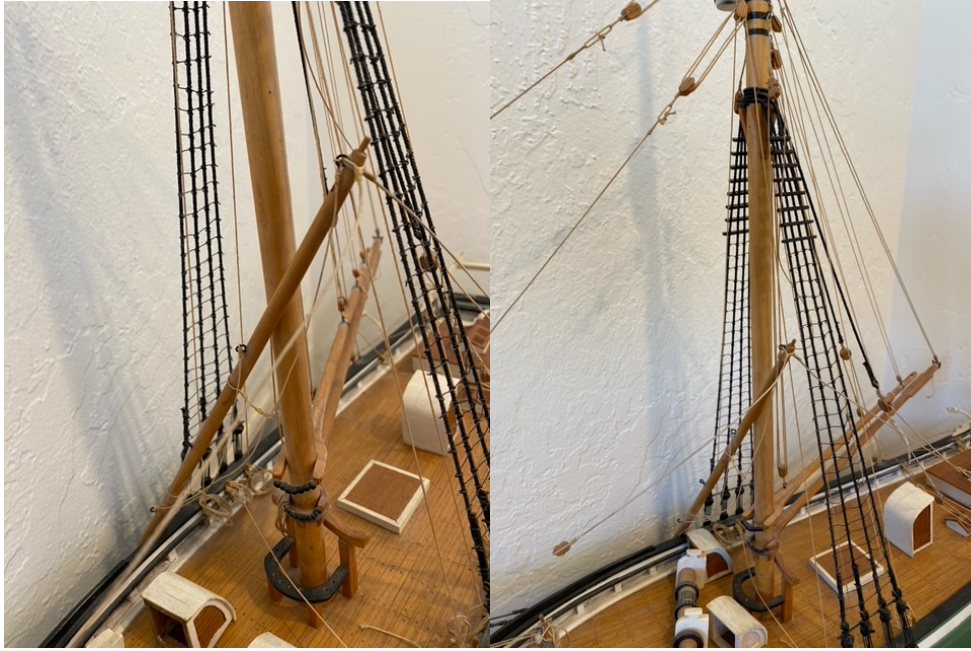


Fig. 14. Damage to the rigging in need of repair.

This will be the 6th restoration/completion we have received in the past three years, and is an excellent addition to our website. All of you gets the first opportunity to take on this minor project.

The owner is also interested in a case for it, and will provide the model dimensions for initial estimations. The new supply of glass we have should make a case more affordable for these projects.

It is now in **Capitola**, and I may arrange to see and transfer it. Please contact me ([jmrhetta@aol.com](mailto:jmrhetta@aol.com)) about how to get in touch with the owner.



## *SBMS Club Officers*

<b>President</b>	<b>Jim Rhetta</b>	email: <a href="mailto:jmrhetta@aol.com">jmrhetta@aol.com</a>
<b>Vice President And Newsletter Editor</b>	<b>Ken Lum</b>	email: <a href="mailto:lum40@comcast.net">lum40@comcast.net</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Jacob Cohn</b>	email: <a href="mailto:jcohnster@gmail.com">jcohnster@gmail.com</a>
<b>Harbor Master</b>	<b>George Sloup</b>	email: <a href="mailto:george.p.sloup@outlook.com">george.p.sloup@outlook.com</a>
<b>Webmaster</b>	<b>Jim Tortorici</b>	email: <a href="mailto:oday20@earthlink.net">oday20@earthlink.net</a>



**2020 Meeting Dates.** All in-person club meetings are cancelled by the Los Altos Public Library until further notice. Instead, we are conducting Zoom meetings as an alternative. Stay tuned for further news.



**2021 Annual Club Membership**

Send in your 2021 Club Membership with attached renewal form! Submit a \$20 check made out to South Bay Model Shipwrights and mail to Jacob Cohn, 726 7<sup>th</sup> Ave, Redwood City, CA 94063. Welcome Aboard!

**2021 Membership Form**

Make check out for annual membership of \$20.00 to South Bay Model Shipwrights and mail to Jacob Cohn, 726 7<sup>th</sup> Ave, Redwood City, CA 94063

Print your name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone# \_\_\_\_\_



Address  
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Receive our Foghorn newsletter by email? Yes \_\_ No \_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

To order a club name badge, add \$15.00 to your check and print your name exactly as it should appear on the badge