

Tidewater WOODEN BOAT WORKSHOP

Life Skills Through Boatbuilding



Workshop News

Issue 13
December 2023

At the Workshop Summer 2023 Recap

TWBW had another busy summer as over 110 kids attended our weekly “nautical skills” camps at the workshop. As in past years, campers experienced a variety of activities, including building a model sailboat, knot tying, sewing a canvas bag, steam-bending wood, using a block and tackle, working with hand planes, and making a CNC name board. Each week also included a day out on the water rowing one of our wooden boats and learning about the abundant marine life in the river and along the shoreline.



Fall Program

TWBW has again set a record for the number of students participating in our fall program. Over 70 young boatbuilders have been busy constructing three rowboats. For this trimester, we have introduced a new design called a pram. A pram is a small dinghy with a flat bow panel rather than a pointed bow. For sailing enthusiasts, the hull shape is very similar to an Optimist sailboat. We have patterned our design after an old, decaying fiberglass pram left at our shop several years ago. Our students have made great progress building this new design as the photos below show.



Constructing the ladder frame used to build a boat.



Installing the seat supports



Using a hand plane to shape a transom panel.



Celebrating the completion of the hull.



Laying-out the location for installing the keel.



Cutting out a quarter knee on the bandsaw.

Continued on page 2

Please remember TWBW in your end-of-year giving. Donations can be mailed or made online at our web site. Thank you for supporting our kids!

Director’s Message

Dear Friends,

As 2023 draws to a close, TWBW has now completed its eighth full year of teaching the art and science of building wooden boats. Since our inaugural program in the summer of 2015, over 1500 Hampton Roads youth have participated in our boatbuilding and/or summer camp programs. We continue to increase the number of students who participate each trimester, many of whom re-enroll for subsequent programs. This, along with the positive feedback we receive from parents and teachers, tells me that we are on the right track with what we do to improve the STEM and life skills of our students.

None of this would be possible without the help of so many people and organizations. We are so grateful for your support.

We look forward to serving even more youth in 2024 and hope you will continue to help us make a difference in their lives.

I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous 2024!

Tom Brandl
Executive Director

President’s Message

We take safety very, very seriously at TWBW. That statement may sound obvious, given the power tools with which our kids are working every day. Everyone in the shop knows a band saw or a table saw, and every other tool we use to build boats, can cause serious injury in a flash. No one uses a power tool without an adult providing close supervision.

But physical safety is not the only safety we focus on at TWBW. Equally important to us is the emotional safety of our teens. We want every student, no matter their background or current situation, to feel welcome and secure in our workshop. No bullying, no taunting, no yelling or cursing, nothing is allowed to occur that might impact our kids in an emotionally negative way. Of course, all our volunteers undergo a thorough background check. But they also undergo a gut check of sorts with Tom Brandl. If a volunteer can’t interact positively with teenagers, as distracted and goofy as our kids can sometimes be, then they will not be helping any student build a boat.

Emotional safety is hard to quantify. When students return not only week after week, but also year after year, we take that as an indication that our students feel safe, physically and emotionally. Your financial support of our program, week after week and year after year, is the only reason we can continue to offer a safe place to our teen boatbuilders. Feel free to stop by any time to see your investment at work. We think you’ll be pleased with the results.

Happy holidays!

Marie Finch, President
TWBW Board of Directors

At the Workshop (Continued)

TWBW Forms New Partnership

During October, TWBW partnered with local nonprofit **ForKids, Inc.** A dozen middle school students built small wooden sailboat models. Construction required them to learn to use up to ten different wood-working tools, including a saw, hammer, ruler and a drill press. They then painted and decorated the boats and voted on their favorite boat. In January, TWBW will return to ForKids and begin constructing a 12-foot Bevin's Skiff rowboat with high school kids.

Open House 2023

On September 30th, TWBW held its 6th Annual Open House. An estimated 200 visitors attended the event which celebrated the accomplishments of our students during the previous year. Guests got to meet the young boatbuilders and examine four of the beautiful boats they constructed. Other happenings included boatbuilding demonstrations, tool displays, a silent auction, and a lunch provided by event sponsor Wegmans. There were also various fun and educational activities for kids. Thanks to all our guests and wonderful volunteers who helped make this Open House a success!



Winter 2024 Trimester Registration

Sign-ups for TWBW's winter youth boatbuilding program will begin on December 13, 2023. The trimester will begin the week of January 8th and end on March 15th. Registration will be conducted online via our website: twbw.org. Enrollment is on a first come/first served basis.

Sign Up Now For TWBW's 2024 Boatbuilding Course for Adults

Classes are held 6 to 8 pm on Thursday evenings at the workshop. The course begins January 25, 2024 and runs through June. This is a beginner's-level course; prior woodworking experience is helpful but not necessary. Students will learn to use both traditional hand tools and power tools while building a 12-foot Bevin's Skiff rowboat. Cost is \$400 per person (additional family members pay half price). The money supports our youth boatbuilding programs. Not only will you learn to build a boat, but you will also be supporting a worthy cause! Class size is capped at 10 students, so call or email us today to register.



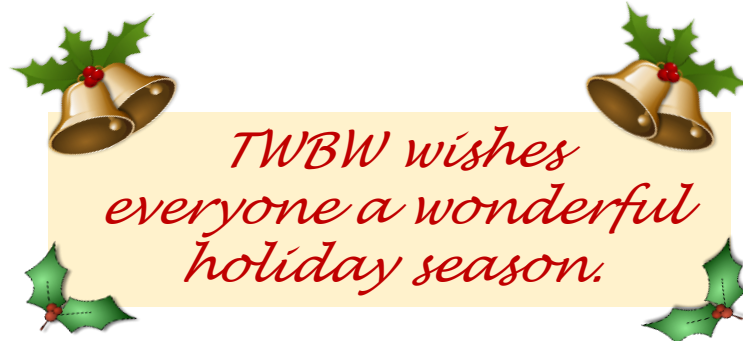
Members of the 2023 Adult Boatbuilding Class proudly display the beautiful rowboat they constructed.

Where Are They Now?

Mason Rodriguez first enrolled in TWBW's youth boatbuilding in the spring of 2022. He continued participating in our programs throughout the next year, up until he graduated high school. During workshop sessions, he often spoke of his desire to become a U.S. Marine. With the encouragement of the four retired Marines on our staff, Mason enlisted in January 2023. He "shipped" to boot camp at Parris Island, SC in July 2023 and graduated on September 29th. He is now at Camp Lejeune, NC undergoing infantry training. We wish Private First Class Rodriguez much success as he begins his Marine Corps career.



When **Carolyn August** was a student in TWBW's 2022 Adult Boatbuilding Course, she was determined to gain the knowledge and skills to one day construct her own sailboat. A resident of Mathews, VA, she drove nearly an hour and a half (one way) to attend Saturday morning workshop sessions. Since completing the course in October 2022, Carolyn has been busy constructing a Salt Bay Skiff, a 12-foot, flat-bottom sailboat. This past October, TWBW's Tom Brandl visited the Mathews Maritime Foundation boat shop where she is building her boat. As the photo shows, she has made great progress in the past year. Carolyn credits TWBW's boatbuilding course with giving her the skills and confidence to take on this challenging project. Great job Carolyn! We can't wait to see the boat when it's ready for launch.



Contacting TWBW

E-Mail: contact@twbw.org

Telephone: (757) 937-6812

U.S. Mail: P.O. Box 1243, Norfolk, VA 23501

Workshop: 910 Ballentine Blvd., Norfolk, VA 23504

Web Site: www.twbw.org