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## MAINE'S FIRST SHIP NEWSLETTER

Reconstructing *Virginia*  
Thank You For Your Generous Support!  
mfship.org

"HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER  
VACATION" AND FALL  
EVENTS  
AUGUST 2013



On a hazy July afternoon, Maine's First Ship *shallop Jane Stevens* takes to the waters off Hermit Island in the first step of her annual maintenance. Volunteer crew from left, Roger Barry, Jeremy Blaiklock, (stern) Mark Aukeman and Tim Teague. After several days of "soaking up" on Rob's mooring in this protected harbor, she's been hauled out and the work needed to preserve her hull and structure will be done this winter at Rob Stevens' Hermit Island boat shed (Thank you Rob!).

Many visitors and supporters are interested in how we will maintain and preserve *Virginia* in the harsh Maine climate when she is completed, and our preservation efforts on the shallop will help show how this will be done. Volunteers will have the opportunity this winter to practice some of those skills while helping to make repairs to *Jane Steven's* caulking, hull preservation and bottom paint.



## **Ahoy Jane Stevens!**



Many thanks to Nick Sewall, longtime Maine's First Ship supporter, for the use of his launch ramp for *Jane Stevens*. Parking space at Hermit Island is limited, and just enough (but not too many) hands arrived in time to help. As the volunteers prepare to launch, Roben Campbell (left) assisted by Mark Aukeman herds her curious grandkids out of the action zone while husband David Fay (behind the shallop) helps carry and guide the trailer with Jeremy Blaiklock. Rob Stevens (far right) backed by Orman Hines

and Roger Barry steady and carry the boat, while Tim Teague balances the load on the hitch.

*We all help out in our own way...*



## **Raising the forward divided frames**

Working with staging and come along, ribbands and rope lashing, raising divided frames present unique challenges.



(left) Discussing the techniques with Paul Cunningham(right), Dick Forrest (left)ties off to the adjacent frame, Roger Barry

perches on the stem to retrieve the come along suspended from the crossbeam. (right) The divided frame end rests on blocks just below the destination mortise.



Paul Cunningham rachets the industrial come along to raise the frame while Dick guides it by the staging and ribbands. Lashed to the top of the frame aft, the frame being installed can be moved into the mortise and out easily as the frame end is shaped into the perfect fit. Divided frames are bolted and clamped to the ribbands, along the deckline and at mid-frame.



**Volunteers craft the Maine's First Ship information kiosk for the Bath Visitor Center**

Inspired by the shapes found in *Virginia's* scrap pile, and a model of *Virginia* built and donated by artist Gil Ross, volunteer shipwright Tim Teague has sculpted a one of a kind work of art.



Created with yankee thrift and the assistance of Bill DelRossi (below left) and Gus Manomaitis, Tim based the design on the forms suggested by the

4"X6" white oak futtocks he salvaged from those unsuitable for use on *Virginia's* frames. This trunnel pegged kiosk also demonstrates the shipwright skills of lap and mortise and tenon joints. Holding the ship's model "under glass", a placard describing Maine's First Ship and *Virginia*, and topped by the flag of St. George this hefty sculpture measures over 6' tall. You'll find our uniques and beautiful kiosk in the Bath Visitor Center, displaying brochures and directing visitors to our Commercial Street location.



Thank you Tim, Gil, Gus and Bill, for donating your artistic gifts to this durable, eye-catching and highly useful celebration of *Virginia's* hull forms and shipwright joinery techniques.





## Maine's First Ship 2013 Education Program - Our First Apprentice Wesley Blum

After three years as an education program student, Wesley was selected this year to become our first Apprentice, studying during the six week program with volunteer shipwrights building *Virginia*. During 2010, Wesley helped build the shallop Jane Stevens and worked on *Virginia* during 2011 and 2012 building frames and shaping spars. Pictured with volunteers Gil Ross (left) and Mark

Aukeman(right) Wesley (center) is helping to build the harpins, cross sections of the stem waterlines that are used for holding cant frames in position until the shell planking or plating is attached. We'll also use them to determine the shape and position of the forward cant frames being built this fall.

### 2013 Student Karl Shumaker

Shipwright George Sprague works with Karl to establish the centerline in *Virginia's* crowjack at right. Karl explained how they would use the centerline and batten to mark where to cut the spar from four to eight sides.



In addition to working on *Virginia*, Shipwright Sprague also incorporated some independent study into this year's program. Karl articulately presented examples of both Steam Bending and Mallet construction *wowing* the annual meeting attendees. Extracts from George's course descriptions illustrate the marine applicability of these carpentry projects.



**Steam Bending:** Manipulating wood to fit the natural curvatures of boats is often eased through the use of steaming. This project would create elegant shelf brackets made of white oak framing scrap that could be auctioned at the annual MFS silent auction. Additionally students would need to build a simple community steam box for this project.

**Wooden Mallet:** A small, hand-held wooden mallet, approximately 14 inches long with a 10 inch head. This project would be constructed with white oak scraps from *Virginia* frames. Wooden mallets are frequently used in boat-building as a tool to drive chisels.

Karl's at the top of the solicitation list for 2014 students, we can't wait to learn another year with such a great student!





## SETTING THE KEELSON-PART 1



Virginia's keelson is being installed in two sections which are joined by a substantial scarf joint. Pre-mortised for each frame, the aft keelson section is also fitted to the deadwood using a massive scarf joint. Preparing to raise the aft keelson, president, Orman Hines and vice-president, Jeremy Blaiklock, and "all hands" assemble to make the lift.

Volunteers Roger Barry, Paul Cunningham, Tim Teague, Bruce Brennen and Mark Aukeman make the quick "timber toss" look easy and the keelson is soon laying across the frames.



Using crowbars to turn and position the keelson, many test fittings will be needed to get a perfect fit for each frame and the deadwood scarf.



Work with chisel and slick quickly begins to refine the fit of mortise and scarf joinery. Below, Mark Aukeman clears excess wood from the scarf joint.



After the keelson joinery has been completed each frame will be bolted keelson through keel, locking the frames in place. The aft keelson scarf will be bolted through deadwood and keel, integrating the frame and stern structures. When the forward keelson section is fitted to each frame and scarfed to the stem, bolting keelson through keel and stem will integrate the forward and aft structures. When the lead keel is installed, each frame will be bolted again, keelson through lead keel.

## CHEWEBACCA TAKES TROPHY AT THE BOATYARD DOG TRIALS



Always first in the hearts of his many admirers, Chewbacca took a respectable fourth place in his group. Shown here with proud papa Jay Coffey, his doggie trophy and canvas entry banner are souvenirs of the memorable day.

Entry text and photo courtesy of Phil Showell cannot be enhanced by another pen.



# Chewbacca

(a.k.a. "Chewie") • Homeport: Bath, Maine

**F**OUR YEARS OLD, CHOCOLATE-COLORED, and the self-appointed supervisor of the Maine's First Ship project to build a replica of the *Virginia* on the banks of the Kennebec River in Bath: that's Chewbacca, and he is raring to compete. But his entry in the trials nearly didn't happen because, back in March, Chewbacca suffered a near-fatal accident at the work site.

Chewie was supervising things at the stern of the *Virginia*, the replica of the 30-ton pinnaque that was built by English colonists at the mouth of the Kennebec more than 400 years ago. Above him, shipbuilders had taken the 12"x12" stern-post out of its mortise joint to improve the fit. The huge timber slipped and fell on the passing dog and he was flattened, all four legs splayed out, under 800 pounds of oak.

It took seven men to lift the stern-post off Chewie. After a pedal-to-the-metal race to the vet's office 30 miles away in Portland, three veterinarians and a mammal neurologist did all they could to repair four broken ribs and internal injuries.

That was more than four months ago, and Chewie has made a miraculous recovery. The MFS and Bath communities are chipping in to cover his medical costs. His russet coat is growing in, and will soon cover his surgical scar. His owner, a devout Christian, considers Chewbacca's recovery a true miracle, a conclusion shared by the vets who treated him.

Today Chewbacca still reports to work, but his new office is at MFS headquarters where he can safely observe all comings and goings while rummaging in the pockets of the shipbuilders for treats. His application to compete in the 2013 Boatyard Dog competition was submitted after all, and his training regimen—swimming in the river as often as possible and chasing a tennis ball as long as someone is willing to throw it—is back in full swing.

Chewbacca, praise be! Fully recovered, often wet, sometimes energetic, sometimes laid back. Oh—he's a Labrador retriever, in case you hadn't guessed.



## Rabbets in the boatshed?



Gus Manomaitis works the rabbet into the sternpost.



Jeremy Blaiklock cuts the keel rabbet using a circular saw preset to the correct angle.



RB Omo begins to outline the rabbet curve

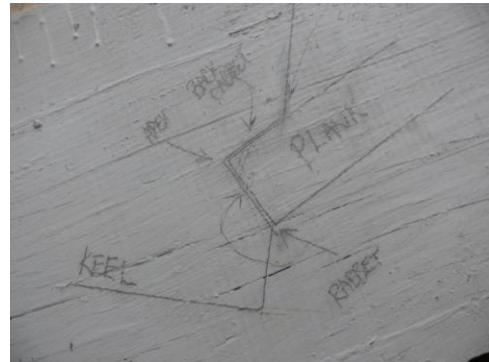
Before all the full frames were set on *Virginia's* keel, a simple bevel rabbet cut was made, taking the top corner off both sides along the length of the keel, preparing a flat plane to receive the board ends of the planking. After making a depth cut along the length of the stern back rabbet it's back to hand

tools and many hours of chisel and mallet work all against the natural grain of the white oak. Frequent measurements are made to stay at the proper depth of cut.



Tim Teague works on the changing depth of the rabbet as it rises higher on the deadwood

A shipwright pencil sketch on the stem shows the compound angle of the back rabbet. This compound angle is used both forward and aft as the angle of the planking increases.



*Virginia's* stern back rabbet shallows as it flares to a graceful fan shape at the foot of the sternpost.

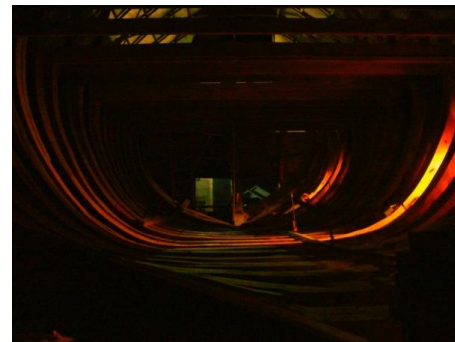
Chuck Jouver (left rear), Gil Ross and Orman Hines (right) chip away at the rabbet





Greetings members and friends. With a newsletter theme of "how I spent my summer vacation", this year needs only one word and that is "sticky". Despite the humid, rainy days of summer slowing both visitor rates and volunteer hours our glowing progress on Virginia through the winter and spring seasons continues. The fireworks finale (half the people went home), and then fireworks starting again seems another indication of the overall heat exhaustion. Fundraising events like our fireworks party and photo exhibit suffered from heat stroke, but the good news is we made more on photos sales (as July went on) than we raised with the fireworks party, which is a promising direction for our exciting upcoming events in October.

Thanks to those who helped prepare the site for the summer events, Jeremy's Bobcat made short work of re-arranging futtock stock and tucked all the picnic tables in through the bay doors for the Chili-chowderfest. Thanks to the helpful shipwrights that took down staging and shifted timbers in the boatshed to make a safe passage to the back lot for premium fireworks viewing and thanks to those who braved the heat and even those who planned to come but had the good sense to stay home –thanks to you too! In this case where conditions were so unusually brutal, it really is the thought that counts for those of us who worked hard to put the event together, We were few for the fireworks view, but had a great show and very little traffic to deal with on the midway or the road home. As Heritage Days continues to become a multi-day festival we will keep working on how to build attractive membership opportunities around the Heritage Days events. Right, *Virginia's* frames by the fireworks light...



Art show *VIRGINIA'S FRAMES* to benefit Maine's First Ship and the Bath Freight Shed Alliance raises \$140.

**YEAR ROUND HOURS - VIRGINIA VOLUNTEERS - SATURDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS 9AM TO 3PM**



Visit us at Bath Freight Shed 27 Commercial Street Bath Maine "When the flag of St. George is flying"

**BATH FREIGHT SHED ALLIANCE UPCOMING EVENTS: Summer Full Moon Dinner Series!**

Thursday Sept. 19th Tim O'Brien: Trattoria Athena and Enoteca Athena

Set at the Freight Shed, overlooking the Kennebec featuring local produce, cheese, meats with wine and Maine beer. There will be live music. Your minimum donation of \$25 pp per dinner will go toward the restoration of the Freight Shed, Bath's winter local food hub. Contact BFSA by visiting <http://bathfreightshed.blogspot.com/>

**Joint fundraiser – Octoberfest – Weekend of October 12, 2013 Please contact Gayla Teague [breezekist@hotmail.com](mailto:breezekist@hotmail.com)**





**Castlebay and maritime singer Tom Kastle to perform in a concert to benefit Maine's First Ship -Saturday, October 19, 2013,** at 7:30 at the Bath City Council Auditorium, Front St, Bath Me, the Maine folk music duo Castlebay will be joined by maritime singer and raconteur Tom Kastle for a concert to benefit Maine's First Ship. Admission for adults is \$15, and \$10 for children.

Castlebay musically weaves together Maine's ageless nautical and British Isles legacies. Julia Lane and Fred Gosbee have loved and researched traditional music for most of their lives and blend history, legend and experience into their personable performance style. They support their fine, expressive vocals with Celtic harp, guitar, fiddle, and woodwinds, as well as playing evocative instrumental selections, treating the audience to a musical journey through time and across the Atlantic.



“What’s Castlebay all about? Seafaring, the darkness and lightness of the coast of Maine, the rhythm of the tides.” –Peter Spectre, marine author

Many of their songs have as themes the lives of those who live by the sea, not only the deep water sailors, but also the shipwrights, coasters, fisherman and their wives. These are the people who established Maine as a maritime legend and who continue to build that legend with their daily lives of skill, hard work and pride. Castlebay has provided historically informed concerts for many heritage celebrations and museums including the Popham 400 Celebration, the Pownalborough courthouse, the Knox Mansion, Fort William Henry, Maine Maritime Museum, Penobscot Marine Museum, Old Fort Western and the Maine Folklife Center at the University of Maine Orono. Their programs are always carefully researched and have been presented throughout New England and in the British Isles. In addition they have recorded numerous albums of both traditional and original music. [www.castlebay.net](http://www.castlebay.net)



Tom Kastle is a singer, songwriter, sailor and teller of tales who has performed throughout the US, Canada, Europe, and New Zealand. He has one foot in the modern singer/songwriter world and the other planted in the traditional maritime realm where he is a shanty and ballad singer and a tall ship captain. He is a co-director of the Chicago Maritime Festival, a faculty member of the Old Town School of Folk Music, and the Narrator (with occasional singing roles) for the Candid Concert Opera Company. When ashore, he lives in a 19th century log cottage in Madison, Wisconsin. [www.tomkastle.com](http://www.tomkastle.com).

The concert will celebrate the life and times of the builders and sailors of *Virginia*, Maine's First Ship. The musicians will dress in renaissance attire and concert goers are encouraged to wear their finest period or pirate garb. Prizes will be awarded for various costume categories, best 17<sup>th</sup> century famous male and female, best pirate, most authentic costume and more.

Maine’s First Ship is a historically significant reconstruction project that is fueled by the generosity of our members and supporters, our partnerships within the local community, and the commitment of our *volunteers*.

We offer practical shipbuilding and ship operation programs for the education of students of all ages. As we build *Virginia*, our floating classroom, we are engaging students in annual summer shipbuilding courses that teach traditional skills. Programs include lofting and related math, carpentry, as well as ship preservation, operation and maintenance that will help prepare participants to succeed in real life employment. Maine’s First Ship is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit dedicated to maintaining a welcoming environment for volunteers, students and visitors.

For advance tickets contact MFS PR at: [breezekist@hotmail.com](mailto:breezekist@hotmail.com)-PLEASE INCLUDE CASTLEBAY IN YOUR SUBJECT LINE – THANKS!  
OR make your check payable and mail to Maine’s First Ship - PO Box 231 Bath ME 04530 and pick up your tickets at the door

**MEMBERSHIP DRIVE – NEW MEMBERSHIP LEVELS AND RECOGNITION!!!**- New Individual and business membership level. We've established some exciting new membership recognition levels for both individuals and businesses try us out!

Individual donation levels:	Name	Membership levels	Other Recognition
\$100	Frame	2 memberships	Decal – 2 event passes
\$50	Plank	2 membership	Decal
\$30	Trunnel	1 membership	Decal
Volunteer hours	Trunnel	1 membership	Decal – 1 event pass T-shirt or hat after 60 days
Free	Community Advocates	1 membership	Decal
Free with parents approval	Junior	2 memberships	Decal

- Note : events planned for 2013 include the second annual Fireworks Party

Business \$ ranges	Name	Publicity in media	Membership levels	Recognition
\$1000-750	Mainsail	Logo and link on website front page	2 memberships	Decal – 10 event passes
\$500	Mizzensail	Logo and link on website back page	2 memberships	Decal – 4 event passes
\$300	Topsail	Logo In newsletter	2 memberships	Decal – 2 event passes
\$100	Bowspritsail	Name in newsletter	2 memberships	Decal

**PLEASE SUPPORT MAINE'S FIRST SHIP BUSINESS MEMBERS AND PARTNERS**

**Business Members:**

Patti Irish Media



**Big Barn Coffee**

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Seaflower Garden and Design

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Sebasco Harbor Resort

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Frohmler Construction

MW Sewall

First Federal Savings & Loan

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New Hampshire Charitable Foundation

Charles L. Read Foundation

Maine Historical Society

Baldwin Foundation

Davistown Museum

**Partners:**

Robinhood Marine

Nat Wilson, Sailmaker

Rob Stevens, Boatbuilder

Bath Freight Shed Alliance

Rockport Marine

BFC Marine

Maine Maritime Museum

Main Street Bath

Theodore & Theodore Architects

Regional School Unit #1

Bath Farmer's Market

Bath Iron Works Corp.

\*note: Maine's First Ship Partners (donors of goods and services) receive recognition at Topsail level







Notes from Maine's First Ship annual meeting in lieu of President's comments August 2013 Newsletter.

This year's annual meeting was the largest by far since Virginia's reconstruction began in earnest in 2011.

Chaired by president, Orman Hines, the brief business meeting began by accepting last year's minutes and the current year treasurer's report, followed by nomination committee chair Jeremy Blaiklock reading the nomination for the slate of officers for the upcoming year. After the successful re-election of officers, the meeting moved to recognition of outstanding annual contributions to Maine's First Ship. This year's recipient was board member and past education co-chair Eric Varney. Eric's work with the fledgling education programs began with

the award willing Jane Stevens and so the lovely half model of her lines by Will West was gratefully given in honor of the past and present work Eric has contributed to our success.

Orman also introduced the membership to the intricate stained glass portrait of Virginia created and donated by longtime supporter Just Wold. Taking many hours of patient and skilled work, this delicate piece will be on display in the visitor center through September and then relocated to safer quarters at the office for the winter season.



Speaking for the education committee, 2013 student Karl Shumaker delivered a fascinating summary of the wood joinery and steaming projects he completed under Shipwright George Sprague's guidance during the 6 week 2013 summer program. Also highly recommended by education chair Merry Chapin is the 2013 video created by Patti Irish that updates the progress to date on Virginia. Found on our website, this is another fine piece of documentary photography by Patti.

The motion to change the end of the fiscal year from June 30 to December 31 to coincide with the end of our tax year, and to shift the annual meeting from August each year to between 45 and 90 days from each December 31 year end was approved.

We expect a better member turnout when the annual meeting is held when few members are on vacation. Some (yet to be determined) form of August event will continue to commemorate the arrival of the colonists and the beginning of Virginia's construction.

**We are soliciting nominations and volunteers for the board of directors and committees. Particularly needed are docents, skills in event planning, grants and membership. Please call 443-4242 for more information.**

***MAINE'S FIRST SHIP FUNDRAISING GOALS FOR 2013: \$150,000***

FMI visit us online at [www.mfship.org](http://www.mfship.org)

Contact us at: [mfs1@myfairpoint.net](mailto:mfs1@myfairpoint.net) (207) 443-4242

Maine's First Ship

PO Box 231 Bath ME 04530

Or stop by the Bath Freight Shed 27 Commercial Street Bath Maine

"When the flag of St. George is flying"

***HISTORY AND COMMUNITY - BECOME A VOLUNTEER!***

