



Maine's First Ship

Newsletter



Winter 2016

Special points of interest:

- Annual Meeting
- Summer program for students
- Annual Gala
- Planking
- Visitor Center

Newsletter produced
courtesy of the
Publicity
Committee:
Roger Barry, Lori Benson,
Allison Hepler



Virginia planking party and Annual Meeting set for March 19



Maine's First Ship's annual meeting this year includes a bit of physical work. Volunteer shipwrights who are building *Virginia* have begun planking her, and invite all members and friends to observe or participate in steaming and shaping a plank.

The annual meeting, to be held on Saturday, March 19 at 1:30 in the Bath Freight Shed, 27 Commercial Street, celebrates another successful year of programming, shipbuilding, fund raising, and greeting visitors from near and far. "We've been planking for a few

months," says MFS President Orman Hines of Phippsburg, "but we wanted to give visitors and members the chance to see the process." Shipwright Rob Stevens of Woolwich calls this a milestone. "The framing took a long time, and we expect planking to go much more quickly," he said. "We have great volunteers who are putting it together."

The annual meeting will include brief committee reports, including an update of the Visitor Center, which, thanks to a grant from Maine Humanities Council, will be updated and

revamped in time for the spring. Also on tap is the re-election of the MFS slate of officers for 2016: President: Orman Hines (Phippsburg), Vice President: Jeremy Blaiklock (Arrowsic), Secretary: Allison Hepler (Woolwich), Treasurer: Dan Burchstead (Phippsburg). Members will also meet the newest Board member, student Tait Nygaard (Bath).

Light refreshments will also be available. The Meeting is open to everyone but only members may vote. Memberships will be available at the meeting.

President's Notes



Our dedicated cadre of seasoned and new volunteers is slowly making progress on putting up the planks on the outside of *Virginia*. Some of the white oak may be too dry and splits a bit, as we pound the trunnels home. With a small wedge inserted into the end of each trunnel they make a solid connection of plank to frame. On

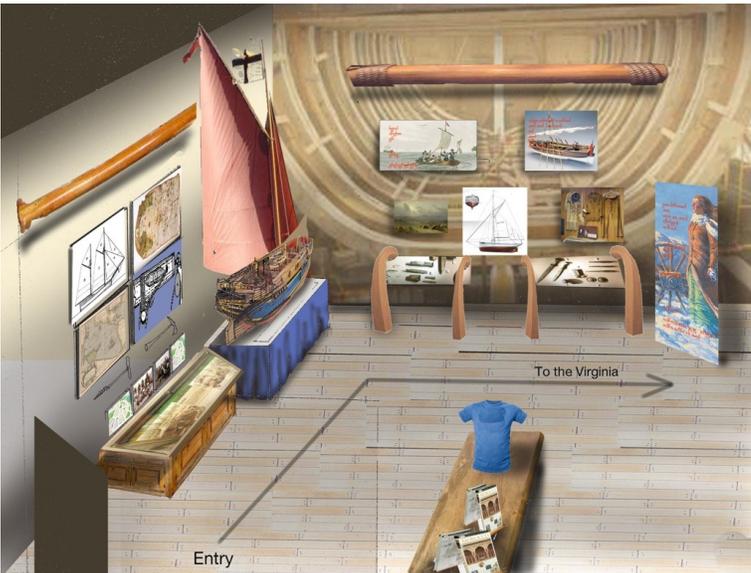
the butt ends of each plank we are required to use metal fasteners; which we have found to break off even though we are careful to drill the holes and grease the screws. So we are now using a bit larger screw.

We have a couple of contacts for the 52 hackmatack knees that will connect the deck frame to the hull, but we are still looking for a larger source of knees. We have put in a request for

grant for the knees and deck framing material, which help us to cover the cost of finishing the decking of "*Virginia*". Once the deck is on she will certainly look like the proud ship that we have all been dreaming of, since those meetings in Jane Steven's kitchen.

- Orman

Updated Visitor Center Needs Summer Docents



Volunteer docents are needed to help with the Visitor Center this summer. After over 4000 visitors came through last summer, Board members Lori Benson, Roger Barry and Allison Hepler applied for a grant to the Maine Humanities Council to update the exhibits.

The updated Visitor Center will still focus on the history of the colony, the archaeology, and *Virginia*, but will be more coordinated and take advantage of additional lighting and signage. Visitors will still be able to visit the ship.

"The energy of docents really draws in visitors from far and wide," says Hepler, "and anyone with an interest in history or shipbuilding or volunteering will make a great docent." The Visitor Center is open 6 days a week in the summer months, and schedules can be coordinated to accommodate anyone willing to volunteer.

Save the date — May 17
Annual Gala Dinner
J.R. Maxwell's

Join us for MFS annual gala dinner on May 17 at J.R. Maxwell's. in Bath. Featured speaker this year is Harold Burnham, who will be talking about *Ernestina*, currently being restored at Boothbay Harbor Shipyard. Also, we need items for the Silent Auction. Contact the office with items.

Welcome to summer boatbuilding at Maine's First Ship



Maine's First Ship has announced its annual summer woodworking camp. Renamed Plank and Keel Woodworking Camp, the summer program is open to students entering grades 7 through 10. "As always," says instructor George Sprague of Bath, "we offer students a chance to develop and hone woodworking skills related to wooden boatbuilding," including working on *Virginia* alongside MFS's volunteer shipwrights. *Virginia* is a reconstruction of a ship built by English colonists at the mouth of the Kennebec River in 1607.

Camp is held in the Bath Freight Shed in downtown Bath. There are two three-week summer sessions being offered: Session I is July 11-28 and Session II will be held August 1-18.

Each session is Monday-Thursday 8 am until noon. Students in each session will get to build a half-hull model of *Virginia*, and construct a 12 foot Bevin's skiff. Field trips to local woodworking and boat shops, and rowing on the Kennebec River are also included.

Volunteers are also working with the students on the history of *Virginia* and the colony who built her. "Virginia's connection to our own maritime history excites the students," says Merry Chapin, board member and chair of the MFS Education Committee. "They are also excited to be working near *Virginia*," which is being built behind the Bath Freight Shed.

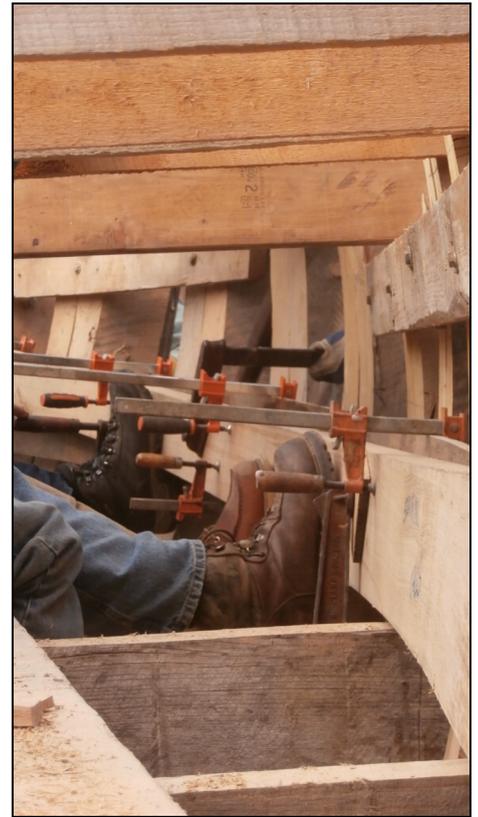
The newly renovated MFS Visitor Center in the Freight Shed that tells the history of the ship and the colony will be a key element of the students' learning. "Volunteer docents will also be helping students experience that history," says Allison Hepler, MFS board member and volunteer docent.

This is the seventh year of MFS's summer program for middle and high school aged students. There is no cost to the program, and interested students and parents should contact Maine's First Ship in its new office above J.R. Maxwell's, phone 443-4242, or email mfs1@myfairpoint.net. Interested people of all

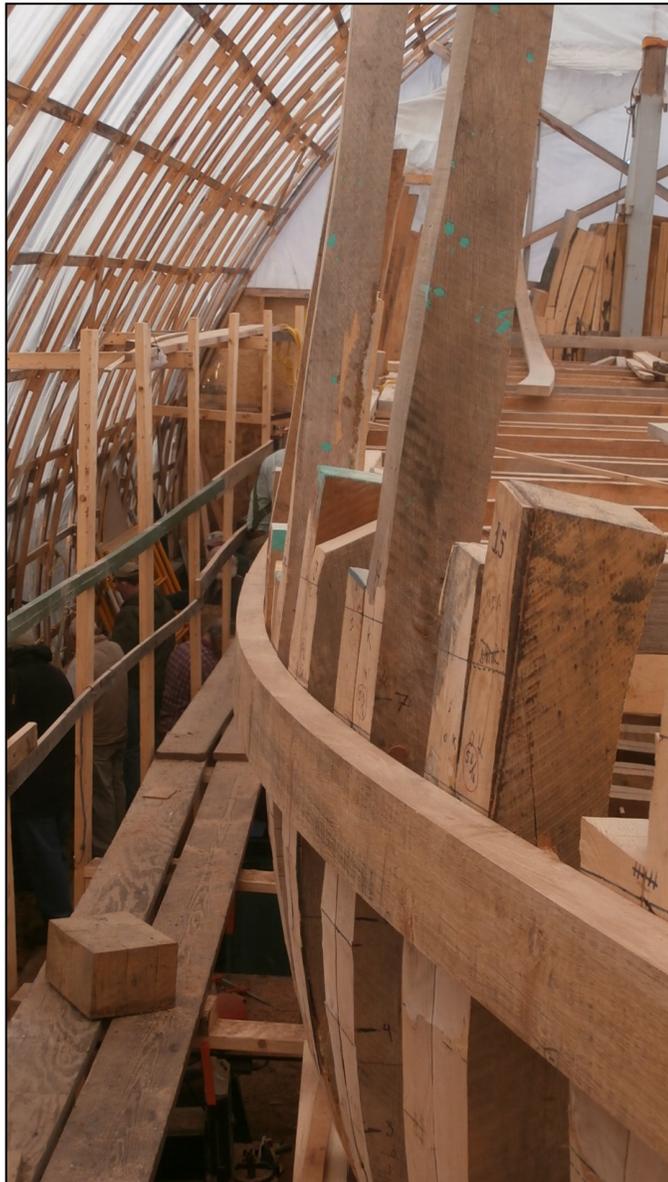
ages can also stop by the boatshop on Wednesdays and Saturdays and speak with any of the volunteer shipwrights. Students can download an application from the website, www.mfship.org.



Planking of *Virginia* brings progress, cheers



Shipwrights are clamping the steamed plank to the inside of the frames, letting it dry to the correct shape. Then they will fasten it to the outside of the frames.





Maine's First Ship: Reconstructing the pinnacle *Virginia*

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Maine's First Ship

PO Box 231

Bath ME 04530

Ph: 207-443-4242

Visit *Virginia* at

27 Commercial Street

(on the water side of the

Bath Freight Shed)

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