

# Coastal Culture

*A peek at the talented people in Rivah Country*

## MATHEWS' MODEL BOAT BUILDER FINDS HOBBY THERAPEUTIC AND STIMULATING

by Tom Chillemi

Building a model boat from wood has many facets. Model builder Don Good of Mathews knows that. It's a pastime that can take you away from the hum-drum of everyday life. "It's therapeutic," said Good. "It's relaxing and challenging and it keeps me stimulated mentally."

Model building is problem solving on a miniature scale. It's the fun of finding solutions in unusual places or ways. "Sometimes you can get lost in tiny details," he explained. "You get frustrated and just have to walk away. Then, all of a sudden, a light comes on and you have the answer."

For example, Good built a Chesapeake Bay deadrise workboat and needed to make a winder for a trotline, which was used in old days to catch crabs. His eureka moment came when he put together two dish shaped washers to create a miniature pulley. "You have to look for solutions everywhere."

Another time, he built an engine and used part of a Bic pen for the carburetor.

To make an authentic-looking life ring, he found some cloth tape to cover it with that resembled the original canvas. Tiny glass beads used for marker lights sparkle when the light hits them right.

"Somedays the boat beats you and other days you beat the boat," said Good. "I guess that's part of life, too."

### Getting started

Good advises those who want to build model boats as a hobby should join a model club in the area. Learning from experienced model builders is a good way to refine skills. "You will learn about materials, tools and they can answer a lot of questions a new modeler may have," he said. Good, who is president of the Mathews Maritime Museum, said he plans to join a club that is forming at the Deltaville

Maritime Museum. (Call 776-7200.)

There are "kits" for wooden boats, but they are nothing like plastic model kits. Even with a kit, the wooden boat model maker has to make each part, cutting, sanding and shaping to fit.

Model boats are built in the same way as a full size boat — starting with a stem, stern and keel laid on a form to make the hull, said Good. Then the sides get planked.

Good can mill recycled "lumber" to needed dimensions, and he can even cut one-sixteenth-inch square pieces with his table saw. His boats are made from pine, oak, basswood and he uses cherry wood for some detailed pieces. Everything is scratch built, except for the steering wheel and propeller, and Good is studying how to make them.

### Planning

Good has built one boat from "formal" plans.

He has worked as a draftsman, and that experience has helped him in this hobby. "I do use plans, they may not be a set of formal plans, but I will draw and make basic plans. I use old sketches and work from photographs when they can be found. I may scale things from the pictures to get a feel for sizes and proportions."

The plan may end up as a basic drawing on a sheet of notebook paper to give him dimensions for a model.

Good works on more than one model at a time, so that he can stay busy while paint is drying. He uses super glue, which hardens in seconds.

Some days he may work on boats five hours, "unless life gets in the way."

He will get so engrossed that he loses track of time, and his wife Debbie brings lunch to his work room. "Maybe she's afraid I'll come



Getting the correct curve of the hull at the bow is an art.

*"Somedays the boat beats you and other days you beat the boat. I guess that's part of life, too." --Don Good*

back in the house," he joked.

### Finishing up

Planning is important. "You need to plan construction steps all the way to the finish," Good advises. And you have to assemble things in the correct order or you will be doing some things more than once. You have to keep an open mind. There's more than one way to do some things."

The model builder will probably be the only person who knows when a detail is not perfect. So, it's up to them to leave well enough alone, or fix it. "I've made some mistakes, but I've learned from them," said Good. "Be prepared to do some things twice. If you don't like the result, it's best to just start over."

### Fleet

Good has been working on an oystering skiff model of a sail-driven boat used from about 1880 to the 1920s and was the precursor of the deadrise boats that were powered by internal combustion engines.

Another of his boats was the "Fox Hill Scow,"

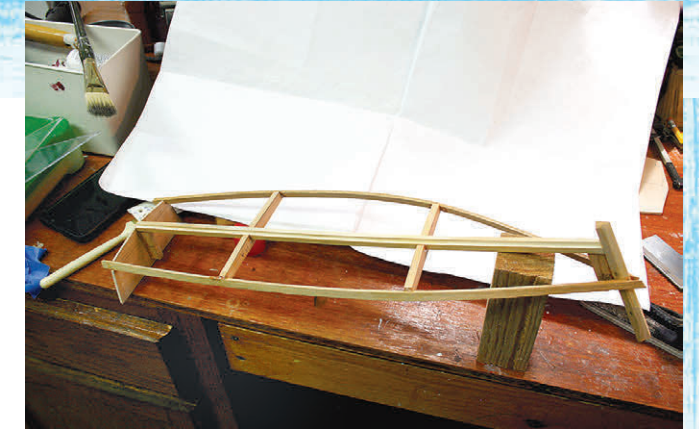
a forerunner of Jon (NOT JOHN, but Jon) boats. They were used all over the Chesapeake Bay for fishing and working pound nets in the 1930s.

One of his first models was a "tow boat," which would be towed behind a workboat to carry extra gear, ice or used as a launch in shallow water. This model boat is correct right down to the rust lines from the nails and gunwales that have been scalloped by ropes rubbing on them.

### Raffle

Don Good has built a deadrise workboat that will be given away in a drawing with the funds benefiting Riverside Walter Reed Hospital in Gloucester. The drawing will take place on Dec. 4. Tickets are available at the museum or at Mathewsmaritime.com, Facebook and the Riverside Hospital donation page.

Learn more by visiting the Mathews Maritime Museum at 482 Main St. in Mathews. It is open through Oct. 30 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and by appointment, made by calling 725-4444.



Model boats are built in the same way as a full size boat—starting with a stem, stern and keel—the skeleton of the hull.

## LEARN TO BUILD

### Calling ships modelers

As part of its continuing "Living History" and chronicling of Chesapeake Bay watercraft mission, the Deltaville Maritime Museum and Holly Point Nature Park is reaching out to members and our community seeking ships modelers and those wishing to learn the skill. This program would be an extension and variation of its education offerings, such as the Turner Lectures.

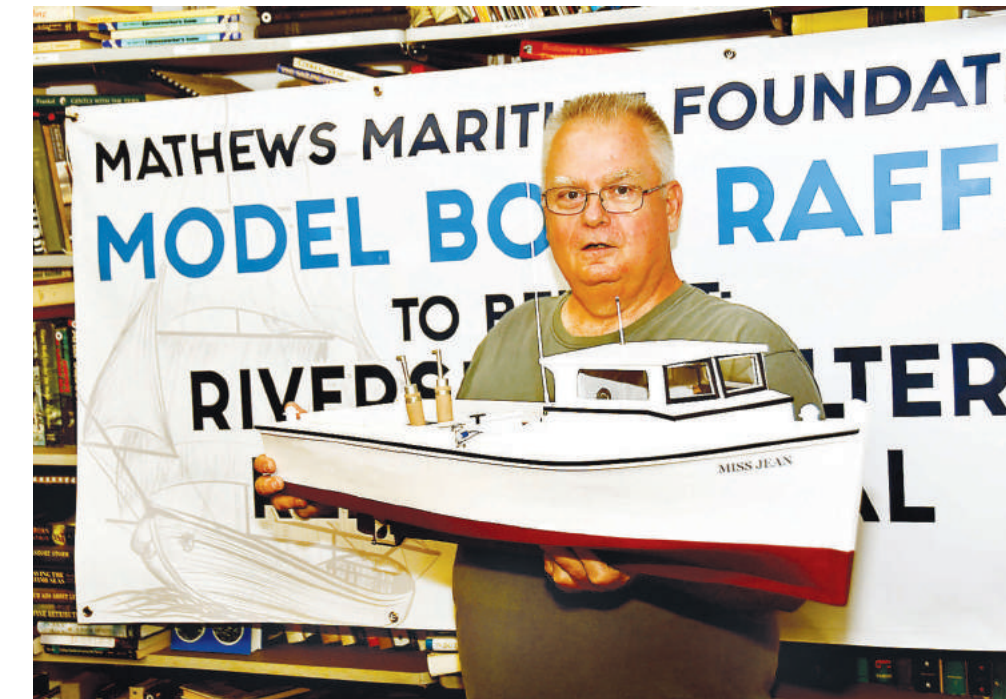
Deltaville Maritime Museum hopes to organize a program for those interested in building model boats. All skill levels are welcome.

This program will be led by John Earl of modelboatyard.com. His works can be seen in the DMM. There will be no fee for this program. Call DMM at 776-7200.

Monthly meetings of the group would be conducted at the museum and open to museum members. Meetings would typically involve a show-and-tell of current projects, demonstrations of modeling techniques, and one-on-one mentoring. Day and time of meetings will be decided once it has been determined that there is an interest in such a group.



The deadrise's cabin is complete with radio and gauges.



Don Good holds his recently completed deadrise workboat that will be raffled to benefit Riverside Walter Reed Hospital.



Don Good's "tow boat" is authentic right down to the rust lines from the nails and gunwales that have been scalloped by ropes rubbing on them.



The deck boards were milled by model builder Don Good and stained to give them a worn look. Note the boat hook and net.



Don Good's deadrise workboat is detailed right down to the canvas covered life ring.