

# Dickerson

Owner's Association



***NEWS LETTER***

***JANUARY 2013***

## **Exciting New Program For June Dickerson Annual Rendezvous**

We are planning an exciting program for the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Rendezvous. Under the leadership of our "Sampson Post" Joe Slavin, Bruce Franz, Larry Moser and I are making excellent progress with the Richardson Maritime Museum in Cambridge setting up a dedicated Dickerson Exhibit. We have met with the resident staff a couple of times (I met most recently on 18 December) and we have dedicated space (potentially to be improved and enlarged) and the museum is making the necessary purchases to make it a first class display.



Larry has produced some "world class" audio/visual products and the museum has procured electronic picture frames to display them. We have provided them a draft layout of pictures and written material that they are reviewing and they will make copies of selected material. We are underway to provide them with half-hull models. Altogether, we are on a vector that will result in a finished display in the late Spring.

That leads us to a once in a lifetime opportunity for the 2013 Rendezvous. I am shortly expecting a formal offer (I have an informal one) from the Museum to host an "Opening Reception" on the Friday night of our Rendezvous.

So our plans are to do a Friday Arrival Parade from the Choptank Light up the Choptank River to Cambridge---reception at the Museum (a pretty walk). Spend Friday night in the Cambridge Municipal Marina or on the hook in Cambridge Creek. I have spoken with the Cambridge Harbormaster who looks forward to throwing out the red carpet for us. Then Saturday morning, race from Cambridge back down the river to the environs of Oxford. Banquet at the Tred Avon Yacht Club in Oxford. Sunday post-Rendezvous Cruise.

Some holes to be filled here----but we will let you all know just as soon as plans are finalized. We do think this parade to Cambridge and reception at our Dickerson Exhibit at the Richardson Maritime Museum will be a fun addition to the usual race and Tred Avon banquet.

So please reserve the weekend of June 14-16 (and longer for a post Rendezvous cruise), 2013 for another great Dickerson Event.

Barry Creighton  
D37 #22  
"Crew Rest"

## **Rebuilding "Iris"**

I have come to the conclusion that owning a "classic" boat (code for a boat that needs various "things" done to it) is like owning an old house. On an old house you might decide to install a \$30 spigot to allow for a hose to reach a garden on the far side of the house. As the hole is being drilled for the 1/2 inch copper pipe thru the sill you find rot in the sill....Next thing you know, a carpenter is telling you the sills on the house are rotted out....The house needs to be jacked up in the air and all the sills and a goodly amount of the siding & sheathing need replacement. The next couple months are spent watching many folks do many things to the house - for a lot more than the \$30 spigot cost.

The last couple years with "Iris" has been full of surprises. We moved "Iris" into the driveway in the fall of 2010 in anticipation of getting the varnish up to snuff, cleaning up the toe rails and perhaps working on the wiring a bit since much of it is as the folks at the Dickerson yard installed it - wiring on these boats is not too big a deal, since you can easily get to it. The idea was to do some nice "cosmetic" things to make "Iris" present a bit better - perhaps a bit of painting; paint the bootstripe....easy stuff.....Seems that was not to be.

The boat was trucked from Portsmouth NH to our home in Concord and deposited right in front of the house in our circular driveway. The boat hauler loved the location - it was simple for him. I like it because it's in front of the garage - easy to store "stuff" as it's hauled off the boat. Of course most of my neighbors were a bit curious when a 36 foot boat appeared in the driveway. It was a great opportunity to discuss the joys of sailing with many of them. The general comment was "that's a big boat". One of my neighbors operates an Art Gallery & sculpture garden and for years has had all sorts of sculpture/display work next door on display in front of the gallery - when she wandered over to find out what was in the driveway & asked "Mike what is that?" My reply was, " That....is Marine Art".



"Iris" deposited into the front yard.

The next spring, in April or so of 2011, as I was sanding the cabin top getting ready to re-paint the non skid areas with the Epifanes nonskid paint I had used a few years ago I noticed some little cracks in the paint. So I investigated...Perhaps not such a good idea...I was able to drive a screwdriver all the way thru the plywood. So, of course I started to "check out" what was going on. What was going on was ROT...lots & lots of rot. Dickerson used polyester resin and a single layer of fiberglass to cover all the horizontal surfaces on these boats and over time polyester resin has a tendency to crack and split. I found many--many areas where the deck fiberglass had cracked and the prior owner had just caulked the crack and painted over everything. Water had penetrated under the covering and rotted both cabin front corners and both rear corners as well as 4 or 5 significant areas on the cabin top. I also found rot on the port deck and a couple of actual "holes" that had been "covered" over with a couple layers of fiberglass and painted by the former owner. Amazing...I found that the fiberglass covering just peeled up like old tape that had lost the "stickiness". It came up in sheets. Within a few hours "Iris" sure looked a bit different. I then spent the next few weeks removing all the hatches, grabrails, dorades and other teak trim. My thought was to completely re-cover all horizontal surfaces with new fiberglass and epoxy resin. My thought of a few "cosmetic" items has changed.



"Iris" with the fiberglass removed. The "black" areas are rot or the precursor to rot.

So far I've removed and repaired all the rot in the cabin top and front deck, and most of the port side. The toerails had to come up to get under them because there was rot in the decks and the plywood needed to be patched in larger sheets to get structural strength. The bulkhead that leads into the cabin needed repairs after a bit of investigation. My sense is that any horizontal surface covered in fiberglass is a candidate for repair...so I've pretty much taken up all of them.



A typical Dickerson corner area. All 4 outside cabin corners looked like this companionway hatch area.

All the plywood was replaced in "steps" using 1/4 inch marine plywood in 3 staggered layers to match the existing thickness and get maximum strength back. Then everything was coated in multiple coats of Epoxy resin and then covered with 2 layers of 9.5 oz fiberglass & epoxy.



"Stepping" 1/4" plywood - a router does a great job.

The big issue with all of the repair work is the huge amount of sanding that needs to be done. Lots and lots and lots of sanding - for hours and hours. Over the years I have invested in a full complement of industrial Festool vacuum sanders that make this job faster and less dusty. I have found that I dislike fiberglass dust and avoid it when ever possible. These tools are expensive, but they sure save a lot of time because they sand quickly and remove 95% of all the dust generated. Almost no "clean-up" time collecting sawdust or fiberglass dust. Unfortunately lots of "finish" sanding of curves and where surfaces meet must be hand sanded...kinda' like doing body work on a car - but a car the size of a small house.



Black rot ground down and 2 layers of epoxy/glass cover it all now.



My "tennis pro" look as I squeegee epoxy into the 2nd coat of fiberglass.

I keep this photo on the screen saver at home. Hope to be back to this soon....



"Iris" on the way to Block Island . This is where we hope to be summer 2014 - SAILING

Mike Aitken "Iris"

## Dickerson travels South



After the remnants of hurricane, "Isaac", left us, our Dickerson 41, "Hemisphere Dancer"(H.D.), was able to leave a Cambridge boatyard, but it was too late to attend the Western Shore Roundup. After loading last minute supplies, we shoved off late for Solomon's Island. The next day, we caught up to "Crew Rest" on the Bay, and followed her to Old Point Comfort; following tides and favorable winds (until they dropped out) gave us the opportunity to make it to Deep Creek Lock, Portsmouth, VA for the night. Unfortunately, we had a schedule that did not allow us to visit with our fellow Dickerson owners..... prior family commitments. (Need I say more?) The trip down the Dismal Swamp Canal was wonderful, and the Pasquotank River into Elizabeth City, NC became a peaceful,

calm extension of the “Dismal”. “H.D.” was the only boat at the free town docks, but the city welcome was there to take care of any needs we may have had. The next day, it was an early start for an Albemarle Sound crossing that turned out to be perfect! We sailed to the Alligator River Swing Bridge (NC hwy#64), and motored into Ms.Wanda’s, “Alligator River Marina” for fuel, showers, and Carolina Bar-B-Q. After another refreshing night’s rest, it was Belhaven, NC, then Oriental. It was here that we drove home to change crew, but not before a quick visit to D & Don Wogaman’s house, old friends, new friends, old shops, new shops, and some local dinners of Shrimp & Grits! We missed D & Don because they were working at the Annapolis Boat Shows, but the Dickerson hospitality never leaves without making a deep impression. Wow, do I love Oriental, it is a sailor’s town.

With fresh crew, “H.D.” began her next leg of the journey to Beaufort, NC where we hid at the town dock from severe weather. Life is good. Next day, we performed soundings at Camp LeJeune’s Brown Inlet that had been reported as severely shoaled; about an hour before low tide, we found depths of 7 ft. or more, and reported our findings to Claiborne Young’s Salty Southeast Cruisers Network (<http://cruisersnet.net/>). Next, it was soundings at New River Inlet and on to Topsail Island, NC for the night. The next day, thunderstorms and severe weather moved in for the afternoon, but it remained north of us by a few miles! Talk about luck, we made it past Myrtle Beach, Georgetown, and into Charleston without a problem, but the VHF radio reports were full of warnings to mariners. The weather was so good, that we motored out of Charleston Harbor into the ocean, and motor-sailed to St. Helena Island/Sound towards Beaufort, SC. We spent a day enjoying the local Shrimp Festival, food shopping, breakfast at “Blackstones”, dinner at “Emily’s” (<http://beaufortrestaurant.com/>) and getting some water & ice. After “overindulging”, we slipped out with the tide to Hilton Head/Daufuskie Island and anchored in Bull Creek. From there, it was back out into the ocean to Sapelo Island, GA; at midnight, the thunderstorms caught us, and followed us into Brunswick, GA the following day. It was those final couple of hours into Brunswick that required a rosary, prayers, meditation, and faith if one was to arrive safely. I saw Jekyll Island take several hits near us. I’m so glad we weren’t out in the ocean. Remember, when the weather is perfect, go offshore. If it “ain’t”, stay inside.

More to come later,  
Bruce Franz “Hemisphere Dancer”

## **What Do Dickerson Sailors do When They Are Not Sailing**

Let us know what your hobbies are. Do you do push ups to keep slim, sail radio controlled boats, work on your Dickerson, play golf or just rake up leaves and help with the house work.

Well we asked Al and Connie Sampson, long time Rhode Island Dickerson sailors on their D 37 “Wanderlust” what they did over the Holidays.

“Well Connie and I left home the day after Christmas and headed for Waterville Valley, NH for five days of cross country skiing. We brought skis, snow shoes and ice skates to have all bases covered since skiing requires natural snow and prior to leaving home that was in very short supply.

Often timing is everything. We arrived Wednesday afternoon at which time it started to snow. Snow continued until Thursday evening. Accumulating 12+ inches!

So for a change we picked the right time and Mother Nature provided great weather.

Happy New Year

Connie & Al Sampson”



# CHESAPEAKE CLASSIC

## Precious Memories of 'My Dickerson Years'

by Nettie Hastings



■ Master boatbuilder Preston Brannock builds a two-sail bateau for Paul Rybon. Photo by Gail Dean

**I**t began a year ago. I noticed I had missed two calls on my office phone that left no message. The third call I connected with the caller, and my unknown journey back in time went something like this: I was invited to a trip down memory lane by this stranger, Joe Slavin. His voice of sincerity captivated me as a great rush of energy surfaced as he shared his hope in me contributing to a Dickerson Owner's Rendezvous anniversary to honor my beloved Uncle Preston Brannock; to revisit the past of a great era and share the stories that made these masters of wood so passionate about their love of building these magnificent vessels, the Dickersons. Many an e-mail, many a thought gave me great joy in sharing all I could of Uncle Preston's talents.

My Uncle Preston came from a large family with a rich heritage of watermen and boatbuilders. His grandfather Moses Geoghan was a boatbuilder on Taylors Island in the early 1900s when Maryland's Eastern Shore was famous for building skipjacks, bugeyes, and other classic sailboats and watercraft. Preston and his older brothers Norman and Dewitt and even his brother's son Dan Brannock were skilled craftsmen who built wooden and fiberglass sailboats and workboats for Dickerson Boatbuilders in Church Creek and Trappe, MD. Preston—who built boats for 50 years—could build a wooden boat by eye, a skill not common today. He told me, "I like working with wood better, but fiberglass is a better boat. I be-

lieve it will last longer." I recall sitting with Uncle Preston at the table at nights in 1980 as he drafted cross-sections of the Dickerson boat design created by his friend designer Ernie Tucker. Preston was an artist and a cartoonist in his younger days, so putting his thoughts on paper came naturally. He continued drawing naval vessels while serving in our second World War. It helped him relax.

Sam Webster—a co-worker and friend of Preston whom I had not seen for many years—told me, "Preston was 'a marvel in time motion'—the most efficient craftsman I have ever seen." He was a perfectionist. If he did not like work done by another, he would stare at it, raise his cap, and sigh... After the other carpenter had left for the day, Preston would remove the entire floor of a workboat and replace it. It was now done 'Preston's way.'

In June 2012, I joined the 45th Dickerson Owners Rendezvous, a celebration honoring Dickerson Boatbuilders. As I sailed with commodore Bill Toth in the parade of boats, I felt that God stirred our Choptank River water's by hand that day for our perfect 'moment in time' as my Tom, my Uncle Preston, Sam, and I shared a sail together. During the rendezvous dinner, I was humbled when boatbuilder Paul Rybon gave me his collage honoring Uncle Preston. Thank you, Dickerson owners. We are forever grateful. You caused many hearts to enjoy a shared passion, and those hearts smile.

## **We Want to Hear From You**

We would like to receive write-ups of your sailing adventures, hobbies, latest Dickerson fix it jobs or just your thoughts and suggestions for future events and items we can include in our 46<sup>th</sup> Rendezvous. Please do not be bashful. Also don't forget to renew your Dickerson Owners Association Membership. please remember we are only successful because you take the time to be active members. Contact us at [jws2827@aol.com](mailto:jws2827@aol.com) if you have been away for a while and need a membership form. Remember to visit the DOA Web Site <http://dickersonowners.org/>

Membership Committee, Joe Slavin, Barry Creighton and John Freal--Edited by Bruce Franz