

## **JACKAROO, a Haven 12 ½**

**Mick Wick**

Just what I need, a new boat when my collection is already substantial. JACKAROO is just a working title, but it is the nickname of the newest grandchild, Jack Dempsey, so it may stand the test of time. She was listed on Craigslist, and the price was right. At first I thought it was impossible. The location of the boat herself was listed as BWI, and how would I ever get a 16 foot boat home from the British West Indies, but a friend pointed out that BWI also meant Baltimore Washington International airport. Sure enough, he was right. Not such a bad delivery. At first I was just on the list,

but other interested buyers shifted through and found various reasons to back out of the deal. They thought that she needs a lot of work. It is true, but I had just attended the Herreshoff Symposium and listened to a full day of lectures about what was possible about building and restoring Classic Yachts. I had just finished building another boat and was looking forward to taking a rest, but I took the plunge. If you enjoy building boats, there is nothing nicer than rolling out of bed, stripping off the cover, and getting to work.

Last year, five of us had spent lots of time cruising the lower Chesapeake, boomtent camping in a fleet of 15 footers. I sailed my two different melonseeds, and they are very seaworthy, but they are wet in the short little seas of the afternoon Chesapeake Sou'wester. Melonseeds are fine in the creeks and rivers, but they take a dusting whenever we round a headland and have to stop and pump before going on. My buddies keep a close eye on me whenever it started to get a little rough. That's my excuse for needing a bigger boat, or at least a dryer boat.



Once I got the haven home and made a close examination, I found that, sometime in the past, fresh water had been allowed to collect in the bilge; I noticed that there were soft places in the bedlogs of the centerboard trunk, so I stripped her down to the bilge and dremeled away at the soft places. I've now epoxied and painted the bilge so this problem won't recur on my watch. The interior is finished bright, and I will mostly keep it that way, but in some places, mostly the forward bulkhead, it had suffered and now was the time for some paint. Petit Sandtone looks almost as good as varnish; my buddy John England says "The best thing about varnish is that it is so easy to paint over".

Spars are a different story. Paint just wouldn't do, so I sanded them down to bare wood and started with two coats of CPES, clear penetrating epoxy system. It is supposed to fill the grain of the wood so fewer coats of varnish are required for a beautiful finish, and to bond the varnish top coats to the bare wood. The catch is that it is terrible stuff to work with. Just like nail polish remover. Even working outside with a big fan blowing the fumes away, I still need a respirator if I am to make sure I live long enough to ever sail this fine new boat.

I am making good progress, and my household tasks are suffering from delay. I need to

paint the porch, and I sometimes pass up some fine sailing weather in my haste to get her done. But it is a great luxury to walk out the back door, and set to work on my beautiful new boat. I am scheduled to take my melonseed to the Small Reach Regatta in July, and I asked if I could bring this boat instead, but Tom Jackson felt that she is too deep and doesn't row as well as the melonseed. I can see his point. I hope to finish her and race in the class of Herreshoff 12 ½'s and her various clones in the Classic Boat Regatta at Bristol in late August.

There are two serious vertical cracks in the cockpit coaming, a beautiful 12 foot piece of bent mahogany. The only true way to fix it is to replace the whole piece, but, at least this year, I will stop short. I've made a male/female mold of the damaged section, dug out the cracks, filled them with G-Flex epoxy. I will sand down the whole area with a belt sander and sandwich on a close match veneer. A belt sander is a crude tool, but it gets right down to the coaming/deck join. That's something that no router will do.

