



Notes from the Bilge



www.lcacs.com

December 2020

Newsletter of the Lake Champlain Chapter of the Antique and Classic Boat Society, Inc. Steve Pond, President

President's Message

Hopefully by now everyone's boats are safely tucked away for the long winter. The 2020 boating season is a distant memory but with 2021 rapidly approaching, our wish is that the coming season be safer and filled with many carefree boating adventures. Time will tell what will happen but there does appear to be a light at the end of the tunnel with promising news about vaccine development.

The Coronavirus has dominated our lives for the past nine months and will continue to impact our plans for the foreseeable future. Winter events are in limbo as well as the possibility of holding our annual boat show in the summer. If there are virtual winter workshop options available, we will pursue them and spread the word through email blasts. Our summer boat show in Burlington has tentatively been scheduled for July 31st but we will need to see how the next six months go before those plans become a reality. If a boat show looks like a possibility, we will get the word out as soon as we can.

The Board has been periodically meeting via Zoom since the pandemic started. We recently held our Annual Meeting and had 15 of our members attend plus guests from other chapters for a total of 20 people. Highlights of that meeting include officially adding our new treasurer, George Maffey, to the Board as well as Rich Butler coming back on as a Board Member. Other meetings have been held to discuss progress on the 2022 International Boat Show and various chapter topics. Most recently, we established a committee to work on increasing membership and involvement in our organization. Susie Becker is spear-heading this group with Susan Haigh and Holly Weber. If you have any interest in becoming more involved with the chapter, please contact one of the Officers or

continued—next page

Contents

President's Message	1
Editor's Note	2
Classic Restoration	3
Chronicles of Ninnyfish (Part 2)	6

ROV Finds Phoenix Resting Place

Reprinted from the the Glens Falls Post Star 9/6/20

COLCHESTER, Vt. — Two paddlewheels from the second commercial steamboat that sailed Lake Champlain more than two centuries ago have been found on the bottom of the lake, officials said.

The paddlewheels from the steamboat *Phoenix* were discovered off Colchester Shoal in separate dives by Gary Lefebvre of Colchester using a remotely operated vehicle.

The discovery was announced by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum.

The *Phoenix* was launched in 1815. It sailed a regular schedule between Whitehall, New York, and St. Johns, Quebec, stopping at ports along the lake.

The style of the paddlewheels and the charring indicated it came from the *Phoenix*, which burned off Colchester on Sept. 4, 1819, killing six of the 46 passengers and crew on board.

The hull burned to the waterline and drifted south to where it came to rest on the shoal. The ice later dragged the wreckage off the shoal to where it now rests.

“The *Phoenix* is one of the earliest known steamboat wrecks in the United States, and the discovery of the well-preserved paddlewheel structures adds to the significance of this nationally significant Underwater Preserve,” Scott Dillon, senior historic preservation review coordinator for the Division for Historic Preservation, said in a statement.

President's Message - continued

Board Members. Your participation would be warmly welcomed.

We've heard from several members that there have been problems not getting notifications when using the ACBS portal. I will check with ACBS to see what needs to be done to correct this issue. Of course, if you are able to read this newsletter, the problem may be intermittent.


As 2020 comes to a close and we look ahead to a new year, I'd like to wish everyone happy holidays. Stay safe and see you on the water!

Steve Pond, President 



Editor's Note ~

You will note we have a new advertiser beginning with this issue (*page 5*) - **Burlington Harbor Marina**. BHM is very handy for dockage and fuel on the Burlington waterfront. They will be host of the 2022 ACBS Annual Meeting and Boat Show. Please support them, as well as our other advertisers, as they support LCACBS.

The last issue of *Notes From the Bilge* included *Chronicles of Ninnyfish*. This issue includes Part 2 of *Chronicles*. With luck, we may have further installments. 

Darling's Boatworks



802-425-2004

Restoration • Repairing • Refinishing • Transport

~ • ~

George Darling
P.O. Box 32, Ferry Road
Charlotte, VT 05445
gdarling@gmavt.net



**POINT BAY
MARINA**

A Full Service Marina

802 425-2431

www.pointbaymarina.com

email: pbm@gmavt.net

Classic Restoration

by John Dupee

On a dreary rainy day in October, I drove to Hinesburg to see Bob Schumacher's latest acquisition. *Vagabond* had spent most of the COVID-19 summer at Safe Harbor Marina in Shelburne, known to the locals and historians until recently as the Shelburne Shipyard. She was transported to Shelburne from Jacksonville, FL where she had undergone some modifications and plied the waters of the St. John's River.

Bob had seen the old woody advertised for sale and for reasons he cannot explain, it caught his attention. In April 2020, Bob and his wife Barb visited the Huckins Yard in Jacksonville to inspect the venerable hull which he already had committed to buying. Previously, *Vagabond* had been visited by two of Bob's friends and their reports did not discourage Bob from his quest.

In October 2020, Darling's Boatworks transported *Vagabond* to the Schumacher residence in Hinesburg where serious attention to structural and cosmetic failures began.

Bob provided me with a brief history of *Vagabond* – from the beginning - 1909. She was one of six built in City Island, NY by the Gas Engine & Power Co. and Chas. L Seabury & Co. which became known as Consolidated. She attracted much attention at the New York Boat Show in 1910. She was listed in *The Nautical Gazette* as 42' LOA, 38'-9" LWL x 9.5' beam and a 3' draft powered by a 32-40 HP 4 cylinder Speedway motor. White oak stem, stern, keel and frames support the cedar planking which was fastened with copper rivets. The interior was lit by acetylene gas.

Vagabond's original owner, George C. Campbell, stated his intent to cruise Lake Champlain and the Thousand Islands in the summer of 1910. A rumored subsequent owner, Atwater Kent of early radio fame, was born in Burlington.

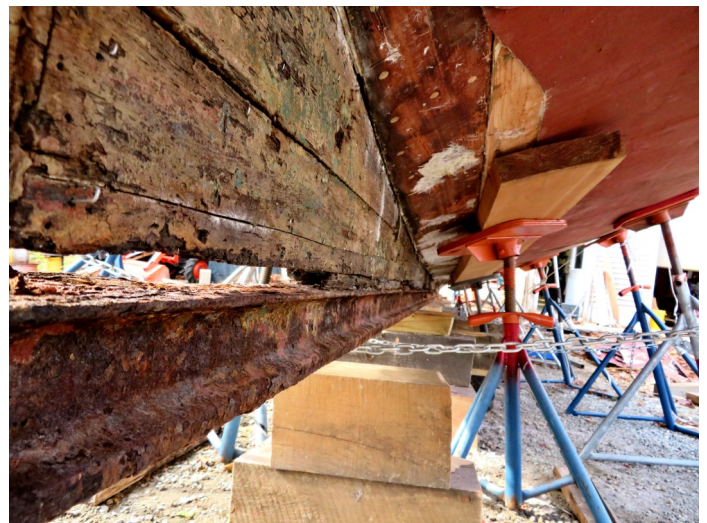
The current (pun intended) propulsion is a 650 lb. Elco electric motor which replaced the conventional power plants of yore. The Elco is powered by eight Odyssey batteries weighing in at 140 lbs. per. Kohler generator is on standby powered by a Per-

continued next column



kins Diesel. Solar panels will also be used to assist in charging. Assisting the Elco when maneuvering in tight quarters, is a bow thruster.

A rusty steel rail, as in railroad, has been removed from the rotted keel. A new keel has been fabricated and has replaced the original keel. At some point, *Vagabond*'s hull was sheathed in fiberglass. Bob also plans on removing the fiberglass from the hull – he does not like it and the insurance companies do not like fiberglassed sheathed hulls.



Next page shows the lead weights and chain used as ballast removed from the bow. The ballast was strategically placed in an attempt to get *Vagabond* to float on her lines.

As you might imagine, *Vagabond* will be in rehab for a some time. There is talk of a workshop for LCACBS, where one could touch and see. These pages may provide updates on the project from time to time.



See more photos on next page



White oak keel before and after



Lead and chain ballast removed.



Michael Sinclair

821 Ferry Road Charlotte, VT 05445



Bow thruster resting on top of Elco power plant.



BURLINGTON HARBOR MARINA



44° 28' 30" N 73° 13' 30" W

LAKE CHAMPLAIN'S NEWEST PREMIER MARINA LOCATED ON THE WATERFRONT IN
DOWNTOWN BURLINGTON VERMONT



PROUD HOST OF THE 2022 ACBS INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW



- 160 deep Water Slips for Boats to 80'
- Monthly/Weekly/Daily/Hourly Rates
- Protected by Floating Breakwater
- Fuel Dock— 91 Octane Non ethanol & Diesel
- Free Pumpout
- Shore Power 30/50amp
- Free Fiberoptic WIFI
- Dockside Marina Store - Ice, Water & Provisions
- Outdoor Bar & Restaurant
- Family Style Shower Facilities
- Laundry
- Convenient Marina Parking Lot
- Golf Cart Dock Service
- Pet Friendly Park Area
- Overnight Security
- Adjacent to Public Boat Ramp



Captain Bob Hensley, General Manager
802.540.6869
info@burlingtonharbormarina.com
VHF 71

burlingtonharbormarina.com
75 Penny Lane
Burlington, Vermont
05401

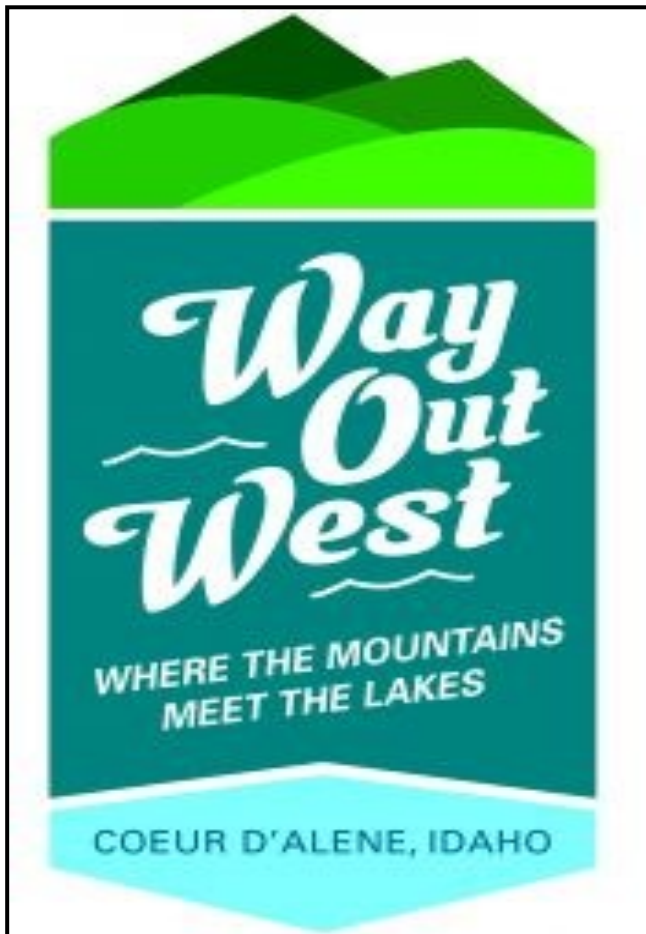


Chronicles of Ninnyfish, Part 2

Sam Haigh

During my sophomore year, in 1965, I brought the *Ninnyfish* up to Cornell. Ed Schuck, a fraternity brother, and I spent many evenings refastening, sanding, working on the motor and dolling up the *Ninnyfish* with fresh paint and varnish. Then we brought her down to Rye NY for the summer, where Ed and I worked at the Westchester Country Club and roomed together with a high school friend of mine, Jay Reilly, in Mom's house while she spent the summer in PA. Ed was an avid water skier, and many nights after work, he and I would tow the *Ninnyfish* with my 51 Chevy to the launch ramp at Milton Point, near the American Yacht Club, and head out into the Long Island Sound for an evening of skiing. This is before life jackets for the skier, or a second person in the boat to watch the skier, were required. Once it got dark and became difficult to see signals from the skier, we worked out a system of towing each other in two approximately 5-minute circles, then stopping to switch places.

continued next page



**Proud Sponsor of
the 2022 ACBS Annual
Meeting
and Boat Show to be
held in
Burlington, Vermont**



One night, about mid-summer, we launched as usual around 8:00 p.m. The Sound was calm that evening, though the sky was heavily overcast. Ed was first in the water and had a good run. About five minutes into my turn, I sank into the water when the engine raced and the *Ninnyfish* came to a sudden stop. The engine had hit something submerged. Ed pulled me onto the boat, I tilted the motor and discovered that the propeller shear pin had snapped. We had a few tools on board but no shear pin. I was able to remove the prop and found a nail that would fit in shear pin slot to get us back. But as I was putting the prop back on the shaft, the prop slipped out of my hand and sank. No spare prop.

We were about 2 miles offshore, and the tide was going out with a vengeance. We saw that we were drifting toward a bell buoy, and the two of us paddled frantically to try to snag the buoy, so we could tie off....me with little *Ninnyfish* paddle and Ed with a ski. But the tide was running too fast. We got agonizingly close but couldn't make it to the buoy. No anchor, so we were at the mercy of the tide which was taking us out to mid-Sound. It was getting pitch black. No battery on board, so no lights on the boat. We were in our bathing suits, wet, no towel, nothing to cover us, the wind had picked up and it was getting cold.

To try to get out of the wind, we crawled under the *Ninnyfish* seats, Ed under the forward seat and me under the under the middle seat. Quite uncomfortable, but better than sitting up in the cold wind. We did this for hours, cramped up under these seats, shivering. With our ears to the lap strake hull, it was quite noisy in the chop that had developed. Occasionally we could hear a distant engine noise through the hull. We would climb out hoping to see another boat, but it was too dark, and they were too far away, so we would climb back under. At about 2:00 in the morning, we heard a new rumbling engine noise. This one got louder and louder. Then we heard the unmistakable noise of water swishing off a bow. I climbed out to see the front of a huge freighter coming right at us. The crew apparently saw us on radar and altered course to just miss us. As they came by at about 20 feet away, we were standing up waving and shouting. The bow wave almost tossed us overboard. The ship didn't slow down, but as they passed, they put a big spot light on us. I jumped to the back of the boat, pointed to the

continued next column

propeller-less engine shaft and shouted: "WE NEED HELP - CALL THE COAST GUARD!" We hung on as the *Ninnyfish* shot up and down in their wake. The ship disappeared into the night. Nothing happened. We climbed back under the seats.

As the sun was coming up around 5:00, I crawled out from under the seat to see that we were a few hundred yards from a beach on the north shore of Long Island. I woke up Ed, and we began paddling with everything we had for the beach. Fortunately the tide wasn't fighting us badly this time, and we made it to the beach. We pulled the *Ninnyfish* onto the sand. With no anchor, Ed stayed with the boat, and I headed across the beach in search of a phone. There was a large beach house directly in front of where we pulled out. But my pounding on the door didn't raise anyone.


So I headed up the road in my bathing suit and bare feet toward a north shore mansion I could see just up the hill. I used the door bell and door knocker several times. In a few minutes, the owner came to the door in a silk bathrobe. He believed my story and let me in to make a long distance call for help. I called our third roommate, Jay Reilly, to come and rescue us. He didn't answer after several attempts. My next call was to the Rye Police. I explained my plight, and believe it or not, they agreed to go to the house to wake up Reilly. While we waited for Jay to call, the nice man in the silk bathrobe served me coffee and doughnuts. Finally, Reilly called. I gave him the address, and he unhappily agreed to go to Milton Point, take the trailer off my old Chevy, put it on his GTO and tow it out to Long Island to rescue us and the *Ninnyfish*.

Jay showed up at about 8:00 a.m. We tried backing the GTO and trailer onto the beach. No good. So we pushed the trailer by hand across the 40-yard beach and managed to get the *Ninnyfish* onto it. But no way to get the boat and trailer across the sand. So, back up to the mansion. Now the owner is in his golf clothes, getting ready to head to the club. One more phone call, this time to a local tow truck operator. The tow truck showed up and tried to back onto the beach. No good. So we pulled out the tow truck cable, hauled it across the beach and attached it to the trailer. Then Ed

continued next page

and the truck operator winched the rig across the sand. We got about half way across the beach, when a guy emerged from the big beach house in front of us shouting at us: "THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY.....YOU ARE TRESPASSING.....STOP WHAT YOU ARE DOING!!" Turns out it was Bobby Kennedy's beach house, and this guy was the caretaker. He was obviously very hung over, if not still in the cups, and was in quite a foul mood. When I apologized, explained what had happened to us, and assured him we would be out of there in few minutes, he shouted: "LOOK WHAT YOU ARE DOING TO THE BEACH!!" We were making two small tire tracks across the sand. So I offered to erase the tracks, if he would get us a couple of beach rakes, which he did. The last act in our bathing suits that morning, before towing the *Ninnyfish* back to Rye, was to carefully rake Bobby Kennedy's beach.

I won't go into ride back from Long Island in Jay's GTO, towing the *Ninnyfish*, with Jay shouting profanities at the rush hour drivers through his Hartman Haller.

All in all, it was not our best water skiing outing on the *Ninnyfish*. 

continued next column

Small Boat Exchange

2649 Shelburne Road

Shelburne, VT 05482

802 985-5222

smallboatvt.com



- *Day Sailers*
- *Cruising Sailboats*
- *Kayaks, Canoes*
- *Trailers*
- *Classic Seaworthy Powercraft*
- *Inflatables, Dinghies*
- *Rowing Craft*
- *Yamaha motors*



We save wood boats!

Our preservation work meets the highest standards of craftsmanship.

Ask about our Fixed-Price True 5200 No-Soak Bottom



1938 Chris-Craft 19' Custom Runabout, Flyin' By,
won Best of Show 2017 LCACBS Classic Boat Show

Cell: 802.734.1019

**Online: SnakeMountainBoatworks.com &
[Youtube.com/snakemtboatworks](https://www.youtube.com/snakemtboatworks)**

**Shop: 7080 Weybridge Rd, Weybridge, VT 05753
Email: Michael@SnakeMountainBoatworks.com**