



# Boatbuilding

## IOI



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# Introduction

**T**he following information is a collection of articles written by the Glen-L staff.

Our hope is that you find this information invaluable as you seek to increase your boat building knowledge. As always, if you have any questions please give us a call or send us an email and we'll do what we can to help.

**I**f you would like to further information about building a boat, we suggest our book, [Boatbuilding with Plywood](#) which can be ordered directly from our website or by phone.

# INDEX

## A

**A DIY company, 68**  
**About buttocks, waterlines and diagonals, 64**  
About Plywood, 8

## B

Bigger is better?, 54  
Bills of Materials & Laminating Schedules, 44  
Butt Joints, 8

## C

Can I lengthen the ....?, 33  
CATAMARANS, 40  
**CB... What the heck is it anyway?, 15**  
**Cold-molded history, 57**  
Conventional plywood or Stitch and Glue construction?, 34

## D

**Determining hull capacity, 37**  
**Did you ever make a mistake?, 67**  
DISPLACEMENT by Simpson's Rule, 20  
**Displacement for Canoes and Kayaks, 22**  
**Do you really want to go that fast?, 73**  
Double Planking Hints, 18  
Drum Cable Steering, 16

## F

**Fairing Tools, 55**  
Fastening sheet plywood to frames?, 25  
Fitting the chine, 49  
**Formula for figuring finished transom size, 35**

## H

**How to make a Cutwater, 62**  
Hydraulic Steering, 18  
HYDROFOILS, 41  
HYDROPLANE, 39

## L

Limbers, 78

## M

MONOHULLS, 38

## N

Notches for longitudinals, 74

## O

of hydroplanes, cats, monohulls and such, 38

## P

Painting options, 31  
Planing vs Displacement Boats, 4  
Porpoise, what is it?, 65  
Push Pull Cable Steering, 17

## R

Range - How far can I go on a tank of gas?, 41

## S

Scarf Joints, 9  
Scarf sled, 11  
SEA SLED, 41  
Self Draining Cockpit, 24  
Setting up - The foundation for building a boat, 46  
**Setting up..., 76**  
Sheet plywood development, 43  
Steering for Boats, 16

## T

The case for laminations, 28  
**The V-Drive evolution..circa 1953 to ?, 59**  
**Then and NOW, 71**  
Transom Reinforcement, 23  
TUNNEL HULLS, 40

## U

**Unusual Uses for Poxy-Shield, 69**  
Using patterns, 48  
Using random-random stock, 27

## W

**What's the difference between "drawing" and "designing" a boat?, 5**  
Wood, 10

## Planing vs Displacement Boats

There are two re-occurring questions that we hear from our customers. "Can I put a sail on (name of planing boat)?" and "If I use a larger motor than you recommend (on a displacement boat) can I increase the speed?"

Different hull shapes have advantages for different applications. The ideal characteristics for sailboats, row boats, and eventually low speed power boats have been long understood. These boats need a hull shape that will move easily through the water with a minimum of power. When more power became available, it was found that a new hull form was needed. In order to overcome the limitations of the bow wave, it was necessary to rise out of the water, to plane. On planing hulls, the bottom shape is extremely important to performance, with minor variations causing sometimes dramatic problems. Let's look at the two basic hull forms to understand why they work the way they do.

Displacement hulls: The overriding fact about displacement boats is that their speed is limited by their length.  $\text{Speed in knots} = 1.34 \times \text{square root of the waterline length}$ . The other part of the story is that these hulls are very fuel efficient; they require little power to reach their maximum speed. Attempting to exceed hull speed is guaranteed to waste fuel and money and gain little if anything in speed. Row boats and sailboats are most often displacement hulls.

Planing hulls: In theory, a full planing hull (with infinite power) has no speed limit. Our TORNADOS and THUNDERBOLTS regularly exceed 100 mph in competition, with one THUNDERBOLT clocked at 148 mph. Planing boats, when they achieve planing speed, ride on top of the water. They are, however, not properly shaped to be efficient at slow speeds. In our previous Web Letter, we discussed how to re-crisp the trailing edge on a planing boat, but did not explain why.

Why: When a boat is planing, the water flows off the bottom in a sheet and the wave breaks behind the boat. If there is a downturn at the transom (hook), the bow will be driven down, increasing wetted surface and decreasing speed potential. If there is a bottom rise at the transom (rocker), the hull will tend to porpoise (jump out of the water and fall back into the water). If the trailing edge of the bottom at the transom is rounded, the boat will behave as though it has a rocker. This results from water following the radiused bottom, up the transom, sucking the transom down. Speed amplifies these effects, with minor imperfections only causing performance problems at high speed. Having said all this, there are instances when you might want very minor hooks or rockers in the bottom ...this is what cavitation plates and trim tabs are for.

**O**thers: Yes Virginia, there are others. There are boats that fit between displacement and planing boats; boats that exceed the speed limitations of displacement boats, but do have higher speed potential of full planing boats. They tend to be less efficient than displacement boats at slow speeds, and less efficient than planing boats at high speed. Their exact characteristics will depend on where their hull form falls between displacement and planing hulls.

**A**nway... Is it possible to put a sail on the 13' FISHERMAN? Ans.: Yes, however, because the FISHERMAN is a planing hull it will be very inefficient (slow) under sail. If I double the horsepower on the NOYO TRAWLER how much more speed can I get? Ans.: Very little, perhaps a half knot, but your fuel consumption could increase dramatically when the motor runs at full speed.

## **What's the difference between "drawing" and "designing" a boat?**

**M**ost anyone can draw a boat; designing one takes a lot more effort and ability.

**O**f primary importance in designing a small boat is knowledge gained by experience. At GLEN-L we design boats, build testing prototypes, and then test the in-water performance. Most designers don't have the luxury of being able to test their final product. We do and the experience gained is invaluable for designing future craft.

**A** new design is started by establishing the parameters. The length, beam, depth, and type of boat is decided on; power or sail and the material the boat is to be built from must be selected. Every boat is a compromise and practical experience dictates the inevitable give and take features that are best for the particular craft being designed.

**D**esigners use coefficients that provide comparative factors to determine the general shape of the midsection and other factors. The range of coefficients for a given type of boat have been gathered over the years and are given in books on boat design. But a designers experience of the performance of previous boats is used to temper the figures, as little information has been published on smaller boats.

**T**he basic lines of the boat are developed showing three views; plan, profile, and sections. A designer must rough out a set of lines that hopefully match the desired

coefficients. The term hopefully is used because accurate coefficients cannot be determined until the lines are finalized.

**T**he displacement of the boat must be estimated; this is the total weight of the hull, motor, passengers, and everything on board when the boat is on the water. Then an estimated waterline is sketched on the lines.

**A** boat will displace a weight of water equal to its displacement. The underwater volume can be calculated by determining areas of equally spaced sections ("s") and entering them into Simpsons 1/3 Rule formula; boat design computer programs do it quicker. The calculated displacement should be very close to the one estimated. If not, back to the drawing board to raise or lower the waterline or adjust the lines and recalculate displacement.

**A** boat has a balance point called center of buoyancy (CB) that is comparable to the pivot point on a teeter totter. The CB can be determined by using figures obtained from Simpsons Rule; the volume on either side of the CB must be equal. But the CB must be located at the ideal position to carry the loadings. The approximate desirable location of the CB is obtained from published figures or percentages of the waterline length gained by experience. The CB is virtually always aft of the mid-points of the waterline length. If the calculated CB is not within the design parameter its back to square one and modification of the lines.

**B**ut the designer isn't finished. Weights have been estimated and must be finalized. The weight of every component of a boat must be calculated and its distance from the CB noted. Consider what is involved. A wooden boat may have a 1 1/4" x 3 1/2" keel 18' long. The volume of the member times the weight of the wood for a given volume is calculated and the center of that weight in relationship to the CB determined. And this is done for everything that will be in the boat. If the total weight isn't equal or close to the displacement or the weights are not equally distributed about the CB, modifications will be necessary. An experienced designer gets an "eye" or "feel" for a set of lines and can usually finalize a set of lines with minimal revisions. A neophyte designer may spend days or weeks bringing all of the factors into balance.

**A** sailboat will need to be balanced so it will sail properly without lee or weather helm. Rudder area must be calculated to provide good steering and the keel or centerboard determined to provide directional stability. If a boat is towed sideways through the water so the longitudinal centerline of the hull is perpendicular to the towing line that point on the waterline is called the center of lateral resistance or CLR. The combined area of the sails must be positioned about the CLR properly (called "lead") to assure balance. And of

course the sail area forces must be balanced with adequate ballast so the boat will not capsize.

**P**owerboats will require calculations on the most desirable horsepower based on the hull characteristics. If the hull is a semi displacement type, with limited speed potential, it doesn't make sense to overpower the boat. Conversely underpowering a planing hull will make a boat a real dog.

**S**ome of the information necessary to make the many calculations are given in design textbooks. Other factors are obtained through technical writings and papers collected by a designer over the years. And if you test boats as we do at GLEN-L, parameters that work can be applied to future designs.

**M**ost creditable designers have a background of engineering or schooling on boat design through universities and specialized boat design courses. Schooling covering the design of smaller craft however is almost non-existent and the experience gained through testing prototypes is invaluable on this size craft.

**T**he foregoing outlines the general procedure that must be gone through to design as opposed to drawing a boat. Computers can do many of the calculations. However, a computer can't design a boat. Someone must put in the figures to form the boat and use the knowledge to select the proper parameters. It's been stated that designing a good looking, well performing boat, is a combination of engineering and art and the best way to develop this combination is through experience. And with more than 40 years of designing boats GLEN-L has experience plus.

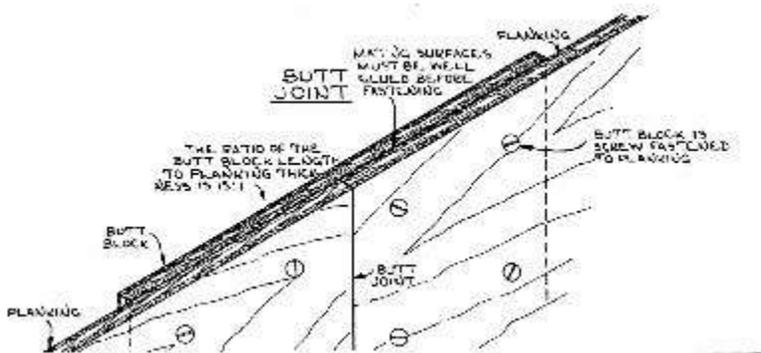
- BOOKS:
  - YACHT DESIGNING AND PLANNING, by Howard Chapelle (\$35.00)
- SCHOOLS:
  - Westlawn Institute of Marine Technology  
733 Summer St  
Stamford, CT 06901  
203-359-0500
- Computer programs:
  - PLYBOATS 2.01  
Ray Clark Enterprises  
7071 Warner Ave., #F  
Huntington Beach, CA 92647  
email: plyboats@ido.net

## About Plywood

### Long sheets

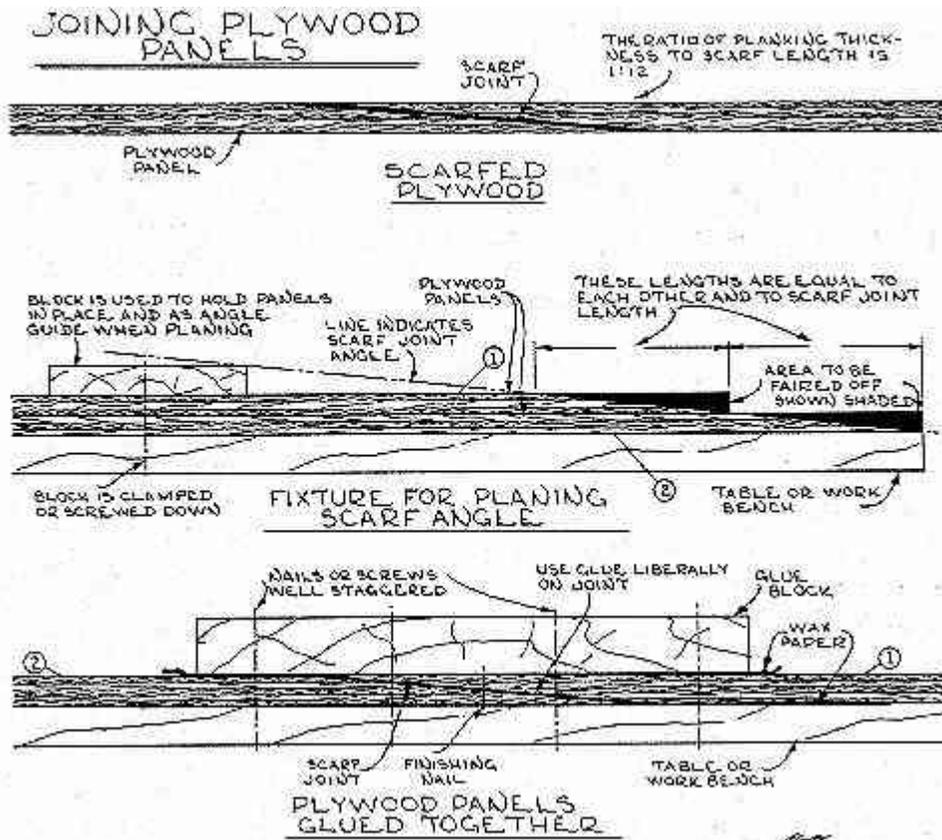
Long sheets are frequently called out in our plans and in plans from other designers. While they may be nice to use, they aren't required. On our test models we use standard 4'x8' sheets, joined using one of the methods detailed below. Both methods have proven to be as strong, or stronger, than the plywood being joined.

### Butt Joints



Butt joints are usually detailed in our plans, but basically consist of butting panels of plywood backed up with a butt block of the same thickness (minimum) as the plywood planking, extending 4" or more on each side of the joint. Butt joints can be glued without fasteners, but only if epoxy adhesives are used. Fastenings, when used, should be spaced about 2" apart and 1" from edges. When butt joining 1/4" panels with 1/4" butt blocks, screws that will not project through the opposite side have little holding power. Usually 3/4" bronze screws are used and the points projecting on the butt block side are ground flush. It is best that the screws penetrate fully, through both planking and butt block, regardless of their combined thickness. Butt joints tend to flatten the joined area, so care must be taken to join in the flattest section of the boat possible. Usual practice is to fit one planking panel to the boat, fasten in place, and then fit the butt blocks BETWEEN the longitudinals such as battens, keel, chine or sheer. Follow with the joining panel. If epoxy adhesives are used without fasteners, it is preferable to rough cut the joining panels and pre-join them on a flat surface so proper bonding pressure can be applied, either by weights or temporary fasteners.

## Scarf Joints



The scarf joint shown is at a ratio of 1:12 but some use a 1:10 ratio up to 1/2" and 1:8 for thicker plywood. The scarf joint length is found by multiplying the thickness of the plywood being joined by the ratio. As an example, at a 1:12 ratio, 1/4" thick plywood would have a scarf joint length of 3". Always cut the plywood panels to the minimum width as wide panels are more difficult to join. As shown in the sketch, the two plywood panels to be scarf-jointed are aligned on the edge of a flat table or a sheet of 3/4" plywood. The upper panel is set back from the lower panel the distance of the scarf joint. Align the edges of the two plywood panels to be joined, the table or work surface, and the clamping block, so they are precisely parallel. Clamp, nail, or screw the block through both panels to the table or work surface. Both plywood panels are tapered simultaneously with a hand or power plane, or a disc sander for preliminary rough cutting. The panels are finished to a smooth surface with a long base joiner or smooth plane, or use extensions clamped to the side of the plane if the base is not long enough to extend from the block to the table edge and provide planing movement. Either resorcinol or epoxy adhesives can be used, although the latter is preferable for most because of its gap filling properties. Remove the panels from the fixture and give both surfaces a liberal coat of glue. (Pre-coating the mating surfaces when using epoxy products is advised). Place plastic film between the work surfaces to prevent them from being glued to the joining plywood panels and use finishing nails, driven through the scarf joint into the table, to prevent slipping. Screw or nail the blocking clamp over the joint with enough temporary fasteners to provide solid,

even pressure until the glue sets. When gluing with epoxy, avoid excessive pressure that forces much of the glue out. **CAUTION: BE SURE THE JOINT IS LEFT AT THE RECOMMENDED TEMPERATURE UNTIL FINAL CURING.** At lower temperatures, use plastic, cardboard, or a blanket to make a hood or "tent" over the joint with an electric light as a heater, or an electric heater, to maintain the proper temperature. The holes caused by temporary fasteners can be filled with a hard-setting putty. Always use scarf joints in the flattest area of the boat and place the leading exterior edge of the scarf toward the stern.

## Wood

**E-mail question:** I can't get mahogany, white oak or spruce; can I use poplar?

Answer: Boats have successfully been built using all sorts of woods that are not recommended for boat building. But when we're asked to recommend a wood or alternative wood, we pick from a standard list. In our plans, we don't generally list long-leaf yellow pine as an option, because it's not available here. In fact, it is a good option and frequently used as an alternative to white oak. Like Douglas-fir, there are caveats about yellow pine. Both woods, in the areas where they are common, are used for home construction. Construction grades are not acceptable for boat construction, both from a quality standpoint and because they are not properly dried. Yellow pine is also a generic term which encompasses a variety of woods. The experts recommend "long-leaf" and some specify "old growth". "Straight grain" is specified for many types of wood, particularly Douglas-fir, because it is dimensionally more stable and has better strength characteristics.

Before this century, when wooden boatbuilding (like many crafts) was an art, boat builders would take great care in selecting their lumber. Today, in a world of consolidation of suppliers and rushed life styles, many home boat builders contact us to ask if they can use woods that really aren't suitable for the wet environment in which boats spend much of their life. In many cases, the caller went to their local building supply store and found that specialty woods were not available. The woods may have been available in lumberyards or from local specialty suppliers, but they had not taken the time to look. *"Can I use red oak instead of white oak?"* Red oak is not as rot resistant as white oak and is not recommended... can it be used? As Allyn (our shop foreman) is fond of saying, "It ain't my boat". We can give recommendations, but it is up to the builder to decide what to use.

Which non-marine woods could be substituted depends on how the boat will be used. You always want wood that is properly dried, free of knots or other structural defects, but what if this is a duck boat you keep in the garage and only take out a couple of weeks a year? If it is well painted, do you really have to worry about rot? Probably not. Clear red

oak would be an option, albeit heavy, for a boat you might have to carry any distance. Western pines tend to be relatively weak and prone to rot. If you are building a small rowboat that you use as a coffee table, pine would be fine. If it's kept inside and only taken out occasionally... how about used frequently, but stored dry in a garage..., how about stored under a cover in the back yard? When you build a boat and you know how it is built and what its limitations are, then you will presumably treat it accordingly. But if you give it to someone else who hasn't decided in advance the limitation he would accept, your pine boat may be very short lived.

We have added a new section to our website, "Wood & Plywood" pages in which we have reproduced Chapter 5 from our book [Boatbuilding with Plywood](#). This chapter discusses woods used in boat building. We hope to add additional features to this section concerning various types of wood that we have been asked about, listing information to help a potential boat builder decide what wood to use. Maybe in the future we will be able to tell anyone who asks about poplar why it is not listed as a desirable wood for boat building.

## Scarf sled

by Mark Bronkalla

I wanted a quick and highly repeatable way to cut scarf joints for the chine, sheer and battens. The methods listed in the books (hand saw, router jig, hand plane, etc) did not appeal to me. I wanted to do the cuts on the table saw.

This sled is modeled after a cross cut sled, but with a pair of fences added for positioning the stock. All of the wood is from the scrap bin.



The angled fence and the wedge are from a 2x4 which had its edge jointed to square it up. The 2x4 was cut for an 8:1 slope as recommended in the plans. The wedge fence was glued and clamped while checking that it was absolutely square in the vertical direction.

The wedge fence is shown with a bracing block which holds the thin end of the wedge fence vertical. The other fence to the right is used for clamping. Remember to save the off-cut from the wedge fence for use as the clamping wedge. The pencil marks are from a previous use of the plywood scrap and serve no purpose here.



**T**his is the bottom of the sled. It shows the plywood base and maple runner. The runner is sized to fit the slot of the tablesaw miter slot closely. The runner is glued and nailed (for clamping). To align the runner, place it in the slot of the table saw with wet glue surface up. Position the rip fence appropriately, and then place the sled bottom over the runner and against the rip fence. Next fasten the sled to the runner with brads from the top. This will hold it squarely in position. Add more brads from the bottom to hold it securely while the glue hardens.

**A**pply a generous layer of Johnson's paste wax to the slide and bottom of sled. This greatly reduces sliding friction. Remember silicone sprays have **NO PLACE** in the woodshop. The silicone is an insidious contaminant of finishes and will lead to fish eyes in very small amounts.



**C**hine piece ready for cut. The clamping wedge is shown being tapped into position with the hammer. The firm clamping is **VERY** important for repeatability.

**T**he far end is supported by a helper, my son David, or by a board clamped vertically in the Work Mate. The top edge of the clamped board is at the same height as the top of the sled on the table saw.



**H**ere the cut is shown in progress. Note the scars in the clamp wedge from previous cuts. You want to make sure that the saw goes completely through the batten so there is not a "nub" sticking out for later trimming by hand.

**A** major feature of the clamping setup is to allow you to keep your hands well clear of the blade. Remember, the saw guard is off for this procedure as well as the kick back pawls. Wear safety glasses and stand to the side. The off cut wedge pieces can become very sharp projectiles!

*This article is taken from Mark's web page on building the Glen-L Riviera (See our site: Useful information & Suppliers/Links: Other Web Sites/Glen-L Projects...)*

## CB... What the heck is it anyway?

**C**B is the abbreviation for "Center of Buoyancy" used on Glen-L plans. The CB can be compared to the fulcrum of an in-balance teeter-totter. The CB is the longitudinal balance point of the underwater volume. Add weight aft of the CB and the boat will go down by the stern, forward and it will be down at the bow.

**W**hen the designer designs a boat of any size, he calculates the underwater volume, estimates the displacement, and determines the CB, however this initial figure is only a starting point. The weights of all the fixed components in the finished boat must actually be calculated. Yes, this means figuring the weight of each batten, gusset, keel, plank, plus everything in the boat including passengers, motor, etc. Hopefully, the total weight should be very close to the original displacement estimate. If not, the displacement must be re-figured to match the calculated weights and a new CB point determined.

**N**ow comes the fun. Each component part of the boat must have the location of its center of gravity measured relative to the CB; this is then multiplied by its weight. When finished, the designer has a long list including each part of the boat with the distance x weight listed; if the total of figures fore and aft the CB are equal, the hull is in balance. Obviously, this is seldom the case. When not, some weights must be shifted to bring the hull into balance. Although the weights of the components of the hull are fixed, some objects can be moved; fuel and water tanks are easily shifted and are usually the first choice of most homebuilders. But are tanks empty or full? Although designers use a half-full figure, due to the varying weight, the liquids are best located as close to the CB as possible. It isn't good practice to move passengers to balance the hull. Although the location of the helmsperson is usually fixed, it isn't practical to specify where each passenger must sit. It is simply a process of elimination to determine what can be shifted and how much. Back to our teeter-totter: the farther an object is from the CB, the more its weight affects the balance. A "weight-value" for each component is figured by multiplying the distance from the CB by its weight. A weight of 10 pounds 1' aft of the CB could be balanced by 2 lbs. 5' forward:  $10 \times 1 = 2 \times 5$ . In extreme cases, the designer may find it necessary to alter the boat lines to shift the CB, however the options are limited by the parameters of the design. This, sometimes frustrating balancing act, is the reason many designers are gray haired or bald.

**D**isplacement or semi-displacement powerboats can be brought into trim by adding ballast. Balancing a sailboat can often be accomplished by moving existing ballast. However, as speed is a function of weight in planing boats, adding ballast for balance is undesirable.

**F**ast planing powerboats are usually not designed to be in balance at rest. In a typical 10' outboard planing hull, the driver can often shift his weight forward to get the boat quickly on plane, then shift aft and the hull will be relatively level. Obviously shifting the driver forward far enough to have an effect in a larger boat is impractical. Outboards with power trim, afterplanes (cavitation plates) and similar appendages to lift the stern and bring the hull on plane more quickly. Any fixed appendage used to force the bow up or down causes resistance and detracts from performance.

**O**pen planing craft, such as deck boats with lots of passenger space, are only in balance with certain loading. The typical bow rider seems to invite everyone up forward but this imbalance becomes dangerous if carried to the extreme. For best performance, cruising type boats of any size will have superior performance if properly balanced about the CB.

**W**hen balance is an important factor, our plans show the CB on the lines drawings. If you are thinking of adding extra fuel in that big open bow space, think again. What are you going to locate aft to balance the weight x distance contemplated forward? Keep the boat in balance for best performance.

## **Steering for Boats**

**A** boat turns in one direction or the other by a rudder of an in line inboard or by pivoting the propeller and lower unit on an outboard or outdrive. There are three basic methods of rotating the turning action required and transferring it to a convenient position actuated by a steering wheel or lever; cable steering, single push-pull cable, and hydraulic. There are others such as drag links but they are not common.

### **Drum Cable Steering**

**T**able steering has been around forever and earned a bad reputation, not without reason. This system operates through cable fastened to a pivoting arm on the rudder or outdrive (or outboard) and sent forward through pulleys to wrap around a drum fastened to the steering wheel. Properly set up, such a system is practical and reliable. Use clothesline rope, awning pulleys, or similar ill thought out replacements in the system and you're not only asking for trouble, you'll have it.

**T**he term "cable" refers to the flexible plastic coated steering cable or stainless steel 7 x 19 wire rope typically 5/32" or 5/16" in diameter. At aft terminals the cable is looped through eye straps securely fastened to the hull and held with clamps intended for cable steering systems.

**P**ulleys or sheaves used in cable systems should be approximately 16 times the cable or wire diameter with a 2" minimum and may be fixed or pivoting types. The latter are common for smaller boats and special plastic/stainless steel with attaching eyes are available. Some "head scratching" must be used in planning so that the leads are fair and straight and the cable runs smoothly in the sheaves. Cable running in fixed sheaves must be aligned parallel to the sheave groove. A great stress is applied to the strap or base that attaches the pulley to the boat hull; bolts are preferable with long screws driven into solid wood satisfactory.

**C**ables running between pivoting pulleys may tend to sag or not be in a precise straight line. Special cable guides with metal or plastic surfaces will take care of this problem although it is preferable these be minimal in number or better yet the system arranged so they are not required as they can abrade the cable over a period of time.

**A** major problem occurs when cables are connected at the tiller; this terminology refers to a tiller on a rudder or the arm that pivots an outboard or outdrive. A straight arm projecting from a pivoting vertical shaft with cables attached as described in the foregoing will have slack in certain sectors of the turning arc. This cannot be tolerated. Special steering tension springs used at the tiller connection (see [Fig. 1 and Fig. 2](#)) will eliminate the slack problem. Cables connected to a pivoting rudder shaft with a quadrant as shown in [Fig. 3](#), do not create slack and springs are not needed.

**T**he steerer with drum attached can be of two types, exposed or [behind the dash](#). The [exposed drum](#) for the cable is in front of the dash (see [Fig. 4](#)) and is primarily used on small hydroplanes or race class monoplanes. Usually only one coaming pulley sheave per side is required and the entire cable is exposed for easy inspection and maintenance. The tiller cable on either exposed or behind the dash types should be of equal length each side of the drum and wrapped 3 or 4 times around it in opposite directions; check to be sure turning the steering wheel rotates the motor in the proper direction.

**D**rum cable steering is viable but ONLY when properly installed and maintained. Crude materials and sloppy installation and maintenance can cause steering failure that can result in serious consequences. DO IT RIGHT OR DON'T USE IT.

## **Push Pull Cable Steering**

**T**he [push pull cable](#) is the most common steering system used on boats today. A push-pull cable consists of a semi flexible cable that slides back and forth inside a flexible sleeve covering. This outer casing is attached to the steerer and routed aft and anchored to the boat hull adjacent to the motor or rudder tiller. The interior cable sliding in the

covering is actuated by turning the steering wheel coupled to ring gears or rack and pinion to convert the rotation to a push pull motion.

**T**he sliding cable tiller end has a solid or tubular bar that couples to the tiller of the motor or rudder by a swivel fitting to provide universal movement when rotated or to allow tilt up action of the outboard or outdrive. Numerous types of connections are used, those from outboards different than outdrives or rudder junctions.

**A** push pull system is relatively simple to install. The cable comes in varying length to suit that required; [Fig. 5](#) shows a method of measuring commonly used. Alternately a garden hose can be used to determine both the routing and length. The hose simulates the practical bends that can be made with the cable as sharp bends are impractical.

**P**ush pull steering is relatively maintenance free. A grease fitting is provided to lubricate the sliding cable and should be maintained per the maker. Corrosion and sticking of the inner cable can be a problem, routing the cable well above the bilge is essential, and cleaning the aft exposed portion should be a regular procedure.

## **Hydraulic Steering**

**I**f you have deep pockets, a good hydraulic steering system should be considered. They are primarily used on larger or more plush boats due to their cost. Basically, the rotating steering wheel operates a hydraulic cylinder to force hydraulic fluid through a tube to actuate a matching hydraulic cylinder. Routing of the connecting tube is simple and a myriad of connection devices are available to connect the fore and aft cylinder motion to the tiller. Some earlier systems did not have the tolerances required for efficient hydraulic use, but as usual, the market place took care of the problem, and hydraulics is an ideal steering system for craft of about 18' or more.

## **Designer's Notebook: Double Planking Hints**

**M**any vee bottom boats use two laminations of sheet plywood to form the contour of the forward bottom. The bend may be difficult or impossible with a single layer of the thickness required. Over the years we've tried many methods of applying double planking, some worked some didn't. In the following, we'll provide a few hints as to some procedures we found that made the task easier and provided a positive bond between the laminates.

**F**requently only the forward vee section of the bottom planking is made with two laminations of sheet plywood while the aft flatter section is applied in a single layer.

Obviously, the two laminations must be equal to the thickness of the single aft plywood panel, two layers of 1/4" forward butting to one layer of 1/2" aft would be equal. Right? Possibly unless you get "scant" plywood. Yes Henry, math has changed; 1/4" plywood is not .25", 1/2" is not .50, etc., scant plywood is about 1/32" less in thickness. Now you understand why few understand "new math". True marine grade plywood is not scant, but much exterior is. In any case, be sure the double plywood layer thickness is the same as the single joining panel.

**P**lywood bent around the bottom vee of the typical sheet plywood planked boat is convex in shape, a section of a cone. Depending on how the plywood is bent, the contour can change slightly, but perhaps enough to cause a void between the laminations. We've found that forming each layer of the forward vee in the same manner is desirable. This applies whether fitting or permanently fastening the plywood in place. Fasten the plywood along the keel to a point where the major curvature starts aft of the stem/keel junction. From that point, go out at about a 30 degree angle forward from the centerline in plan to the intersection of the chine and force the planking down. The angle is not critical and will vary from boat to boat. The principle is to fold the planking down from the stem to the chine; not fold from the chine to the stem. Each lamination should be bent and fastened in approximately the same manner and sequence.

**W**e prefer POXY-SHIELD with thickeners added as the adhesive between the plywood laminations. Silica #1 added to the activated resin to form a soft butter-like or thick syrup consistency will provide void filling capabilities with positive adhesion. Prime both contacting surfaces with activated resin followed by a generous coating of the adhesive rolled on with a short nap foam roller such as the Glen-L #08-529. Work quickly and have a helper; particularly if the area is large.

**H**ow do you know if the two layers mate solidly together? Before applying the outer layer, drill some small holes in the outer lamination about 6' apart, well staggered inward from the keel, stem, and chine. When the outer lamination is bent in place, the adhesive between should come out of the holes. Try rapping the outer surface after application lightly with a mallet, it'll help fill small voids with the adhesive. There is also a different sound between contacting areas and those with a void.

**T**here are several methods that can be used to force the planking laminates together. If you are fortunate to be working in a garage or similar structure, use uprights extending from joists or other roof structure and wedge to the planking surface. Any number of these can be used to provide firm pressure and assure a positive bond between the glued planking panels.

**T**he planking layers can also be forced together by weighting the outer laminate to force it against its mating counterpart. Plastic bags filled with dirt or sand draped over the surface will form readily to the arced contour. Alternately or additionally, use temporary screws with a plywood washer under the head driven through both layers. For more tension, use a block on the underside to give the screw threads more pulling power, or use small bolts with washer blocks under head and nut. Washer blocks are usually 1/4" plywood about 2" square. A long strip of 1" wide plywood run diagonally from chine to keel or stem both top and underside fastened with screws or through bolted. Make sure washer blocks have a sheet of plastic wrap or wax paper between them and the plywood so they are not glued to the planking. A power staple gun is a fast way to drive fasteners and force the two layers together, but may not have enough holding power. Staples should be removed after the adhesive cures. Driving them through a strip of plastic filament tape will facilitate removal. After cure and removal of all temporary fasteners, fill the holes with thickened epoxy and sand smooth.

**T**he foregoing referred to applying planking in sheet form, however, the suggestions also can be used in cold molded construction. See our web site under "Boatbuilding Methods, Multi-Diagonal Planking".

## **DISPLACEMENT by Simpson's Rule**

**D**isplacement is a common term used in yacht design but few comprehend its meaning and how it is obtained.

**A** floating body displaces an amount of water that exactly equals the weight of the floating object. Let's suppose we have a bucket of water filled to the brim. If we put a floating object in the bucket that weighs exactly one pound, one pound of water will flow over the top of the bucket or be "displaced". This is a "gimmie" and has been understood since Archimedes discovered the principle in his bath tub.

**A** cubic foot of fresh water, one foot square and one foot high, will weigh about 62.5 lbs. while saltwater will weigh about 64 lbs. The term "about" is used as impurities can change the decimal point. We can determine the displacement of a boat by finding the cubic feet of volume of the portion of the boat below the waterline and multiplying by the weight of water.

**S**o, how does the designer use this information? Displacement as stated, is the total weight of the floating object. This means the boat weight plus that of everything normally carried on board including passengers. When designing a new boat this total weight must

be calculated by figuring the weight of all individual pieces of wood, etc. This is a very tedious process that is one of the least fun parts of boat design.

**N**ext the designer will estimate where he expects the waterline to fall and calculate the area of the hull below the waterline. If the boat is a simple rectangle the cubic content can be obtained by multiplying the underwater height x width x length (in feet) to obtain the volume in cubic feet. This volume is then multiplied by the weight of a cubic foot of water to obtain the estimated displacement weight of the hull. If this displacement weight does not match the weight that the designer previously calculated, the waterline is adjusted and the process repeated. Doesn't sound that bad, but remember, a boat is not uniform in shape.

**T**here are many ways to determine the volume of an irregular shape; a computer with a proper program can solve the problem quickly if the proper factors are entered. There are several other methods but let's go back to a way of calculating volume that is basic and old as the hills: Simpson's Rule.

**S**impson's Rule is used to determine the square area of the surface of a plane, such as the area of one cross section of a hull. When the areas of a number of sections have been obtained, the cubic contents of the whole can be calculated.

**L**et's use an example of how this rule is used to determine volume, then displacement. Suppose a boat has a waterline (estimated) length of 20'. This length is divided into an even number of equally spaced parts drawn perpendicular to the waterline. Let's use *10 parts 2' apart and number them from left to right 0 through 10 (the bow)*.

**N**ext the areas in feet of these sections must be determined. The designers use a tool called a "planimeter", with dials and wheels that determines area when traced around an irregular plane. But the area can also be figured by laying the drawing over graph paper to a scale compatible with the drawing, counting the squares in the plane and estimating partial ones. The area on one half of the boat section is determined and multiplied by two. A typical boat will have no area at station #10.

**A**fter the areas of all of the 10 sections have been obtained, list them in columnar form with the station number (#) in the first column and three additional columns, labeled A, B, and C. List the area of each station in column A. In column B enter the following numbers: Station 1# and #10 enter a 1, all odd stations station a 2, and all even stations a 4. You should have a column starting and ending with 1 and alternating 2 and 4. Kinda sounds like voodoo doesn't it?

**N**ext multiply each of the figures in the B column by the area listed in column A. Put the result in column C. When all station rows in column C have been figured, add them together. So far, the point of this exercise has been to get the total of column C. The next step is to multiply the column C total by the station spacing in feet, (2' in our example), and the result divided by 3 to give the underwater volume in cubic feet. Multiply this by the weight of water (62.5 or 64 lbs./cu. ft.) and the result is the displacement in pounds.

**T**hat wasn't so bad was it? But, the displacement figured does not equal the calculated weight of the boat. So it's back to the beginning, adjust the waterline up or down, and try again.

**T**here are many ways to estimate the waterline with reasonable accuracy and numerous attempts are seldom required. But our original intent was to present or re-present an old rule that figures displacement. Simpson's Rule is a handy one and can be used to find the area of any irregular plane as well as the volume.

## **Approximating Displacement for Canoes and Kayaks**

**A** common question is "how much weight will she hold?" This especially applies to smaller boats such as canoes or kayaks.

**T**he following will give a rough idea of the displacement of a typical double ended craft such as a kayak or canoe. It will not be accurate with boats that have a transom.

**T**he factors required can usually be measured from the boat or possibly the lines or sections. All measurements must be in feet. These are:

- D = draft . Estimate draft at the widest point of the boat or approximate midpoint; usually about 3" - 6" on the typical canoe / kayak.
- B = maximum beam at bottom. If round bottom measure width about 3" above keel.
- L = waterline length or length chine point to chine point fore and aft measured along the centerline of the boat.
- Disp. = displacement, weight of everything on board plus boat weight.

**T**o find the displacement at the estimated waterline use the following formula.

$$.6D \times B \times L \times 62 = \text{Displacement in pounds, fresh water.}$$

Let's take an example:

We have a kayak that has a draft of 6" (.5'), a midships bottom width of 20" (\*1.67'), and a waterline length of 17'. Putting these figures in the formula:

$$.6 \times .5 \times 1.67 \times 17 \times 62 = 528 \text{ lbs. fresh water displacement.}$$

But let's say we know the total weight to be carried, boat weight, passengers and gear, in other words displacement: but how far will the boat sink in the water? Suppose we have a displacement of 450 lbs. Using the kayak example above the formula is altered to solve for draft.

$$\frac{\text{Displacement}}{\text{-----}} = \text{Draft (D)}$$
$$.6 \times B \times L \times 62$$

OR

$$\frac{450}{\text{-----}} = .43' \text{ or } 5 \frac{1}{8}'' \text{ draft}$$
$$.6 \times 1.67 \times 17 \times 62$$

Are the formulae accurate? No, but close enough for estimates. Basically it calculates the underwater volume and converts with a factor (.6) derived from a group of kayaks whose characteristics had been calculated.

Be practical when you consider load carrying ability. Many people, however, are not. They want a small kayak that will carry two full blown adults with lots of gear. Don't expect to load the boat so there are only a couple of inches of freeboard. Some even want to carry several passengers in a 12' kayak. Use a string to simulate the boat outline on the living room floor. Sit the passengers contemplated in the outline and you will readily see if what you desire is practical.

*\* Convert inches to feet by dividing by 12.*

## **Transom Reinforcement ....for the heavier outboard motors**

**W**e're starting a new era in outboard motors. Government regulations are virtually eliminating the typical two-cycle outboard motor that has been the standby for many years. Modifications of the two cycle outboard have been made by some companies but many modern outboards are four cycle to meet the new regulations.

**T**wo cycle motors mix oil with the fuel to lubricate the moving parts. This eliminates a lot of engine components that are required when the typical four cycle motor, is used. Four cycle outboards are heavier; many almost double the weight of older two cycles. And since outboard motors keep getting more powerful transom weight can be considerable.

**A**s one old time outboard race driver stated when I remarked about the liberal use of metal reinforcements at transom junctions "It ain't strong enough, it never is". That statement rings true even more today. With the heavier outboards additional transom reinforcement is always desirable.

**T**he [sketch](#) shows a good method of reinforcing the transom area on smaller boats. Make the "clamping" of the transom as thick as possible; the chart below the sketch shows the maximum for various horsepower outboards. Reinforce the transom in a fore and aft direction with plywood motor-well sides, preferably blocked to bottom and deck longitudinals. Reinforce corner junctions with epoxy resin with thickeners added formed into fillets. Use epoxy adhesives at all joints and fasten with screws, nails, or bolts as applicable. Change "it never is (strong enough)" to "it's stronger than the proverbial brick outhouse".

## **Designer's Notebook: Self Draining Cockpit or... "Quick Henry, man the pumps!"**

**L**et's set the record straight. Almost everyone would like to have a boat with a cockpit that would drain any rainwater or spray back to the ocean or lake the boat is floating in. Why aren't ALL boats made with such a feature? Let's analyze the subject.

**A** self-draining cockpit must be above the waterline or water would come in the cockpit, not flow out through the scuppers (cockpit drains). How much above the waterline? Obviously, the higher the cockpit level above the water the better for drainage, but in a 14-16' boat the hull depth limits the cockpit level. Way back in memory a figure of 9" above the waterline for a self-draining cockpit was desirable for a boat in the 20' range. Obviously, any figure must take in account the size and shape of the boat. Let's get a few facts.

**A** boat has a CB (center of buoyancy) that is essentially the same as the pivot point on a balanced teeter-totter. Moving a weight forward or aft of the CB make the boat go down by the bow or stern respectively. Architects use a PPI (pounds per inch immersion) to calculate out of trim. A 20' boat may have a PPI (it'll vary with the boat) of 250 lb. ft. If a 200 lb. passenger moves 1.25' aft of the CB the boat would go down by the stern 1" when at rest. Suppose our 200 lb. passenger goes to the transom, 8' aft the CB, to pull up the outboard motor. That will bring the stern down more than 6" ( $200 \times 8$  divided by  $250 = 6.4$ ) further in the water. Then his buddy comes back to help him; well, you get the idea any self-draining cockpit level must be quite high above the waterline or water will come into the cockpit through the scuppers.

**S**o what, if a cockpit level is only 4" above the water, the passengers feet may get wet feet but the water will flow back out when they come forward. Very true, but the water in the cockpit weighs more than 60 lbs. per cubic foot and the boat could go down by the stern even more as long as the guys remain in place. Perhaps the example is a little extreme, but the idea is to illustrate that a small boat cannot have a practical self-draining cockpit.

**W**ater can be prevented from flowing back into the cockpit by crossing the drains. The port drain exits on the starboard side and vice versa; a method common on sailboats that heel. Check valves can also be used at drains. These allow water to flow out but not in. However, they can malfunction if debris gets in the valve. Of course, a typical small planing boat at speed is not that critical to passenger movement. In addition, the static waterline is not the same as the craft when planing and water backing up in the cockpit through scuppers would not occur.

**C**onsider the above factors, the pros and cons, prior to insisting that the boat you build must have a self-draining cockpit.

## **Designer's Notebook: Fastening sheet plywood to frames?**

**B**uilding boats planked with sheet plywood started around the WW II era. Before that, the adhesives used to make plywood were, in short, worthless for marine application; the plies would delaminate in a heavy fog. After the adhesives were improved, it took a long time before professional boatbuilders would use plywood because of its previous problems.

**B**uilders of the time planked boats with solid wood with many seams. When plywood started to be used, builders logically built the same framework and attached the plywood in the same way as they had done with planks. Rarely did that work out. Boats planked with sheet plywood wouldn't conform to the shape of a planked boat. A surface developed from a segment of a cone or cylinder was required to enable the sheet material to bend to natural curves. The method is known as "sheet plywood development".

**M**ost builders retained the closely spaced frames with many longitudinals and a zillion fasteners. Then someone reasoned that all that framework wasn't required. Further down the road, many production boats were monocoque; the boats were built over a form with stem, transom, chine and sheer the only framework members. After the hull was removed from the form and righted, they were reinforced with internal framework, primarily longitudinals. This eventually led to current Stitch and Glue boatbuilding.

**B**ut before that progression, the sheet plywood boat framework resembled that of its predecessor, the planked boat. At about the same time, more powerful motors such as the automotive V-8's were converted and installed in the new plywood boats. This was before the advent of superior epoxy adhesives and epoxy based putties for fastener holes. At higher speeds, the putty over the countersunk fasteners would come out, water would catch the outer plywood lamination and eventually rip out the outer plywood lamination, starting at the screw hole.

**T**his condition was primarily observed across the plywood at frames that contacted the bottom, longitudinal fasteners caused minimal problems. The logical solution was to eliminate cross fastenings in the bottom frames, and it worked. Some builders even went so far as to relieve the frame so it had no contact to the bottom planking. This also worked well and today is quite common in faster sheet plywood boats, although in slower boats the frame contacting the planking is still prevalent. However, fasteners are preferably NOT used across the planking in any sheet plywood boat.

**F**airing a sheet plywood boat framework so the planking will perfectly contact the frames is wonderful in theory, but virtually impossible in practice. The frame will either contact the planking causing a hard spot or the reverse. In many sheet plywood boats, side battens were eliminated or minimized and this accentuated any out of sync frame. Fasteners driven into an out of sync frame causes a visible bump or dish that will mirror through the finished planking. This becomes more visible on dark painted sheet plywood planked sides. Eliminating fasteners and relieving the frames so they did not contact the plywood solved the problem. Many die hard builders and older texts still retain the notion that sheet planking should contact frames. The latest practice allows the sheet plywood to take a natural bend; it isn't being forced against framework to form an unnatural compound curvature.

**M**any have questioned why we do not advocate fastening into frame on sheet plywood boats. The foregoing is our reasoning and is proven in practice. Should the planking be glued to the frame? Why not? Thickened epoxy adhesive on the frame will fill in the void and make positive uniform contact as developed by the planking. Plus it's a preservative for the otherwise exposed frame edge.

**A** boat built using the described procedures will not have bumps or hollow spots or framework mirrored to the outside. It'll be a smooth uniform surface and even black painted hulls are practical. Plus that it's proven to be durable. Why build any other way?

## **Designer's Notebook: Using random-random stock**

**T**he Bill of Materials in our plans often use the terminology "random-random", meaning varying lengths and widths. Most large lumber suppliers, particularly those supplying wood commonly used in boat building don't buy material already milled such as the common 1" x 6" or 2" x 4" sold in lumberyards catering to home construction.

**T**heir lumber comes unfinished, neither the edges or outer surfaces are milled or planed. The material comes in lifts or groups of a common thickness, neither the length or width is consistent. A lift containing four quarters material will be slightly more than 1" (hence "four quarters") in net thickness in the rough. Widths and lengths will vary; the lumber is rough cut from the sawmill to obtain the most stock from the felled tree without thought of what the finished size may be. Think about it; if a tree is sawn up to make a special sized lumber there will be a lot of material that is scrap. Guess who pays for it; you the customer. More valuable lumber could be very expensive if sawn to specific sizes with excessive waste. Using the entire tree with minimal waste holds the cost down and reflects to the consumer.

**M**any small yards will mill and stock lumber to standard sizes. Obviously someone must pay for the waste and the time spent in sawing to size, again that's you the consumer. Some yards finish the stock to thickness, usually 3/4" to 13/16", for four quarters stock. Lengths and widths are as they came from the mill. That's the stuff for boatbuilding you want. You can rip it to size yourself getting as much from the stock as possible. Obviously, if you have a choice, select the longest and widest stock available without paying a premium. Most suppliers do charge extra for wide widths and long lengths.

**M**any boat parts are irregular in shape. Arced shaped parts, such as deck beams, can often be nested one inside the other. A 5 1/2" width may provide a single beam while two may be obtained from an 8" width. A 6' long beam can be made from a single length, but

perhaps two can be obtained from a 9' length. It is readily apparent the wider the width and lengths the more usable material you obtain for the buck.

**C**heck the Bill of Materials for the boat being built. Find the widest width needed and roughly total all the strips or other pieces and change to square feet of a given thickness. Be generous; material lists seldom cover the interior structure and some waste (or don't you ever goof) is inevitable. Remember when using random- random stock it'll be cheaper than sawn to size material, so in the long run you'll be ahead costwise.

**T**hat's why we prefer to call out random-random stock, particularly for frames. In our shop the random widths are piled in roughly the same widths. Working from the templates, we select the most appropriate width and length for the parts being produced. Outfall filters down to parts for a smaller kit so the waste is minimal. The footage of lumber we use to make a frame kit will always be less than the typical home boatbuilder; we have the selection advantage and templates to work from. With care however, the builder can save on lumber by thinking and taking advantage of random-random stock.

## **Designer's Notebook: The case for laminations**

**L**et's face it, the lumber and plywood we have to work with today is not what it used to be. The old growth trees that used to be common provided a much higher percentage of clear material and were cheaper for the mills to process. Today the mills are harvesting 30-year-old trees that yield a lot more material with knots and other defects and winds up costing more.

**I**n some applications, lesser quality woods or plywood can be laminated to improve the strength and to make longer lengths suitable for boatbuilding applications. Epoxy adhesives, with their gap filling qualities, have made laminated wood a more reliable process for the home builder. Properly used epoxies make wood-to-wood junctions that are extremely strong and durable. So why aren't laminations used more often in boatbuilding? Well, laminating small members to make larger ones is time consuming, can require a lot of epoxy, and in some cases laminates are neither desirable nor an advantage.

**I**n the following we'll discuss some work that has been done with laminations, some unusual and out of the ordinary.

### **A production method**

Several years ago, some southern California professional builders were producing sheet plywood boats with all plywood laminations for keel, stem, chine, and sheer. The method may also have been common to other parts of the country. The boats were built on a form or jig and the laminations made over the form. These boats were in the 20' range with keels laminated from mostly 3/8" plywood, usually about 6" wide aft and extending forward and bending in the forward section to form the stem with the width reduced to about 2". The aft portion of the keel was about six laminations or so thick with the stem section more than twice that. The stem laminations ended stair step atop the keel (into a notched form) to spread the stress. The joining laminations were scarfed or butt joined, staggering the joints so that no two ended at the same point. Numerous clamps or clamping fixtures were used to hold the laminations while curing. I did see one innovative builder clamping a rubber strip from a truck inner-tube to the keel and tightly wrapping it diagonally with the final end secured by another clamp, thus reducing the number of clamps required.

The chines were made similarly from plywood lamination, much wider and thicker than in conventional practice because so much was eventually faired away. The forms were cut off diagonally at the chine point and the chines were set in diagonally across the bottom side junction. Bending was simple, not always easy in conventional chine construction.

Obviously fairing these lams was quite a chore, particularly the chine. The builders used electric planes and routers on special fixtures to accurately fair the members, in some cases disc sanders with very coarse paper were used to initially remove the surplus.

The inner sheers were also plywood, bent in place after applying the bottom and sides and righting the boat. The laminations were applied directly against the side plywood and again they were rather oversize. Those familiar with bending wood know that wide thin uniform strips can't practically be bent around the typical plywood boat with forward flare. Such a member cannot be forced up or down without "kinking" so the laminations were sawn to shape. Templates were made and subsequent laminations duplicated with router or collar shaping. No fairing was required as the member sides to the planking, however, beveling for the deck was necessary. When the hulls were removed from the form they had no frames, though sometimes frames were added.

Note that the boats built using laminated longitudinals were production boats and the expense of the fixtures usually makes it impractical for building a single boat. However, the method may suggest some possibilities to the innovative builder.

## **In Stitch and Glue**

**W**e've used bottom batten and keel laminations in stitch and glue boats for quite some time. However, these are applied after the boat shell has been formed. All plywood laminations or combinations of plywood initial laminations capped with a solid wood-reinforcing member have worked out well. Wider battens spread the support area, provides additional gluing surface, are easier to install, and thinner laminations make the bends more easily. Battens laminated from plywood have never become common on conventionally built plywood craft. In a vee bottom boat, it is difficult to bend the thin wide strips toward the stem in a nice fair curve. Reducing the width as the bow is approached helps, but getting the laminations to bend to a shape that will match the plywood planking is a problem. Insurmountable? No, but again a lot of thought, work and possibly some shaped fixtures may be required.

### **Common practices**

**P**lywood laminations on the inner surface of longitudinals have long been used to prevent splitting. The centerline keel seam is critical and when a solid member has two halves of sheet plywood fastened to it a local stress occurs. A lamination of plywood applied over a solid wood keel need not be thick or continuous, 1/4" plywood on smaller boats, fitting between frames on the inside, is usually sufficient. If using epoxy adhesives, only minimal fasteners are required; epoxy adhesives, properly used, have proven to be as strong as the wood itself.

**L**aminated beams for deck or cabin tops are a natural for laminated construction and have been used extensively for years using either plywood or lumber. Laminated beams are stronger and use considerably less material than sawn members but do require a jig or fixture for forming. Three laminations are the minimum to use. Some builders make the laminations wide and rip it into several beams. Always leave a little extra for cleanup, as possible misalignment of the laminations and cleanup is usually required. A problem with laminated beams is that they will collapse slightly when taken off the gluing jig.

**R**eplacing sawn frames on a vee bottom boat with frames made from laminations is impractical, but advantageous on bent or round bilge boat frames. However, in high-speed vee bottomed boats with solid wood bottom, frames are often laminated with thin plywood to prevent splitting; longitudinal motor stringers laminated with plywood can be significantly stiffened. Note, when I discuss plywood laminations for frames, they are used so that the veneers are parallel to the planking. The longitudinals are fastened to the frames and fasteners do not hold well in edge-grain.

**H**heavy skegs or keel members made from laminations have the advantage of being more stable and easier to handle. On inboard installations where a shaft hole goes through a heavy skeg, the hole can be progressively cut or drilled in the laminations, eliminating

the typical long boring tool required for solid members and avoiding the ever present possibility that the long hole is not drilled in correct alignment.

**A**lthough it would be possible to laminate long longitudinals from shorter pieces, it requires a lot of work and glue, and a long scarf joint is a more practical solution.

**W**e've used multiple laminations of solid wood or plywood for transoms, corner knees, stems, keels, battens, planking, cabin tops, decks, hull planking and undoubtedly other places that haven't come to mind. So during your building, think laminations, or at least consider them. P.S. solid wood laminations also look nice.

## **Shop Talk: Painting options**

**A** caveat: We are not paint experts. We have, however, painted a lot of boats, and are frequently asked "what would you do?". We invite any comments from other builders and would be glad to include them in future WebLetters.

**A**llyn Perry is our shop foreman, Frame Kit maker, and boat test model builder and... he has painted all of the test models for the last 30 years. Allyn is always quick to add that he is not an expert, but I think he's pretty good. He most often sprays the paint, but on some of the more recent small boats he has used our epoxy foam rollers with good results. I asked him what he would do, if he was painting his boat.

**I**f you built the Stiletto, the inside is bare wood, what would you do?

Allyn: "I may not be a good example. I would make sure my boat was always protected, under cover. I wouldn't leave it out in the driveway uncovered. I would probably use an oil based primer and then spray Zolatone\*. If I expected it to get more exposure, I might use a light coat of Poxy-Shield... I don't know if you want me to say this, I know we don't recommend it, but I would thin the activated Poxy-Shield with about 10% denatured alcohol and put on a thin coat. I would then use an oil-based primer and probably Zolatone. If I expected it to get a lot of abuse, I would probably slop a lot of Poxy-Shield on the inside, then undercoat and Zolatone. Poxy-Shield makes a really hard surface, and that's gotta be good. Most of the other epoxies that are available are thinner than Poxy-Shield, I'm sure they would add additional protection, but I really haven't tried them."

**A**nd the outside... assuming it is fibreglassed?

Allyn: "I used to use Z-Spar Monopoxy undercoat. You could apply it in very heavy coats. I'd apply two coats, then do all my final sanding. Monopoxy is no longer VOC

compliant, so it is not available in Southern California... I don't know if it is available elsewhere. Now I use a non-marine primer that can also be applied in heavy coats. At the paint store, if you tell them it is going to be used on a boat, they say it is not recommended. I haven't had any problems on trailerable boats that are not left in the water for more than a day or two at a time. After sanding, I spray on InterLux Brightside. It must be sprayed in very light coats, allowed to dry for a day before additional coats are applied. I usually apply two coats on the test models. If it were my boat, I would probably apply more. I have not used Pettit, Woolsey or any of the other available marine paints, because I have no reason to experiment, but I'm sure they all make good products that would work."

\*Zolatone is a paint product that must be sprayed; it has different types of pigments that don't mix so that the finish is "speckled". It is also non-gloss and not as slippery as other paints. This material may be known under other names in other parts of the country. Its main use is for truck beds and is available through automotive paint stores.

### **Other types of paint.**

**N**one of the following are "recommended" for below the waterline, but all have been successfully used on trailerable boats. If your boat will remain in the water, you must use a marine bottom paint.

**Latex:** See [WebLetter 23](#)

**Industrial enamel:** I made a trip to my local paint store to ask for input on industrial enamels. Many builders have reported using industrial enamel, but we haven't and I wasn't sure if Alex at the paint store would know what I was talking about if I asked for it. He did and took me right to the industrial enamel section. His first question was "Oil base or water base?"

"Oil, I guess... what exactly is industrial enamel anyway?"

According to Alex, industrial enamel is just a tougher paint, formulated to stand up to gasoline and other chemicals, for a whole lot less than marine paint. "We can't recommend it for boats" he quickly added. I told him we used topside paint all the time and it's not recommended for below the waterline. "I know", he said, "I wouldn't be afraid to use it, but we still can't recommend it".

**Marine Top side paints:** Allyn uses Brightside, but other manufacturers make similar paints. Brightside is a "topside paint" and states right on the can not to use it for below the waterline. We have used topside paints for years on trailerable boats that are not left in the water and have never had a problem.

**Two-part linear polyurethane** - Allyn has used it on his motorcycle; his comments: "Two part linear polyurethanes are a little more forgiving when sprayed, since the paint is 'activated' and thick coats will harden without crinkling. However, pot life is limited and

unused paint cannot be saved. Sanding and polishing properties are very good. Durability is also very good, but this material tends to be a bit pricey."

**A** note: If the outside of your boat is fiberglassed, the purpose of the paint is to 1) Be pretty, 2) Protect the resin from ultraviolet light. Considering this, almost anything can be used if you're not particular what it looks like. If it peels off, re-paint, water will not harm the fiberglassed surface. Latex is a particularly good paint for duck boats that you want to camouflage: non-gloss; using two colors, you can easily mix a variety of color variations. For something more "official", Pettit makes marine camouflage paints.

## **Designer's Notebook: Can I lengthen the ....?**

**T**he answer can be yes, no, and maybe.

**L**engthening or shortening a sailboat is not recommended. There are simply too many variables: center of lateral resistance, sail center of effort, lead and other factors are altered when the length is changed. Designers go to considerable effort to get the relationship of these various factors correct. If they are changed, the results can be questionable.

**M**ost human or motor powered boats can be lengthened or shortened as much as 10%. However, there are exceptions that will be discussed later. Why 10%, can't I go 18%? Possibly, the lines can be lengthened or shortened BUT, we know from experience that up to the 10% factor, the integrity of the design remains basically unchanged. All length factors are altered 10%. This means the location of a centrally located motor, CG (center of gravity, and location of major weights are also shifted by the 10% factor. Beyond the 10% factor the characteristics can be altered; put in another way we get into a gray area. It may be OK but it might not. Then too, the construction may not be adequate when a craft is excessively lengthened. Why take a chance?

**A**ltering length when done properly works well and is simple to accomplish; do it incorrectly and one big mess will probably result. You can't simply add a frame at midpoint or at the stern. A boat has curving lines and each section is (usually) different. Lengthening by this method will cause unfair lines that will be almost impossible to correct and may well alter the hull characteristics. The correct way is to re-space each of the stations or frames from the aft end of the stem to the transom a proportionate amount up to 10%. If frame spacing is equal or varies, multiply by the percentage factor being used. As an example if frames are uniformly spaced 18" apart and the 10% factor is used, each spacing will be increased 1.8" (.10 x 18") or rounded off 1 3/4" (1.75").

**S**ome designs are impractical to lengthen. Stitch and glue boats with full size patterns are a prime example. Simply extending the side and bottom templates for the most part simply won't work and the results can be questionable. Check the web site, many that have tried it had real problems.

**B**oats that have a sawn harpin are another type that doesn't lend itself to easily lengthening. A harpin is a portion of the boat sheer line as seen in plan view that is sawn to shape rather than bent. If the boat is lengthened in the harpin area the contour of that member changes; the harpin pattern given won't fit properly into the frames. Yes, the harpin shape could be re-drawn, stretching (or shortening) the spacing a proportionate amount. But unless you have some lofting or drafting knowledge, re-drawing the contour may not be easy.

**C**an the beam be changed? Not practically, this changes all the frame patterns and the curvature (on most) of the side frames. Never attempt to alter the chine beam; this will alter the characteristics to such an extent the result will be unknown.

**C**an the depth be increased? Possibly a small amount by extending the side frame members equally. This will also increase the beam and could exceed the practical or legal towing width. Boats with excessive flare or tumblehome are best not changed as increasing the side frame member curvature could be a problem.

**E**very design is different so a universal statement as to whether a design length can be altered is impractical. If in doubt ask the designer.

## **Designer's Notebook: Conventional plywood or Stitch and Glue construction?**

**P**lywood boats are commonly built by two methods, conventional and Stitch and Glue. Conventional plywood boatbuilding has been used since plywood became practical for boat use. It's a modification of the methods used for the old conventional planked boats that seem to last forever. Stitch and Glue, although most think it is new, has been around quite some time. Its popularity, however, really took hold when the marine epoxies were developed. Both conventional and Stitch and Glue building methods are reviewed under the listings [Boatbuilding Methods](#) on the GLEN-L website.

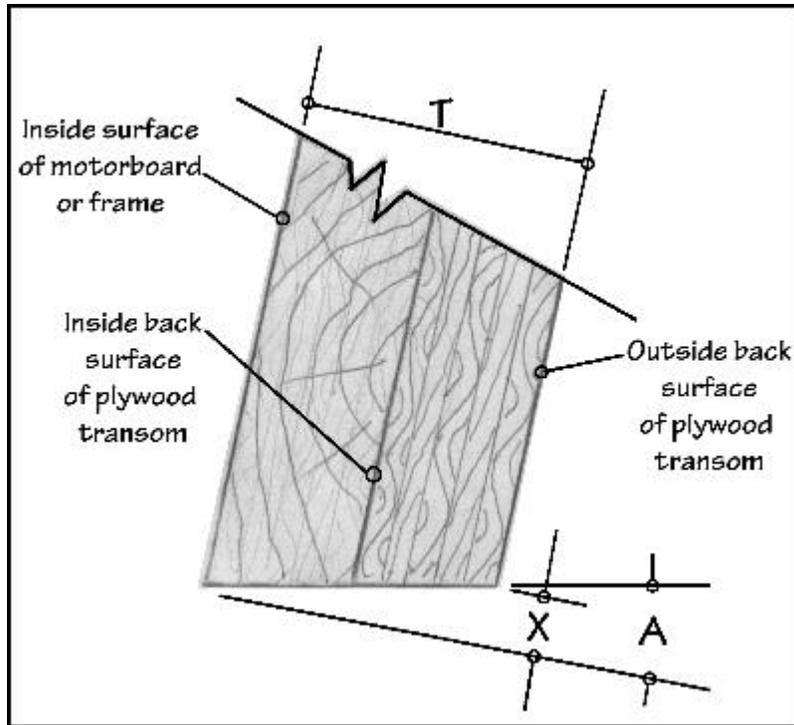
**W**hat's the best method? It depends on the type of boat, not all boats are practical for Stitch and Glue (S&G) construction; the method is impractical for hulls designed for

cold-mold or diagonal plywood strips. Our plans utilize S&G methods for many small boats using sheet plywood. The contours of the planking are given, so you don't need to determine the shape from marking it out from a framed boat as would be required for conventional building. S&G eliminates fairing, a task that most builders find confusing, though, after a little experience it isn't really much of a problem. S&G is popular with first time builders as a boat is formed very quickly after the parts are cut out. This boosts confidence and stimulates the itch to do more. Some don't like the fact that applying the epoxies and taping seams is a smelly, messy project; and epoxies can be toxic for some. Although epoxies are currently used on S&G and conventional plywood boatbuilding glue bonding, it's not as extensive as the glue, fillets, and fiberglass reinforcements of S&G boats.

**C**ost to build is predominate in most builders minds. At first glance, S&G seems to be more expensive and it possibly is, by a little. Many check the GLEN-L "Stitch and Glue Kits", see the price and blanché. But such a kit provides the fastenings and bolts, the "FASTENING KIT" used on conventional construction plus any bolts required. Also included is epoxy to use as a coating, with or without additives (furnished) for gluing or forming fillets; you can even make fillers for patching screw holes or other minor imperfections. Fiberglass laminates to bond the seams and copper wire to "stitch" the seam together, even the tools for application, rollers, squeegee, and brushes are included. S&G eliminates much of the solid wood, frames and longitudinals typical of conventional methods. Even the stem, the long curved wooden section at the bow, is eliminated in most GLEN-L S&G plans. Subtract the items not needed in S&G and the costs to build come quite close. It is possible to take shortcuts on conventionally built boats that are not desirable for S&G methods. Glues can be substituted for epoxy and encapsulation can be eliminated. Cheaper fasteners used and fiberglassing eliminated or polyester resin used. On smaller "throw away" boats, this may be satisfactory but in the long run comparing the two methods on equal terms is the only fair way.

**D**urability? Either conventional or S&G methods have excellent life, particularly when epoxy encapsulated. Dry rot will always be a problem if rainwater collects in the bilge. Epoxy inhibits this but over a period of time under soggy conditions the wood can rot. Obviously, keep the bilge dry and most of the possible problems are eliminated.

## **Designer's Notebook: Formula for figuring finished transom size**



The transom pattern perimeter is generally given to the outside back surface, see sketch above. However many boats have transoms angled (A) aft, in the case of outboards about 12° to 15°. Thus the angle required on the bottom, and usually the sides, requires more material (X) than the pattern outline. Cutting the angle away from or greater than the given pattern contour solves the problem. Or, the extra material required for the angle at any given point can be obtained. The sketch shows the total thickness (T) of the transom plus the motor board or frame. The sketch above can be duplicated using the angle given on the plans and the total thickness of the transom. Distance "X", the amount of additional material required larger than the pattern, can be measured. Optionally X can be obtained by simple arithmetic.

AS A FORMULA:  $X = \text{Angle factor (A, as listed in chart)} \times \text{multiplied by T (thickness)}$

$$X = A \times T$$

As an example solve X for a 1 1/2" thick transom and motorboard or frame with a 12° angle.

$$X = .213 \times 1.5 = .3195"$$

To find the answer in sixteenths of an inch divide by .0625.

$$X \text{ in } 1/16\text{ths} = .3195 \div .0625 = 5.04 \text{ or } 5/16"$$

CHART	
Angle in degrees	"A"Angle Factor
10	.176
12	.213
13	.231
14	.249
15	.268
16	.287

## Determining hull capacity

**QUESTION:** Sea Knight

I was looking over the USCG Safety Standards for Backyard Boatbuilders to get the information on max. load/person/gear. On page 6 it begins with filling the boat with water and counting the buckets full, then figuring out the weight of water it took to fill it. After searching for the part saying it was a joke, I realized they were serious.

Have those calculations been done for the Sea Knight?

**ANSWER:** We concur, the USCG method of filling the boat with water is not a practical method. They do have a method to calculate the interior volume, but it is rather complex. A short method follows that is reasonably accurate for the purpose and on the conservative side. It assumes that the boat was built per the plans.

Plansheet 2 shows the sections of the hull in HALF SECTION.

- Strike a line parallel to the reference line at #0 (transom) sheer level. The square footage of the area below this line and inside the hull outline must be calculated at #0, #2, and #5. The drawings are to 1 inch = 1 foot scale.
- The area can be figured by dividing these areas into geometric shapes (rectangles and triangles). The area must be in SQUARE FEET.
- The simplest way to do this is to use transparent graph paper with a 1/4" square grid. Each square in scale is 3" or 16 squares per square foot.
- Lay the graph paper over the section drawing and count the squares in each of the three sections.
- Figure the area of each of the three stations.
- Add them together and multiply by 2 (2 halves).
- Multiply by 5' - The result is in cu. ft total volume.
- Mutliply the cu. ft. by 64 (weight of water)

- The final answer is the weight required to sink the boat to the sheer level.

We've taken some liberties on the conservative side as to where the sections are taken, but it's probably as accurate as filling the boat with water.

**W**hen the US Boating and Safety Act was first passed. We assumed we would be required to calculate these figures for each design. We contacted the USCG to ask how we should go about this and they asked if we built the boats... no, then you cannot make the calculations. Only the builder can certify the figures as the builder may not follow the plans.

## **Designer's Notebook: ...of hydroplanes, cats, monohulls and such**

**T**here are many types of boat hull configurations and although this text deals with powerboats some of the nomenclature would also apply to sailboats. The following hull types have been selected since they represent the most common types: monohulls, hydroplanes, stepped hulls, three points, catamarans, tunnel hulls, and hydrofoils.

### **MONOHULLS**

**A** monohull has one supporting surface and is common to most powerboats. The single planing area may be completely flat, vee'd, arced, or round in cross section. In addition, a hull can be classed as one with a soft or round chine (junction of the bottom and sides), or as a hard chine where the bottom/side join in an abrupt corner. As viewed in profile the hull lines may be severely arced or relatively straight, particularly aft. Straight running lines aft, parallel, or almost so to the waterline, are intended for planing speeds. A planing hull skims over the water with the hull more or less above the water surface. A hull that goes *through* the water is classed as displacement... it pushes through the water, rather than on it as with the planing hull. Obviously there are categories in-between such as semi displacement, semi planing, etc. A flat bottom boat (with no vee in section, at the transom) is faster but the ride is rough, to put it mildly. Deep vee bottoms, usually considered to have about a 20 degree vee or more, came into popularity a few years back but do require more power. In smaller boats they also have a tendency to tilt severely to one side; called chine walking. In addition the small deep vee boat at slow speeds or at rest tends to list from side to side as the passengers move about. Boat bottoms are compromises that veer toward one performance characteristic or another, through an infinite range from a flat bottom to deep vee.

## HYDROPLANE

**A** boat that planes or skims on top of the water surface is classed as a hydroplane and may be a monohull, or multi-planed such as three point and stepped hulls. Some designers include catamarans and tunnel hulls in this category. A hydroplane is intended for speed and does not work well at displacement speeds. Since speed is a function of weight, best performance will be obtained with lightweight hull construction and minimal passenger loading. When powerboats were in their infancy, planning the hulls was virtually out of the question as the available engines were extremely heavy and produced low horsepower. Thus the boats were long and narrow to go thru the water easily. When lightweight and more powerful motors became available the hulls were widened and shortened to take advantage of the ability to plane.

### THREE POINTS

**I**n common usage, the word "hydroplane" usually refers to a three-point. A three point hydroplane has two planing surfaces forward and one aft. The forward points (sponsons) are lower than, and are outboard, of the main hull. The third point is the aft end of the boat bottom and is generally flat. However, at high speed the third point is virtually free of the water, the boat is riding on the prop. Three points have been built with one point forward and two aft but have not been successful to the best of our knowledge. The common three point was as we know it was developed or perhaps better described as popularized about sixty years ago. Today they hold most major speed records for straightaway and circle racing. They have also become increasingly dangerous as they are pushed to higher and higher speeds. The hulls are almost free from the water and the air rushing between thru the forward sponsons creates considerable unstable lift. These hulls are not intended for offshore or rough water conditions they are primarily racing craft. However, GLEN-L has several smaller three points for the young at heart. Again, as with all hydros, weight is important. Heavily loaded, so that the aft end cannot lift out of the water, they are not that fast. It is possible to compensate for heavier driver weights in small outboard models by adding a hydrofoil to the motor.

### STEPPED HULL

**S**teps are transverse breaks in the bottom plane, straight or fan shaped. They create a clean break in the planing surface for reduced skin friction. Like a transom, a step ends a planing surface and the theory is to cause the water to miss contact with forward portion of the following plane. Substantial reduction in wetted surface under relatively smooth water conditions can thus be achieved. There must be a clean break of the water as it leaves the step; with air behind it. If not the step will create drag and even suction.

Various numbers of steps have been used over the years but their current use is not common. Stepped hulls in general, have a poor reputation in rough water. Stepped hulls generally run very flat but many, particularly with a single step tend to porpoise, although a mild porpoise usually increases speed.

## CATAMARANS

**T**he word catamaran itself is unusual, as every other letter is an "a". The word is derived from the Polynesian words "kattu" (to tie) and "maran" (tree). The earliest form was a logical evolution from available materials to provide a stable platform.

**T**he modern catamaran, mostly referred to as a "cat", has twin hulls for planing, side by side, separated by a tunnel or open area. The original Polynesian hulls were symmetrical, in section and were not power boats. Modern power cats have become asymmetrical in most cases. A cat powerboat is a wide stable platform at rest or underway. It turns well, but flat, as opposed to the bank common to vee bottom craft. They are very soft riding in a chop, however, in conditions where the seas can strike the flat area of the tunnel, pounding will occur. Cats are preferably powered with twin motors, one on each hull. Various pods, third hulls, and other appendages have been developed to make single motors more efficient, but they still work better with twin motors. Like deep vees, cats have more draft than flat bottom hulls.

## TUNNEL HULLS

**A** tunnel hull could be designated as a cat, but there is a notable difference. A tunnel hull is similar to a single hull split down the longitudinal centerline and spread apart by a tunnel. The hulls are asymmetrical; the inside surfaces of the tunnels are straight longitudinally and typically vertical. These are primarily fast boats and are commonly used for offshore racing with a rather high tunnel so the rougher seas make less contact with water. These hulls are best for twin motors but have been developed to work well with a single motor with adjustable prop height. The water/air mixture rushing thru the tunnel creates considerable lift and higher speeds in windy conditions can be dangerous. Again although thought of as race boats GLEN-1 has developed small tunnel hulls for fast, safe, enjoyment on protected waters. The turns are flat as opposed to banking but relatively sharp with the hulls seemingly glued to the water. Fun boats!

Note: There is another type of hull that is often called a tunnel hull. These are usually slower hulls, more properly called "tunnel stern" hulls. These hulls have a fore/aft depression or "scoop" in the bottom for the prop. These may be in various configurations, and are meant to allow the hull to run in shallow water.

## SEA SLED

**T**he inverted vee bottomed Sea Sled was developed and patented by Albert Hickman more than 50 years ago. The forward section of the hull looks much like a "W" with the center vee section going to a flat plane at the transom. High claims were made for these boats and though many were justified, it was considered a poor sea boat. The boat's appearance was unusual and combined with the closely held patent, the number built was minimal. The comments made are primarily for historical information as few have been built in recent years.

## HYDROFOILS

**H**ydrofoils are external appendages that support the hull (type may vary) above the water. As with a three-point, the idea is to decrease wetted surface and in theory should be capable of the fastest speeds. The struts, located fore and aft, have fins attached to lift the hull clear of the water as speed increases. The fins are similar to an airplane foil section but modified for water, parallel or slightly canted to the longitudinal waterline. The hull lifts free of the water as speed is increased, and settles into the water as speed is decreased to operate like a conventional boat. These are novelty boats, there have been some that operate successfully, but the moving parts, the vulnerability of the appendages, critical foil shape and angularity, make them impractical for the average builder or boater.

**S**o what's the next advancement in hull design? Sorry, but we don't have a crystal ball. However, be assured it probably won't really be new. Over the generations boatbuilders and designers have added many different appendages to their hull designs. With advertising copy that described their "new" hull as "revolutionary", "a breakthrough", "exclusive design pat pending", "the superior boat of all times has finally arrived". Eureka it's here? Probably not, more likely a revision or modification of an old idea taken out of mothballs, often incorporated more with an eye to marketing than performance. And the advertising copy for this revolutionary innovation... it was most likely written by someone who didn't know his port from his starboard.

**Designer's Notebook: Range - How far can I go on a tank of gas?**

**M**ost boat owners with a power boat of any size want to know how far they can go on a tank of fuel. Simple question? Yes and no. When all the information is available, calculations are simply made. But, there are a lot of variables that enter into the equation: speed desired, horsepower required to obtain that speed, fuel capacity and range desired. Any one of these factors can be calculated if the others are known. Let's go through the information required step by step.

**W**hat speed do you wish to travel? Probably the most economical one. Motor manufacturer's have charts that show the most economical rpm's their motor will operate at. The information will also furnish the horsepower the motor develops at that speed.

**W**e have available speed charts on most designs above 20' that give the speed the boat will obtain with a given shaft horsepower. Note that's shaft horsepower, not maximum horsepower. A diesel engine has a constant and an intermittent rating. You need the constant figure; the output you can safely run the motor at all day. Gasoline motors can usually be figured to produce about 70 percent of their advertised horsepower. Again, the motor manufacturer should be able to supply the accurate figure for their motor.

**F**uel capacity is easy, how much tankage is available for fuel.

**Y**ou need to know how much fuel the motor being used will consume at the horsepower being used. Again, the manufacturer's chart would give this information, however, some rules of thumb can be substituted. A good two cycle outboard will use about one gallon of fuel for each 10 hp produced. An efficient four cycle will use about one gallon of fuel for each 13 hp used. The typical diesel, two or four cycle, will produce about 20 hp for each gallon of fuel used.

**L**et's use a diesel powered 55' trawler with an 840 gallon fuel tank as an example. The craft requires 150 SHP to attain a speed of 12 knots or  $(12 \div .87)$  13.8 MPH or  $(12 \div .54)$  22.2 kilometers per hour. The 150 SHP is divided by 20 to determine the fuel consumed per hour.

$$150 \text{ shp} \div 20 = 7.5 \text{ gals per hour}$$

**T**he fuel capacity is divided by the gallons per hour consumed or 7.5 to obtain the number of hours we can run at the noted speed.

$$\text{gallons of fuel carried} \div \text{gals /hour consumed} = \text{running hours}$$

$$840 \div 7.5 = 112 \text{ running hours}$$

**T**he running hours multiplied by the speed will provide the distance that can be traveled or...

**112 x 12 = 1344 knots range or divide by .87 to obtain miles:**

**1344 ÷ .87 = 1545 statute miles**

**I**s that then the range of this craft? Absolutely not. The figure is theoretical and assumes no rough seas, winds, currents and going from point "A" to point "B" in a straight line. A minimum of 10% extra fuel has been suggested as a compensating factor, but this is not cast in stone. Remember, if you run out of fuel, you can't walk home.

**T**he figures obtained will give an idea of the possibility of making an extended ocean going trip in a powerboat. Those of you who have an idea of gliding over the water at 25 mph to Hawaii or a voyage of similar distance isn't practical in the typical small boat. The weight of the fuel required may exceed that of the boat. Fuel is heavy; gasoline weighs about 6.2 lbs./gallon and diesel 7.1. The 940 gallons of diesel in the example above weighs almost 6000 lbs. not counting the tank weight.

## **Designer's Notebook: Sheet plywood development**

**A**ny boat built with sheet material for planking, plywood, metal or plastic, must be "developable". To be developable it must be either flat or curved to the surface of a cylinder or cone; most often that of a cone. The terms conendric development and developed for a specific sheet material such as plywood are used to describe a hull that can practically be built from sheet material.

**S**uch a surface will either be straight or convex in section. It cannot be compound to form a flare or concave surface although a developed sheet plywood boat may appear to have somewhat concave sections as viewed from different angles. It is also possible to compound the panel endings, in some cases, to introduce a minimal convexity. But a generous flare cannot be made on sheet plywood. Metal can be heated, bumped or formed to introduce compounds but is not a surface that will accommodate sheet plywood.

**M**ake a simple practical test to illustrate a developable surface. Take a sheet of paper and form it into a cylinder and then a cone. Any strip through either is developed and could be covered with a sheet material without buckling. To illustrate what happens when a compound is introduced, lay the sheet of paper on a table with one edge weighted to the table with a ruler. Bend up one corner and the paper will form a nice smooth developed

surface. Now attempt to put a concavity on the underside of the raised corner. The paper kinks, would not take sheet material, and is not developable.

**T**he design of a boat to accommodate sheet material can be rather complex without the use of computers. Initially, the development method used required a point or points with radians emanating and forming segments of a cone or cylinder. The method worked, but attempting to get a desirable boat shape was difficult. Worn out erasers were commonplace. Other methods were introduced and the development was simplified, but it's still a tedious process. And, from practical experience, we've found that a little tug or shift when building the boat can cause variations, usually minor, from the developed surface. The developed surface makes one that can be formed with sheet material. It does not prove that the material being used CAN be bent to that surface. A nice developed surface may be impossible to bend into shape if the material is too thick; then multiple layers may be required.

**A** stitch and glue boat is an excellent example of one with developed surfaces. The sides and bottom are joined along the chine, stem/centerline, and stern and the sheet material bends naturally in shape. Of course the side and bottom shapes need to be developed by calculations, model or mockup. However, the building method doesn't try to force the plywood into a compound shape. The method does lead to some interesting possibilities on models or prototypes on what can be done on the panel endings and how much compounding is practical; not much in most cases.

**G**LEN-L does have boats built from plywood that have compound surfaces. There is a distinction as these boats may be built from plywood but NOT sheet plywood. Construction is cold mold using layers of relatively narrow strips of plywood running diagonally across the boat. These do form a compound surface and some areas (typically aft on planking boats) may be large panels covering a developable surface or with minor compounds.

**T**he term "developed for" (steel, plywood, or aluminum) describes a surface that sheet material can be bent around smoothly without buckling and does not have compound curves. Don't attempt to alter the exterior contour of frames or other sectional members of a sheet plywood boat. If a compound surface is introduced, sheet planking will be impossible or at best impractical to force in place.

## **Designer's Notebook: Bills of Materials & Laminating Schedules**

**I**n our description of what a GLEN-L plan and pattern set consists of, the terms "Fastening Schedule" and "Laminate Schedule" are often used. Perhaps we originated these but we're not sure, not much is new in boating. In any case, we popularized the methods of listing the fastenings required to build and the use of laminates at seams for stitch-n-glue boats.

**A** fastening schedule lists in tabular form what type, size, and the spacing or number of fastenings to use at each junction in the boat. The proper type for each particular joint, the length, diameter, and gauge of fastening to use is specified. For example, junctions may require bolting, screw fastenings, or nails. We also always stipulate that each permanent junction of wood members should be glued; epoxy is currently our first choice.

**A**s an example, bolts are specified by type, diameter, and length. Mostly carriage bolts are used for wood to wood junctions. Screws would be specified as wood type round, oval, or flat head, with flat head the most common. The overall length is specified as well as the gauge (diameter). Nails used are mostly the ring type common to boatbuilding and specified by length and gauge.

**T**he type of material used for fastening is also specified, generally hot dipped galvanized or bronze. Although other materials such as brass or "Monel" are available, we don't list them as an option; the brass are weak and deteriorate rapidly in salt or brackish water, and while Monel or similar metals are excellent the cost is high. We might add that the term "stainless steel" encompasses a wide range of metals, many stainless steel alloys will rust, and most are subject to crevice corrosion. We seldom specify these alloys, as the proper ones are expensive and suppliers are too frequently selling the inferior type for marine fasteners. As a cost saving, particularly on smaller boats, galvanized fasteners are listed. This is NOT the common bright finish electroplate found in the local hardware or building emporiums; these are not acceptable. Galvanized refers to the hot-dipped type where the screws are submerged in a vat or molten galvanizing metals. The hot dipped surface is dull gray after exposure to the elements. This does result in a fastener that may have some burrs or clogged threads; the price paid for a cheaper fastener. It's preferable to not mix fasteners; bronze and galvanized, for example, although with trailerable boats that don't remain in the water, particularly in fresh water, the inter mix doesn't cause a problem.

**E**ach junction of two wooden members is listed with the proper size and also the number or spacing of fasteners required. In practice, more or less fasteners may be needed and a shorter or longer one more adaptable. However, through the years of building many boats, our calculations have proven accurate.

**T**he number of fasteners required for each size and type is then tabulated, with a reasonable safety factor included. This is done with the designers and shop people going over each junction and checking the sizes, spacing and fastener totals.

**T**he result is a complete listing of the type, size, and total number of fasteners required to build the hull, all in tabular form, resulting in the "Fastening Schedule".

**S**titch-n-glue and some other plywood boats require laminations of resin impregnated fiberglass material for seam and other junctions. The "Laminate Schedule" lists the size of the fillet (epoxy resin with thickeners added) to make a cove at inner junctions, which varies with each. The type of fiberglass laminate used at the junction is listed; fiberglass cloth, mat (seldom used), bi-axial or similar material of various types and weights depending on the design requirements. Widths and number of laminations are also listed. Again the totals of resin, hardener, additive fillers, and widths and lengths of fiberglass material required are totaled and noted. No need to search the plans or fine print, everything you need is listed in the Laminate Schedule.

**T**his reminds me of the remarks of a mentor of days gone by about a boat I had recently designed. I was very proud of the fact that many details were given, as the boat was intended to be built by average DIY boatbuilders. He dressed me down with the comment: "Never furnish Bills of Materials and other listings. If a guy can't figure it out himself, he shouldn't be building a boat." I think he was wrong. And, with other designers adapting our procedures and the acceptance by customers of our methods, it doesn't appear there is much doubt. It's a lot of extra work, but this is the right way to do it, and what you get with GLEN-L plans.

## **Designer's Notebook: Setting up - The foundation for building a boat**

**A** boat, unlike a house or garage, does not have flat areas such as a level foundation with vertical uprights (studs), etc.. A boat is curved from most any direction you view it. An artificial foundation must be created. We've developed a method of using a "building form" to substitute for the "foundation" in the analogy with housing construction. This type of building form is used on conventional boatbuilding, wood, metal, or fiberglass but is not required for stitch-n-glue boatbuilding.

**T**he conventionally built plywood boat is built around a series of sectional members called frames or bulkheads. We furnish patterns to make your own or you can buy the ready made assembled GLEN-L Frame Kit that includes all the members listed for the

particular boat; each machined to shape and fully assembled. Our system utilizes an athwartship horizontal reference line across each frame. On most small boats this is the inside surface of the bottom frame member. However, it may be a horizontal cross member at most any selected height on the frame. The frame centerline is perpendicular to this horizontal reference line that we call the "set up level". The set up level is also parallel to the waterline thus forming a horizontal plane level both lengthwise and athwartship through the boat.

**I**f the frames or forms are aligned vertically at 90 degrees to the set up level, horizontally level about this plane, and centered along a longitudinal centerline the variances in the curved boat shape are automatically developed. These frames and other hull framework members are supported by the building form. This is simply a method of supporting the frames and other members such as stem and transom accurately at the set up level. Several types of forms can be used but generally we prefer one developed over the years that has proven simple and accurate. The frames and other members are supported by two longitudinal members (set up members) that are level both lengthwise and athwartship, at a convenient working height, and spaced a width compatible with that of the frames. These longitudinal members are supported to the ground or working areas by upright legs.

**T**he longitudinal set up members may remain as part of the boat. Often they are used as longitudinal supports for floors, cabinetry, etc. If the boat is inboard powered, the set up members double as motor stringers to support the weight and spread it through the structure. Set up members on smaller boats and those outboard powered are used only to build the boat and are not a part of the finished boat.

**I**t is not necessary that the ground or floor is level; only that the set up members be level in both directions. Obviously you don't want to work on the side of a hill but a level surface is not necessary. In days gone by, the typical beginning of construction started with building a level floor to build the boat on. Great idea but expensive and not required with the method we have developed.

**T**he upright legs supporting the set up members may be posts buried in the ground if working on a dirt area. Some will have the advantage of building on a paved area, however, it's doubtful if you want to bust it up and put in posts. To overcome this we use a horizontal base member anchored to the ground with expansion bolts. This base member is used with cross members to support the legs.

**M**ost of our plans detail, dimension, and give instructions for a building form specifically for the boat being built and even list the sizes and materials required. But, the

building wood sizes or type is not critical and any scrap lumber can usually be substituted.

**T**he frames and other parts that form the hull structure must be rigid. Longitudinals will be bent around this framework that will require shoving, pulling, etc.; the structure must not move or the hull shape may be distorted. Fasten the frames securely to the set up members. Upright blocks from the set up members fastened to the frames with screws, bolts, double-headed nails, or clamps will do the job. Or use an athwartship cleat atop the set up members and fastened to the frame or cleat on the frame set up level, fastened by any method listed above. Remember, however, the fasteners will be removed to lift the boat from the building form. Don't position fasteners in such a manner that they are inaccessible and cannot be removed easily.

**B**race the framework with cross braces between frames or block the frames to the floor. Perhaps a ceiling or wall is available for anchoring the bracing to the framework. Usually some of the braces can be removed just before planking the hull. Better to have more bracing than not enough.

**A** well built building form, with accurate frame members properly centered, leveled, and securely held in place, will provide the sound foundation for the construction of the balance. Spend a little time to make it correctly and time spent fixing goofs will be virtually eliminated.

## **Designer's Notebook: Using patterns**

**W**hen you purchase a set of GLEN-L plans, you receive patterns for various members as noted on the particular boat descriptive literature. These patterns usually consist of the exterior contour, often in half section, of the frames or sections, transom, and full templates of items such as the stem, knees, centerboard trunks or other pertinent structural members. These must be duplicated in wood, steel, aluminum or forms for fiberglass depending on the material the particular design is constructed of. Boats built by the Stitch and Glue method often furnish patterns for the planking and most contoured parts in the boat.

**C**omplete instructions are given on how best to use the patterns, but people often overlook or fail to review them adequately. There are several methods to duplicate the patterns to the material. The paper patterns can be laid over the material and a punch or awl used at frequent intervals along the lines to be duplicated. A dressmakers wheel, a round wheel with "teeth", works well on wood. We prefer carbon or transfer paper. Most are familiar with the old carbon paper used in offices but it's only standard paper size and

lots of sheets are required. GLEN-L has recently made available [transfer paper](#), in large 2' x 16' sheets that readily covers large areas in one piece.

**P**atterns are frequently given in half section and a mirror image or opposite side is required. This is easily done with the transfer paper. Lay the half section pattern to be duplicated over the material used with duplicating side of transfer paper on the material and another duplicating side up to the paper pattern. Use a pencil and trace the contour. The line will be transferred to the material and the part mirror duplicated to the underside of the paper pattern simultaneously and both halves will be identical. The hole punching method will give the same results but the transfer paper is easier and gives a solid positive line on the material being duplicated.

**M**any segments of patterns are straight lines. There is no need to duplicate these the full length of the line; mark the endings only, we use a well defined "dot" with a small circle around at either end of a straight line. When the transfer paper is removed the dots are connected with a straight edge directly on the material.

## **Designer's Notebook: Fitting the chine**

**A** chine in a boat is the backing member of the side and bottom planking and is typical on a hard chine hull, meaning an abrupt angle change from bottom to side, not a radius or round shape. In other words, the chine is the usual longitudinal backing typical on vee bottom boats. The backing member is properly a chine "log" but over the years the single word chine has become commonly used.

**T**here are numerous methods of making chines but this discussion will cover the typical solid wood chine on a runabout or sailboat built with sheet plywood or diagonally cold-molded, although the suggestions given will apply to other craft.

**T**he lumber used for chines, should be selected with care; good, clear, straight-grain stock, knot free, neither over-dried nor wet. The species of wood can vary widely, but it should accept glue and fasteners well. A chine is highly stressed and soft sugar pines or similar wood should not be considered.

**T**he chine typically extends from stem to stern, preferably is a single piece, and should be at least a foot longer than the installed member. Usual practice is to have the side of the chine parallel to the side frame, although this is not always the case. Sufficient landing must be provided for both the side and bottom planking. Typically, the side planking is lapped by the bottom in the aft section while butting together near the stem. The member will require bending and twisting to force it in place. Each frame should be

notched and beveled so the chine fits tightly against each of the frames and transom. The chine should bend naturally against each frame so that after fairing (beveling), adequate stock is available for fastening the bottom and sides. The bend may be stiff, but should scribe a clean fair line without dips or humps.

**B**ending and shoving the chine exerts considerable stress on the hull framework so be sure the structure is well braced and won't move. Bending in the chine for left and right sides simultaneously is desirable to equalize stress. Some, however, feel doing one at a time is preferable and the lesson learned on the first makes the opposite sides easier.

**A** few hints on bending the chine in place. Fit the junction with the stem first leaving overhang at the transom. It'll probably take several cuts to properly fit the chine to the stem. Use clamps to hold the frames in the frame notches in the aft section. C or bar clamps anchored to the forward portion of the chine will provide leverage and a handle to bend and twist the chine against the stem while fitting. The actual position of the chine on the stem is not

critical. Twisting the chine will alter its ending on the stem. Move the chine at the stem up or down so it forms to the frames and mates flat against the stem contour. This can be visually illustrated by using a 1/4" plywood strip the width of the chine extending aft of the stem a frame or so to represent what the actual chine must accomplish. The thin plywood will exaggerate what will take place when the solid member used is bent in place. Sometimes the chine will simply not mate to the forward frame so it parallels the side. A small amount can be faired off but realize an excessive amount may destroy the member's integrity. The following assumes the boat is being built upside-down. If the top edge of the chine does not mate solidly against the forward frames, try twisting the chine and letting it land on the stem closer to the sheer edge. If the chine lower edge projects, try moving the chine/stem junction the reverse direction. If you have the chine in place and one of the above conditions still exists, all is not lost. Shims on the inner or outer surface can be used to add material to the chine so it can be faired properly. Finish an outer shim in a long taper so the transition from chine to shim is a smooth fair plane.



The forward frame is beveled so that the chine will have a flat landing.



**T**he chine sides to the stem in a long compound taper as it junctions against the stem side; typical construction for this type of craft. However, a continuous flat area for the side and bottom planking, stem, and chine must result after fairing. Easier said than understood by most. The stem is usually partially beveled, but final trimming done after the chine is permanently installed. If the chine protrudes too far, it can be faired to a certain extent; if set in too far, a shim will be required.



**T**he photo above illustrates a plywood fixture we have found helpful to determine the position of the chine on the stem side. Keep in mind what has been stated in the foregoing. The bottom and side must mate to the stem and chine on a continuous surface.

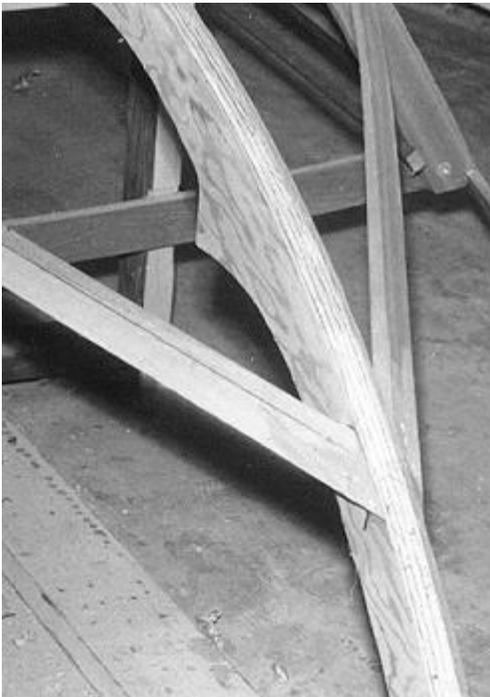
The chine can't be located on the stem so that the stem/chine junction cannot be faired to a flat plane. Take small pieces of plywood and simulate the side and bottom joining on the stem to help visualize what the finished junction will look like.



**A**fter the chine is fitted, pre-drill screw holes for the stem ending, coat all mating surfaces with glue, preferably epoxy. Have a helper hold the chine obliquely away from the boat and position the chine at the stem with a single screw. Use a clamp, rope, Spanish windlass, or braces to hold the chine against the stem if the screw junction is not adequate. Spring the chine around the boat, and when in place, drive a second (or more) screw through the chine into the stem then progressively fasten into the frames. Often, screws holding the chines into the forward frames are omitted at this stage, and the member clamped in place or a finishing nail in a pre-drilled hole or a thin drywall screw. If a large countersunk hole is drilled for a screw, at the point of severe bending, the chine will probably break. After the glue has set and the boat is planked, the screw fastening can be installed. Keep bending the chine after fastening into the frames. Most prefer to leave the chine extending past the transom, trimming to fit, when most of the fasteners are holding the chine to the frames.



**W**e haven't had to steam chines in place on any of the GLEN-L prototypes. However, we choose the lumber with care and have a big stock to select from. If the member seems difficult to bend, the chine can be forced in place as far as possible. Wrap the area of greatest stress with old towels, pour boiling hot water over the area, and immediately bend in place as far as practical. The process can be repeated several times if necessary; bending the chine progressively forcing it in place. When released, the chine will retain a partial set but can be re-bent in place easier.



**M**ost who have trouble bending in the chine have not thought through the process. And of course as described above, you can usually fix a goof with shims. But, that should not be necessary. Use a short length of the chine to see how it fits against the stem. Use scraps of plywood to simulate how the bottom and sides must mate to the stem and chine. If you fully understand how the chine mates at the stem and frames and how the side and bottom must lay flat against the member, the actual process becomes easier. In other words, THINK before you start fitting the chine in place.

[Chine drawings. http://www.glen-l.com/weblettr/webletters-6/images6/wl49-chine.jpg](http://www.glen-l.com/weblettr/webletters-6/images6/wl49-chine.jpg)

## **Designer's Notebook: Bigger is better?**

**W**e've always been mystified by large people, six foot plus and more than 250 lbs. who wish to build the smallest boat. Or the person who wishes to build a boat to carry himself, a passenger (both heavyweights) a dog, decoys, and probably several 12 packs in a boat of about 10'... and be capable of being out in four foot seas. Then there is the prospective builder who wants to build a small hydroplane, carry a driver, observer, and pull a skier. Ridiculous, but we are amazed at what people expect of a small boat.

**W**hen you contemplate building a small boat and you are edging into any of the above examples, investigate. The beam and length of the boat is in our catalog. Use a string and outline the size on the living room carpet or similar area. Get seated in the outline. Simulate the gear and passengers that may be aboard. Be practical. Do you really want to be bouncing across the water in a boat this size? Remember too, this boat is not on that level, flat, non-moving carpet. You must get into this craft that is going to tip, possibly severely, when you get aboard and move about. Is the available space adequate for your needs?

**M**any would-be builders want to build a small boat and increase the horsepower we have listed. The power we give in most cases is conservative, but based on USCG requirements. See [WebLetter 43](#). In addition, you may not be able to get insurance if the boat is overpowered. Again, be practical. A larger motor weighs more and, if carried to the extreme, can be downright dangerous. It's generally not the hull strength; a reasonable increase should not be structurally harmful. However, overpowering can cause capsizing or other dangerous handling conditions.

**N**o we are not stating you must build a larger boat. We're just saying realize the limitations. A slightly larger boat will not add appreciably to the cost. Time and difficulty

in building changes little. In fact, a smaller boat usually has sharper bends, and springing in longitudinals may be more difficult.

**T**o be honest, I like small boats. The feel of skimming over the water is exhilarating and fun. Sailing alone in a small sailboat with a brisk breeze is a challenge and the maneuverability is a joy. I like the plop plop of the oars or paddles as I skim through the water in a small boat in the early morning or at dusk. And I like to show my small boat transom to some guy in a multi-thousand dollar boat. When built and used for their purpose, small boats are all fun. But please don't expect more than a small boat is capable of.

**S**ee you on the water in MY small boat!

## **Designer's Notebook: Fairing Tools**

**F**airing, as referred to in boating and as it applies to this discussion, means angling, beveling, and shaping the framework of a boat so the planking or decking will lie flat to all members and not just rest on edges. Fairing is required on most wooden boats except possibly stitch-n-glue craft where the process is virtually, but usually not completely, eliminated. The amount of fairing required varies. A flat bottom rowboat won't require the shaping a vee bottom hull with compound curvatures will.

**A**fter the boat is completely framed and ready for fairing, fear strikes many neophytes. Not that fairing is difficult, it isn't, but it is confusing for the first time builder. Taken a small step at a time and thinking the process through simplifies the project. Some builders, however, start whacking away without the faintest conception of what must take place.

**I**nstalling longitudinal battens AFTER fairing is overlooked by many. It's easier to notch the battens into frames or bulkheads from a faired surface to the exact depth required. A hand held circular saw, or enlarged base router set to the required depth cuts the notches accurately and quickly. Battens installed after fairing should require minimal shaping while those installed from unfaired surfaces could require unneeded and undesirable removal of stock.

**T**he purpose of fairing is to shape the framework so the mating member, deck or planking rests firmly in place. Take a couple of battens or strips of plywood of width to extend half the beam of the hull, to simulate how the planking must mate to the framework. When working on the bottom, bend the batten athwartship from keel to chine. It will be apparent that some high points will need to be faired if the strip simulating the

planking is to lie flat. Do this along the bottom and from chine to sheer on the sides. Bend the strip longitudinally over several forward frames and the stem. Typically, a lot of beveling will be required along the stem, and note that most angles are ever changing. If the angles were constant, they could be pre-cut. In conjunction with, or after rough fairing, simulate the planking on the boat with sheets of plywood or portions of the planking used. Visually seeing what fairing is required and understanding it will make fairing much easier.

**A** common fairing method simulates the bottom planking, as described above, that will lie on a chine for example. A file is used to make a notch in the chine to the angle that would be required so the planking would lie flat. This procedure can be repeatedly done along the chine and will serve as a guideline as to the amount of material that must be removed. The stem and other areas can be done in this same manner. Just remember, the plywood, solid stock, cold mold, strip, or carvel planking must mate solidly to each supporting framework member.

**A**fter doing some fairing, each individual develops a favorite tool (or tools) that does the task efficiently. Some use only hand tools, others primarily portable power tools. In almost all cases, a good fairing job will require the last phase to be done by hand.

**L**et's consider the area that requires the most fairing, usually the stem that in many of our designs is plywood laminations. Trimming a bevel on a long plywood edge with a hand wood plane is slow work. A good husky wood rasp will take off a lot of material in a hurry. One professional boatbuilder, who had formerly been a shingler, used his razor sharp hatchet, to rough trim the angles required. This is much like the wooden shipbuilder who uses an adz for rough trimming, some with amazing accuracy. Rough finishing is still required, usually with a hand plane or possibly a file.

**A** power plane can remove a lot of material in a hurry, but it is easy to remove too much. The favorite power tool for rough fairing used in our shops is the disc sander with coarse sandpaper. It can take off a heap of material in a hurry, but again, removing too much material is easy. Other sanders are usually reserved for finish work. Some will use a belt sander and although it can remove material quickly, it's difficult not to get a rounded surface or undercuts from the belt edge. A router or belt sander mounted on a jig has its advocates but, in most cases, the fairing can be done by other means quicker than a fixture and tool can be set up. But again, if you have a special tool and are proficient in its use, it may be preferable for you. Getting the fairing done correctly is the important task, not how it's done.

**I**n our shops we finish the fairing with a hand plane followed with a thorough sanding with coarse paper. The sanding is done with a sanding belt cut to make a long single

piece fastened to a flat board. Pushed back and forth diagonally across the boat helps smooth any projections. However, if the athwartship sections are convex, concave or reverse curves, the sanding board must be used in varying fore and aft directions. Care must be taken so the beveled edges are fair. The curved surfaces must be true curves without humps or dips.

**W**hat if you goof? If you butchered a deep dip in the member, fill it with a wooden shim epoxy glued in place. Remove any humps, but take care, often a hump is concealing a dip on either side. Stand back, sight along the lines, hold your face sideways, upside down, and every which way. From any angle the surfaces must be fair.

**S**till getting a positive surface for the planking or joining member can be difficult. Modern technology has come to the rescue. Epoxy resin (POXY SHIELD) with thickeners, silica or microspheres, will fill reasonable gaps and still have structural integrity. Care is required if, for example, a dip is being filled with thickened epoxy. If screws are driven fully home, the planking or mating member will undoubtedly follow the dip. To prevent this, use a wax or plastic covered wood strip fastened at the ends to bridge the gap and omit fasteners in the filled area until after the adhesive cures.

**H**ow long does fairing take? How far is up? A good boatbuilder with the correct power and hand tools will probably fair a typical 16' plywood boat in two hours or less. Could you do the fairing in this time? Very doubtful, perhaps a half day or even a full day would be more like it.

## **Designer's Notebook: Cold-molded history**

**M**any feel that building a boat by the cold-molded method is new and revolutionary. The cold-molding process as used in this dissertation is using thin multiple laminations of relatively narrow (about 6") wood or plywood, bent over a form and progressively glued together. The laminations generally cross one another at oblique angles with a minimum of two or more layers. The process lends itself especially to round bilge boats so the laminations can extend from keel to sheer without a seam. However, the use of cold-molding on vee bottom boats with a reinforcing chine is also widely used.

**T**he cold-molded method is essentially making plywood over a form with the advantage that some compound curves can be introduced. It also provides a smooth, leak proof,

monocoque structure that is incredibly strong for its weight. The possibility of leaking between seams is virtually eliminated as each junction is backed with another laminate.

**W**hen and who first started building cold-molded boats is unknown. During WW II the method was used on PT boats, and many were built. During this same era the British built the cold-mold process de Havilland "Mosquito" twin engine bomber. And the famous "Spruce Goose" was built by Hughes Aircraft under the leadership of Howard Hughes by the cold-mold method. True, the amphibious airplane only flew once for a short distance, but the structure remains solid.

**A**bout the mid-forties, many cold molded hulls were commercially produced. The process was somewhat involved and tooling costs were high. This was not for the "mom and pop" boatyard.

**T**he typical cold-molded hull was usually under 20' to cover the more popular range. Typically five to seven laminations of 1/16" mahogany or spruce veneers in 3" to 6" widths were used. These strips were coated with phenolic resin type glue and allowed to dry. The strips were applied over a mandrel the shape of the boat and stapled in place. The structure was then placed in an airtight bag and a vacuum applied to force the laminations together; then rolled into a large oven or autoclave and baked under high steam and heat to cure the adhesive. The hull was then removed and the exterior staples removed and a filler forced into seams to cover minor imperfections. The formed hull was then placed in a fixture to keep it in alignment while the transom and other members were installed. Interior reinforcement was minimal and the interior clear of any obstructions; quite unusual for the time.

**D**ue to the tooling cost, U S Molded Shapes, Inc. and a few others produced stock hulls to 20' and sold them to other companies to finish out and market.

**E**arly in the fifties these boats were available, on a limited scale, to the home builder to finish. Mass production of this type of construction virtually ended with the advent of fiberglass boats. However, the durability of these hulls was never questioned and many are still in use today.

**C**old-mold construction of a somewhat different type was used to build the popular mahogany runabouts such as Chris Craft, Century, Hacker, and others. These boats, when planked with solid planks with batten seam construction, leaked until they were in the water long enough to swell the seams. Transporting the boat to varying locations was a chore as the boats dried out while on the trailer and might take a day or so after launching to become watertight. The glues of the day were not actual adhesives; they were more of

a caulking mastic and could be pulled apart with little effort. In an effort to solve the problem and possibly to make the final longitudinal planking thinner and easier to bend, the bottoms were diagonal planked followed with the typical longitudinal planks. The boats still leaked. Some tried canvas between the lamination, but after a time the canvas deteriorated and the old problem still existed.

**T**oday most of the runabout mahogany boats built use a diagonal underlayment, but with at least two laminations, typically plywood, followed by thinner longitudinal solid wood planks. Plywood has been used for the final planks of these runabouts, but the outer veneer is very thin and the general appearance is not as appealing. These hulls don't leak due primarily to the epoxy adhesive, usually with thickeners used between the laminations. Encapsulation of each piece and final epoxy coating has eliminated most of the older problems.

**B**uilding cold-molded round bilge boats as were manufactured yesteryear has been modified; expensive mandrels, air bags and autoclaves are eliminated and building a single boat is practical. The diagonal laminations are bent over a hull framework to provide the hull shape and progressively stapled in place with thickened epoxy between each lamination. Epoxy with thickeners fills minor voids and still maintains structural integrity. It's a simple way to build and is thought by most to be easier to do but requires more time. The vacuum airbag is often used to assure a positive bond between the laminations.

**A**s is often the case, the old timers had the right idea. The problem was that the adhesives of the day were complex and costly to use. Epoxy adhesives and modern methods have popularized cold-molding, which is now thought of as a new procedure by many builders.

**I**f you are considering building a boat, consider the cold-molding method. It's not the total answer for many boats, but well worth considering for many.

**Designer's Notebook: The V-Drive evolution..circa 1953 to ?**



**T**he MISSILE, featured in this WebLetter, was created as part of an evolution in fast small boat design. The following facts are, as we remember them. Documented information (at least to our knowledge) is not available.

**I**n the early fifties, WWII was behind us and with the availability of higher horsepower motors, the interest in fast boats heightened. In Southern California, going fast meant being able to go faster than the next guy. This phenomenon was similar to the interest in street "hot rod" cars of the era. Develop something that will "wup" the competition was the word; cars or boats.

**H**owever, the typical fast inboard runabout of that era was an in-line inboard motor, centrally located in a finely finished mahogany planked hull. Top speed was in the 40-50 MPH bracket. The faster these boats were pushed, the more the bow dropped and, combined with the deep forefoot common to runabouts of the era, became dangerous.

**T**he more powerful motors were being reworked to put out even more horses. Obviously, something had to be done to the hulls. It was learned that shifting the major weight (motor) aft, eliminating the deep forefoot, and making the aft sections virtually flat, made the hulls capable of more speed without the dangerous handling caused by the deep forefoot. Who developed this change? It's virtually impossible to know for sure. The old boating adage "nothing is new in boating" applies here. In our area, and to our knowledge, the boat type was primarily popular in the So Cal area first and the credit goes to Joe Mandella, a builder of finely crafted mahogany runabouts.

**J**oe had a young client who was a real speed nut (name omitted to protect the guilty), who had graduated from the street rod group. His father evidently felt that fast boating was safer than street dragging. Probably the speeding tickets incurred from street racing also helped to get his monetary support.

**A**nway, Pop bankrolled several boats built by Joe, each that would hopefully be faster than the last. Joe, the fine craftsman, was up to the task and produced quite a few hulls that were powered with inboard stern mounted motors, connected to a v-drive; the stern drive was not commonly available. He switched from planked hulls to sheet plywood planking both for lightweight and structural integrity. The boats sold, after all, the

competition "rodders" wanted to go faster too. And of course, this spawned other innovative boatbuilders (copy cats?).

**G**LLEN-L had a history of messing around with fast runabouts, so using the new innovations and incorporating some of our own, we designed the 16' 6" HOT ROD inboard with stern mounted motor connected to a v-drive. Plans had not previously been available for this type of craft so the response was instantaneous. The HOT ROD also started many individuals in the boatbuilding business; copies of the HOT ROD appeared under several company names. Some had subtle modifications; most were blatant copies, "designed" by the builder. GLEN-L has probably designed more of these craft than any other designer. TORNADO, 18'6", THUNDERBOLT, 17'3", DRAGSTER, 18' 4", RAMPAGE 18', and RENEGADE, 20'8" are all of this type.

**A**s an amusing aside: we heard of a builder who was producing a boat that looked very much like our HOT ROD design. Visiting the shop (our company affiliation not known to the builder) we were surprised to see our HOT ROD plan displayed on the wall with all identifying information cut away. When told that it looked like a GLEN-L design, the builder explained they were *his* drawings and that GLEN-L had copied the HOT ROD from him. Again name omitted to protect the guilty.

**W**e were also told that Joe Mandella felt that we had duplicated his boat and that he "was going to club us over the head with a 2" x 4" if he ever saw us". However, a visit with Joe, showing him our plans assured him our design, although of the same type, was not a copy.

**A**s this type of boat progressed, the terminology of SK or flat bottom was used. The initial boat hulls were plywood with similar features, flat or almost flat bottom at the transom, minimal vee forward, and tumblehome at the transom. The decks and cowl became the crowning feature. Plywood with exotic veneers such as all types of mahogany, walnut, monkey pod, zebra wood, or anything else that no other builder used, were common. All was fiberglassed, most by professionals that did only decks for the builders. And the upholstery; not just plain old flat cushions, but beautiful tuck and roll with heavily padded cockpit perimeters. Top this off with a polished, finned, accessory equipped, exposed motor (it would be sacrilege to try to conceal it), add a custom trailer with chrome accessories and you had a package everyone could appreciate. Fiberglass hulls eventually replaced those production hulls built of plywood, but for several years the fine crafted wood deck was still used.

**T**he MISSILE followed the HOT ROD and was specifically designed to accommodate the popular small block Chevy V8 motor. The 265-283 cu. in. motor has since grown in cubic inches and horsepower. The MISSILE at a 16' length was shorter than was typical.

People always seem to want small go-fast boats and the MISSILE filled the bill. The original was clocked at just under 70 mph powered with a small block that had been hopped up a little, ignition, cam, carburetors etc. At top speed the boat, in our opinion, was a little too loose and we felt keeping it well under that figure would be desirable. However, the public paid no heed and large motors pushed the boat even faster. The MISSILE was a popular boat, featured on the cover of our current catalog of that era and reviewed in several national magazines. But, speeds in excess of what we had planned, led us to discontinue it. We had neither reports of structural failures nor high speed accidents, BUT, we felt there was a high potential.

**A**fter we went on the Internet, we received many reports of builders and owners of the MISSILE. All highly complimentary, some being rebuilt, most quite old. And, most complaining that it was no longer listed in our Internet catalog. So, by popular demand, back it came. Yes we still feel the same; keep the speed reasonable and it's a fine boat.

**B**ut then, what do we know?

## **Designer's Notebook: How to make a Cutwater**

**I**n the hey day of the mahogany runabout as put out by Chris Craft, Garwood, and others, a protecting metal cap was used at the stem of the boat called a "cutwater" (See photo below).



**C**utwaters were used on work boats to protect the bow and this carried through to stylish runabouts... chrome plated, of course. Some of the fancier cutwaters swooped back from about midpoint to the top to form a rearward facing arrow or other scroll ending. It was also common practice to cover the side at the transom ending with a chrome plated strip. These too often had a contour or curvature on the forward edge.

**M**any building today wish to emulate the cutwater, but little information exists as to how they were made. The following describes how some builders made their cutwater

from sheet stock such as copper or brass: a malleable alloy that could be formed and easily brazed, seldom less than  $3/32$ " in thickness.

**C**utwaters should be made prior to the finishing of the boat as some shaping of the wood beneath may be required to allow for the welds. Cutwaters are made in two halves joined by welding on the stem centerline. A template of cardboard is made for each side of the boat meeting over the stem centerline with aft end contoured to suit. Mark the points that will require screws to hold the cutwater in place and countersink the metal halves before assembly for the half oval or flat head screws to be used.

**W**ith the two cutwater halves taped on the boat, start at the sheer and measure down in increments of 8" more or less. At each of these points, draw on the cardboard template a line aft that is approximately tangent to the stem arc; also mark such a line on the side of the boat.

**A** frame or form in the shape of a vee must be made for each of these points. One method is to use two pieces of wood,  $1/4$ " x 2" x 12" plywood works well, pivoting from one end on a nail or screw driven through both to form an adjustable vee. This fixture is used at each point marked on the cardboard to determine the shape of the frame or form that is required at each section. A frame to that vee is made from  $3/4$ " plywood or 1" solid lumber.

**T**he two metal halves for the cutwater are cut to shape, a saber saw with proper blade works, but slowly. Be sure to mark the cross sections drawn on the template to the metal. Use the frames made at each section to form the varying vee shape of the cutwater. Fasten the metal to the form with at least two screws per frame side. These can also be used to fasten the finished cutwater to the boat or brazed over. The results should be two halves of metal joined along the centerline with varying angularity that match the vee at the bow of the boat.

**T**he centerline seam is brazed together, preferably tack brazing at frequent intervals. The cutwater can then be checked to the bow of the boat. It should fit very closely, but a hammer may be required to form the cutwater more closely to the bow shape. Use as large a block of wood as practical atop the metal to spread the pounding over a large area and prevent denting the metal. It may be necessary to use some screws to force the cutwater to the stem contour.

**W**hen all is fitted, braze the cutwater seam and grind the seam smooth. The cutwater is then taken to a plating company, polished and then chromed.

Put it on the bow of gleaming natural finished boat and the result is a one of a kind custom fitted cutwater that will draw lots of attention. Yes, it's a lot of work, but the result is worth it.

## Designer's Notebook: About buttocks, waterlines and diagonals

This discussion primarily applies to vee bottom boats, although the terminology is similar to those with a round bilge.

The terms buttocks (butt), waterlines (wl), and diagonals (diag) are referred to on the "Lines Drawing" of a set of plans. Unless the boat is being lofted, they will have little purpose as far as building the boat is concerned. However, understanding why these lines are important, and their purpose will enable a builder to better understand how the lines of a boat are generated.

The "Lines Drawing" of a boat will basically consist of three views: *Plan* or top view, *Profile* or side view, and cross *Sections* taken through the hull at intervals commonly called stations, which usually coincide with the location of the frames or forms. Three primary lines dictate the shape of the typical vee bottom boat: *chine*, junction of the side and bottom planking; *sheer*, top edge of the side planking; and *keel*, the junction of the bottom planking along the centerline.

The keel definition is loosely defined to simplify the description. Often this line is called *fairbody*, the junction of the outside of the planking as it meets the keel.

If the section lines, chine to sheer and chine to keel, are straight, no other lines are required to illustrate the shape of the boat. However, most craft will have some curvature of the sides or bottom as shown in section. Most builders think of a sheet plywood boat as having straight sections; some may, but most will be of convex shape. Concavity is not practical unless it is at the extreme bow or stern, usually minimal in nature.

**B**uttocks are used to show the amount of deviation from a straight line the bottom sections (chine to keel) have. Buttocks are shown in plan view as straight lines parallel to the keel, usually two or three at least on each side of the boat. In section view they are straight vertical lines parallel to the centerline and spaced from the centerline identical to those drawn on the plan view. In profile they are curved lines that illustrate the height the buttock crosses the section line. These curved lines must be smooth and fair. Altering

section lines and re-fairing the profile buttock line is an ongoing process. When properly faired, the lines in section and profile must be smooth flowing and fair.

**H**owever, the section line may intersect a buttock at such an angle that determining the exact point is difficult. To improve accuracy, a **diagonal** is used, shown as a straight line in section, usually to cross the planking as close to 90 degrees as possible. One is usually at forty five degrees to the centerline, others as required to make the definition point of a crossing line accurate. The distance is plotted from the intersection of the diagonal at the centerline, along the diagonal to the planking, at each section of the plan view. This should result in the plan view diagonal being a fair curving line. If not, the entire process is repeated, adjusting the points as required to assure each buttock and diagonal are fair lines and the bottom sections smooth flowing lines.

**W**aterlines are shown in profile as straight lines parallel to the base or reference line that in turn is at right angles to the station perpendiculars. Usually a minimum of two and usually more are used to define the side contour at each section. They must be smooth curving lines on the plan view and develop smooth curves on the sides as shown on the section views. The points of curved lines are shifted to accomplish this; this is quite similar to what was done for the bottom.

**S**ection lines are the frames or forms that shape the boat. If the lines are not accurate, the boat may have unsightly dips or bumps that will be an eyesore and detrimental to performance.

**T**he finished lines are still inaccurate. On a small scale a pencil line width may represent an 1/8" or more. To finally true up the lines and get accurate sections, the boat must be lofted and this means going through the same process in full scale but, of course, the small scale drawing will make the task easier. Many years ago Glen-L decided that lofting was not that easy for most builders, nor something they really wanted to do. Imagine laying even the smallest boat in actual size, incorporating all views shown in the "Lines Drawing" for the boat.

**S**o, when building with Glen-L plans and patterns, you can forget all of the above and not really care what a diagonal or buttock is; you go directly to building the boat!

## **Designer's Notebook: Porpoise, what is it?**

**P**laning boats can have a condition where the boat "bounces" in the planing attitude and will longitudinally teeter totter back and forth. In severe cases the boat can leap clear of the water. In either case, the ride is rough and uncomfortable. A small amount of porpoise

is desirable in faster boats as they shouldn't be glued to the water for maximum speed. For most pleasure boats, a porpoise is a pain in the posterior both literally and actually.

**T**wo factors tend to make a planing boat porpoise; weight distribution and/or a warped bottom.

## Weight distribution

**A** planing boat that has excessive weight at the transom will tend to porpoise. Underway the excess transom weight makes the boat go down by the transom, but then forward speed overcomes the weight and the bow drops, most often slamming down. This condition repeats itself time and again. The boat is simply out of balance.

**T**he cure is to remove weight from the transom. Shift any movable weight forward. Batteries, fuel or bait tanks, even passengers if sitting near the transom. *Note in this case, weight is REMOVED from the transom*, adding weight forward to bring the boat in balance is not desirable.

## Warped bottom

**T**he fore and aft bottom lines of a fast boat are straight in the aft section; they do not curve upward near or at the transom; commonly called a rocker. Our instructions and drawings generally emphasize the importance of straight lines in this area, but it's easy to goof. We've erred, and we know better. It's easy to let the transom drop down a little when building bottom side up. Don't let it happen; check and recheck. A straight edge along the keel and parallel to it outboard must be straight without gaps between it and the bottom, particularly at the transom. Even a rounded corner at the transom/bottom junction can cause a porpoise. It is common practice to radius this edge when fiberglassing the boat, as the cloth will not readily form around a sharp corner. For top performance, this rounded edge must be eliminated. This is usually achieved by applying additional layers of scrap glass cloth and grinding the edge to a crisp corner.

**I**f either of the above conditions are causing porpoising in your boat, the best solution is to correct it.

**T**rim tabs or cavitation plates can also correct the condition, if not too severe. These are often used on faster boats to control bottom defects or disadvantageous weight distribution.

## **Designer's Notebook: Did you ever make a mistake?**

**O**bviously, if you said, "No" you are telling a big fat lie; we all make mistakes. Some are minor, some quite stupid, but in the case of boatbuilding, most are correctable.

**O**ver the years we've heard of many mistakes builders have made in building their boat. The following lists a few examples that should provide a snicker and perhaps a good feeling that the mistake you just made pales in significance to the goofs others have made.

**A** few years ago a fellow dropped by and stated he had made the frames but couldn't understand what to do next. He had several frames crammed into his car. And they were beautifully made, top grade mahogany, neat (no lumps of glue) everything indicated fine workmanship. BUT, the frames had been made in halves. Why? The patterns showed only half the frame. He ignored the drawings and instructions that stated the patterns were in half section symmetrical about the centerline. He was such a nice guy too. But, yes, he did complete the boat and did an excellent job.

**T**hen there was the guy who couldn't bend in the longitudinal sheer member without breaking it. Questions as to the type of material and quality, size of member, large holes for fasteners at frames, and other pertinent questions were asked. Not an incorrect answer! The next step was to review exactly what he'd done. Everything was great UNTIL he described notching for the angularity, particularly in the forward frames. Typical construction described in the plans and pictorials illustrate beveling the frames so the longitudinal member fits flat. BUT, he decided notching the longitudinal was easier. This in turn weakened the member to the point it would virtually break with almost any bend. When the correct method was explained he simply hung up the phone and cut the conversation short.

**T**he best or worse, depending on the outlook, was the builder who made a mistake and did the almost impossible with no good way to correct the error. In many designs, the fabricated frames are mounted on longitudinal "set up" members that may or may not remain in the finished boat. Many of these set up members are tapered or cut away so battens or the plywood planking won't contact them. A builder phoned and stated he had the hull finished but a bump, quite large, protruded from the forward bottom section of the boat. This was a new problem, and, for a while we were mystified; then the light went

on; could he have possibly forgotten (?) to trim the end of the set up member as shown. Yep, that's what he'd done. Now was our turn to question him. How did he ever bend the planking around the bow without breaking it. The builder admitted that it was a tough bend and had taken several helpers and application of hot water to spring in place. From a logical standpoint the bend couldn't (?) be made. How did he fix the goof? We never found out.

**T**he above examples are extremes. Most mistakes are minor and readily corrected. But, just perhaps, the above examples make that last goof made in your boatbuilding project not so bad after all.

## **Designer's Notebook: A DIY company**

**D**uring a recent lunch break, we were sitting around shooting the bull and someone brought up the popularity of the DO-IT-YOURSELF movement. It's so popular the designation DIY is commonplace and how, as a company, Glen-L personifies this movement.

**A**s a small company we can't afford many of the luxuries of large corporations, but perhaps that's a good thing. Advertising comes to mind. We prepare our own advertising, write the copy, take the photos, set the copy, etc. Taking this load away from us would free up time. But, can someone else write copy about our company? We surely know it best and perhaps our prose isn't always correct, but it seems to get our point over.

**W**e, of course, do the designing in house, write the instructions and catalog information, and work out the kits to be furnished. If a Frame Kit is to be made, the designers and shop people coordinate the details. If the boat is built, again it's all done by us, DIY. Many don't realize the custom fittings we make. We make patterns for sand cast parts such as fins, and sailboat fittings such as mast bases, etc. If we need a certain part and it isn't available or prohibitive in cost, we consider making it.

**A** recent case in point is our exposed steering drum for small boats. The manufacturer went out of business and we still had a demand. A pattern for the castings required would be expensive to make; even defrayed over a reasonable number of sales, it wasn't practical. So DIY. Fortunately we have the ability to

make patterns for sand castings. So we designed an improved version of the unit, and made the patterns. Even with outside foundry work and machining (we neither have a foundry nor machine shop), the total cost to the consumer, you guys out there, was very fair.

**W**hen we decided to make some videos on boating subjects we called on a Hollywood group of specialists. Sure they could do it, at 5,000 bucks a day. So DIY. We wrote the text, outlined and shot the scenes, edited the entire works and made masters at a recording studio. And our cost was considerably less than thousands per day. We couldn't have done videos and offered them at a decent price otherwise.

**O**ur books are another example. When we considered writing our first book, we contacted the Eastern publishing houses and they were very cooperative. They would edit our text, prepare and print the book and distribute it. Great? Not so, we would be charged for all these service and we would receive a small royalty on each book sold; no guarantee that any would be sold. So again DIY. Overnight we became publishers doing everything the big houses did ourselves and we produced other books as well. Can you the consumer tell if this is a DIY project? Absolutely not. Are we able able to provide our books for less? Positively yes.

**M**any nice comments have been received regarding our website. This is a DIY project that is never ending. Barry, our Webmaster, designed the site, writes the copy etc. Yes he did take some classes in the beginning, but concentration, diligence, and a need to know attitude helped. Are we now experts in the field? Far from it, but compare our site to those prepared (costly) ones done by the pros. Not much difference, but then we know what is required and what must be done to make those who hit our site customers (we hope).

**W**hat DIY projects do we have pending? Wait and see, but you can bet that something will be required that we can't buy or sell at a price that will make customers, not drive them away.

## **Designer's Notebook: Unusual Uses for Poxy-Shield**

**T**heory is great but experience is the best teacher. At Glen-L we are constantly experimenting as a matter of business, but also in our private lives.

**I** have a small farm, ranch, or whatever with a pond. I have a golf cart, which I use as a carry all. On the space for the golf clubs I decided a removable box to carry the "pickups" constantly being gathered would be great. The box had to be light, removable, and durable as it would be removed and thrown on the dump area to remove its contents. I got together with Allyn and we decided to use cheap underlayment plywood of about 5/32" thickness. The bottom would be 1/4" plywood with drainage holes; the rim reinforced with plywood and a 1" lumber "hook" to hold it on the cart.

**W**e didn't like the idea of using cleats at the corners, so we decided to try fillets made from POXY-SHIELD epoxy resin. No fasteners were used except a few small brads to hold the bottom in place during the filleting. The sides were held with temporary masking tape on the outside; no permanent fasteners. A 1" radius fillet was used on all interior junctions made from the activated resin, blended with two parts microspheres and one part silica to a heavy batter consistency. No fiberglass reinforcement was used. The entire box was epoxy encapsulated and finished with a couple coats of left over varnish. Big deal, "now I can make a box", you may be saying.

**T** rue. but that box has now been in use for SEVEN years. All that time in the open, no cover; the cart with box was mostly stored under trees. No further touch up paint or maintenance and it's been treated roughly. But, it's still in one piece and being used; the POXY-SHIELD is doing the job.

**A**nother experience we had was different to say the least. Stream water is used to provide water to the pond. A 55 gallon steel barrel was used as a settling tank to eliminate much of the silt. A 4" plastic elbow drain was inserted through the bottom and held, you guessed it, with POXY-SHIELD and a couple layers of fiberglass tape. At the time, more than twenty years ago, we had no experience using epoxy for metal to plastic bonding and had serious doubts as to the longevity of the junction. About five years later a big rainstorm washed away the barrel. End of story? Not at all.

**I** was doing some excavating down stream a short time ago and spotted a white object buried in the silt. There was our elbow; the steel barrel long gone. But, the portion of the elbow epoxied to the barrel was still there. Well rusted but still attached after more than twenty years in a watery condition, some of it tumbling through the water.

Once you become familiar with this great product, you will find your own special uses for Poxy-Shield. Do you wonder why we are enthusiastic about the bonding powers of our Poxy Shield?

## Designer's Notebook: Then and NOW

While sitting at a counter in a restaurant, sandwiched (pun intended) between two guys using cell phones, it hit me, how many changes have come to pass since this small company started back in 1953.

We were taught that our drawings had to be done in ink, and never on paper, only drafting linen. In the real world, we quickly discovered that simply wasn't true, good blueprints could be made with pencil drawings on vellum. Boy, did the drawing pens and ink bottles quickly get pushed to the back of the drawer.

When we started, all design calculations were done by slide rule, a now obsolete relic. If more accuracy was needed, logarithms were the answer; using voluminous tables, calculation that would be difficult by multiplication and division was simplified. We had adding machines that could do no more than add or subtract. The one we had was a manually operated sliding number affair actuated by a hand crank. Calculators eventually became available, but were very expensive at first and a far cry from the tiny ones we use today. The only computers were main-frames that were not available to the small business guy. As I say all of this, even I find it hard to believe what we were using back in 1953.

Instructions were laborious to produce. In the days before word processing, copy machines and printers were commonplace, making multi-sheet instructions was a chore. Sure we had the latest manual typewriters, but if a typo was made, we used an eraser or the trusty "white out" to make the correction. Making many professional copies of a page involved a print shop. The type was hand set with a practical minimum of 1000 copies on a letterpress. But the cost was astronomical for the time and who needed 1000 copies?

**M**imeograph was the popular method of reproducing small runs of printed copy. The process required a special two-part paper that was inserted in the typewriter. The text was typed directly, but woe if a word was mis-spelled. The cover sheet had to be pulled back and a special correction fluid painted over the area; then re-align on the typewriter and type over the error. Copies were made by inserting the copy in a special machine; in our case hand cranked. It made fair copies, if you liked blue type.

**T**he boat designs themselves evolved because of "new" building materials like plywood, fiberglass and lightweight powerful motors. The powerboat of yesteryear was narrow because it had to be pushed through the water; the motors were heavy and powerless compared to modern powerplants. Lightweight motors developing high horsepower enabled wider boats to plane and attain "pleasure" (if approaching 100 MPH is pleasure?) speeds that had been previously unthinkable for the home builder.

**I**n the early years, plywood was unreliable and the glues used to bond the plies left much to be desired. But progress brought better plywood, and with experimentation, we learned how to use it for boat construction. The construction of original plywood boats paralleled that for planked boats and tended to be over-framed and heavy. The adhesives used were flexible and would not form a true bond. Today we have taken what we have learned into new methods like stitch and glue that takes full advantage of plywood as a sheet material and seam bonding with epoxies and fiberglass laminates to form a durable product.

**I**s everything better today? Of course not. But many of us look back with selective memories at those "good old days". My grandchildren can't understand how anyone could exist without TV, computers, and... *cell phones*. How will the next generation look at today's devices and techniques? Will the computer and cell phone look like the slide rule or hand-cranked adding machine look today? Time marches on.

**I** hope that with the changes to come that we won't lose the desire to build something with our hands... maybe that's just me, but I think it would be a great loss...  
*is that your cell phone or mine?*

## Designer's Notebook: Do you really want to go that fast?

**T**his text may appear to be opposed to speed over the water. That's not true; we were weaned on three point hydros and fast runabouts. Speed on the water is thrilling, exhilarating and fun, particularly in a small boat. The wind whistling by, the slap of the water on the hull, and an occasional dash of spray magnify the feeling of speed. Sit smugly in your car at highway speeds, wrapped in a cocoon of metal and glass and the sensation of speed is virtually lost. Going 30 mph in a small boat feels more than double the sensation of being in an auto at 60 mph plus.

**Y**et, people tend to equate land speed to that over the water. Adding to the confusion, people exaggerate the speed their boat does. Many a 50 mph boat won't push a speedometer beyond 30. And, if old Joe's boat will do 50 yours must go faster. Perhaps it's our competitive nature, but few like to be left in the wake of their buddy's boat.

**B**ut, let's get realistic; speed costs money. Let's cover only one factor, fuel consumption. The magazine pages of an "ultra" fast boat test yield some interesting figures. A 46' oversize speedboat will top 100 mph and only (???) use 132 gallons per hour. Multiply 132 by the cost for a gallon of fuel in your area and you'll find what it will cost to run this beast at that speed for only one hour. Don't forget this is top premium grade fuel, not the regular gas most put in their cars. Drop down to 53 mph and the fuel consumption lowers to 52 gallons per hour in this instance. Reduce the speed by roughly 50% and only about 40% of the fuel required with full throttle will be used. Incidentally this boat can be had for just under half a million bucks. Line up in the line to my left?

**B**y the way, the above is a pleasure boat test. One hundred miles per hour over an uneven water surface is fun? More like, grit your teeth, hang on, and "What am I doing here?"

**G**etting more realistic, let's look at the figures for a 19' deluxe runabout. It tops out at 49 mph and uses 22 gallons of fuel per hour. Drop the speed to 33 mph and this craft will use 12 gallons of gas per hour. Still, the cost makes you think, doesn't it? Obviously many factors enter the speed of a boat. Weight being a major consideration. Also in a magazine test a 17' boat with fewer frills and less weight topped out at 40 mph while consuming 9 miles per gallon. When speed was decreased to 30 mph fuel consumption went down to 5 gallons per hour.

**F**uel consumption at various rpm and thus horsepower is available from engine manufacturers. In our archives (source and accuracy unknown) there is a note that "a four cycle gasoline motor will use about one gallon of fuel for every 13 HP it produces". (Motor horsepower used divided by 13 = gallons of fuel required) Thus the fuel consumption for the powerboat you contemplate and the cost can be roughly estimated. Maybe a few extra mphs isn't worth it?

**I**f cost is of primary importance and you will settle for 5-6 mph, consider an electric powered boat. Our 14' "Amp Eater" prototype would run about 7 hours on its batteries. Recharging the batteries takes about 6 hours; the cost in electricity, pennies.

**S**o to you speed nuts (most power boaters), enjoy the sweetness of pushing the throttle open... it's costing you, but isn't the fun priceless?

## Designer's Notebook: Notches for longitudinals

**T**his discussion refers to sheet plywood boats built by typical plywood on frame methods using athwartship frames at frequent intervals. For clarification, our definition of the term [chine and sheer](#) follows.

**T**he chine is the longitudinal wood member backing up the junction of the bottom and side. The sheer is the longitudinal at the top of the side planking and backs up the junction with the deck, if used.

**A**gain, to further narrow this discussion, we're assuming the boat is a flat or vee bottom with flare to the sides; the sheer line is outside the chine as seen in plan view.

**F**rame notches can be precut before mounting the frames on the building form or after they are set up. Most builders prefer to pre-notch but it makes little difference; hand beveling while on the building form will usually be required. The patterns may show the cut outs in the frames that are required but don't automatically assume these are the exact

size. Check the width and thickness of the stock actually being used and alter the notches to match. In most cases the precut notches will need to be angled while on the building form so it's usually preferable when you are precutting notches to make them undersize and trim as required when fitting the chine in place.

**W**e usually notch for battens after the chine and keel have been faired to receive the bottom planking. Then notch the frame the precise thickness of the stock being used. Very little if any fairing of the batten will then be required. We use a portable circular saw set to the required depth to notch frames for the battens, a router also works well. Since frame notches for battens may require an angle a swipe or two with a wood rasp may still be required.

**S**elect the lumber with care, particularly that for the chine and sheer, good vertical grain stock properly dried and free from knots or other defects is imperative. Sized to the plan specifications, the chine and sheer longitudinals should be at least a foot or so longer for trimming to fit.

## Chine

**S**pring the chine member around the boat lapping over the stem and transom. It's nice to have the chine fit against each frame securely, but it seldom happens. Typically the chine lands securely against the frames in the aft section. In the forward section the chine must twist, a bar clamp tightened on the chine will provide a "handle" to give leverage. The side of the chine may not land securely against the side of the frame, it will probably protrude. However, the chine must solidly fit into the frame notch. The portion that protrudes must be removed during fairing. Consider carefully; the side planking must have a solid landing on the chine side and the bottom must also firmly contact the chine. Notch the frame as required so the chine protrudes so this can occur.

**C**ut 4" or so off the end of the chine for use as a guide. Hold this block against the chine with end butting to the frame, then mark the contour for the notch required and do the same on the opposite side of the frame. Saw the frame notch and recheck with the sample block. If the fit is not precise, use a file or wood rasp to clean up the notch. Take care that the side frame does not project past the chine as this will tend to create a hard spot and mirror through the plywood planking.

## Sheer

**F**rame notches for the sheer are marked with a portion of the sheer member as described for the chine. Again adequate landing must be provided on the sheer for the side planking and deck (if used). Boats that have considerable flare to the sides and a sheer profile of an arc may need to have considerable material removed in fairing. In some instances, the faired sheer in the forward section may be almost triangle in shape.

**N**otches in frames for longitudinals is not difficult if you think in advance. We'll repeat it again. *The mating planking must land securely on the longitudinals.*

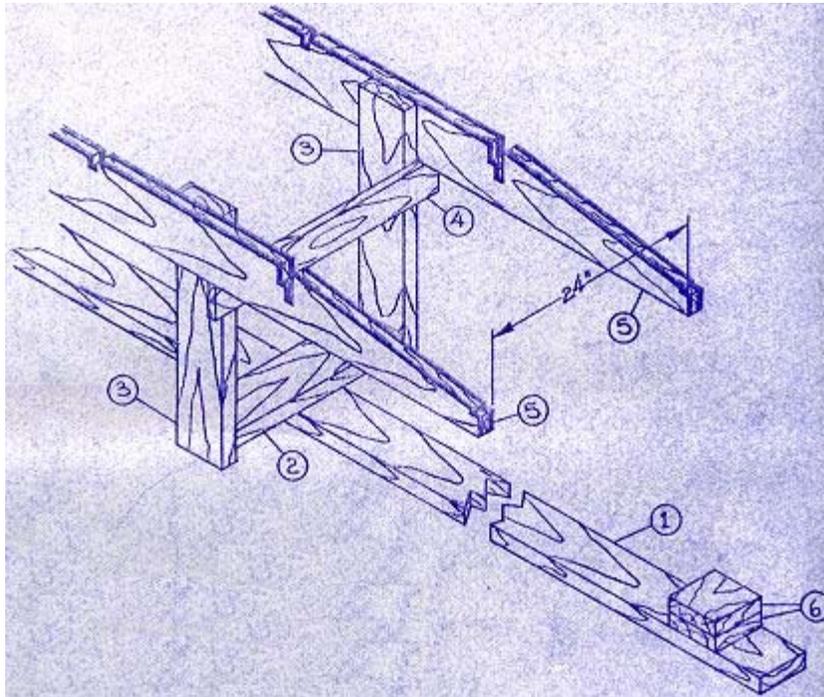
## Designer's Notebook: Setting up... The building form

**C**onsider the building form used to build a small boat as being similar to the foundation of a building. If the foundation for a building is out of kilter or unlevel, problems occur. If the building form used to build a boat is flimsy or out of alignment, problems are compounded.

**A** building form to support the frames, stem and transom during construction is required on most framed boats. Without some sort of "reference plane" these pieces could not be practically built into a boat. We call this reference plane the "set-up level" and all GLEN-L plans and patterns using framed construction indicate this set-up level. Our plans detail a wooden building form for the design being built with full dimensions and material sizes.

**I**n the boatbuilding shop of yesteryear the approved method was to build a flat, level, wooden floor and erect a form on it, all vertical and level to the nice working surface. Wonderful, expensive, lots of work, and not necessary. The most common building form we've developed utilizes two parallel, horizontal, straight 2" "set-up members", supported to the floor or ground with legs.

**T**he support legs for the set-up members do not require a flat floor or base. The set-up members must be level but the working area need not be flat. If working on a dirt area posts (legs) may be buried in the ground to support the set-up members. Legs can rest on a concrete floor but must be anchored some way to prevent movement. The building form must be strong and secured in position as you will be pushing, pulling, and pounding every which-way and the framework must not move. If your foundation moves, frames can be thrown out of alignment, the sure basis for future trouble.



The drawing shows a typical building form. The various parts of the building form are numbered and are referenced in the following text. The #1 base is anchored to the concrete floor with expansion bolts at each end. The #2 spreaders are fastened to the base and #3 upright legs resting on the floor are attached to the spreaders. The #5 set-up members may be temporary or in the case of inboard powered boat permanent motor stringers. The set-up members are clamped to the legs parallel and level in both directions, then fastened in place supported by #4 athwartship cleats. Additional diagonal braces or supports may be required, just be sure the structure is rigid.

**W**e like to use a chalk line or wire along the centerline just below the set-up members to center the frames and align the stem. Left in place it's a ready reference to check frame alignment.

**T**he frames are mounted on the building form set-up members, spaced per the plans, centered, and vertical. Athwartship cleats atop the set-up members, sided to the frames, can be used to fasten the frames to the set-up members if required.



**T**he tip of the stem is referenced from the set-up level, aligned on the centerline and blocked to the base member. Each framework member is then blocked to the form or to one another to prevent movement; all must be aligned and held in place during the entire construction process.

**D**on't forget that the frames and other members must be removed from the building form. Use screws, bolts or double headed nails readily accessible for removal. After the boat is planked we prefer to turn the boat right side up with the building form still fastened to the boat, and right the entire works. Level the boat while resting on forms. Block securely in place and then remove the form.

**S**ounds as if making a building form is a lot of work? Not really, if you consider all the time saved by making a strong accurate structure. If you make the building form/foundation strong and true, the boat will go together easier and in less time

## **Designer's Notebook: Limbers**

**W**hat are limbers? Limber is a nautical term for drains in longitudinals or cross members to allow water to flow to the lowest part of a boat. They are usually thought of as being used along the keel but they should be used anywhere water is liable to be entrapped. Most trailered boats have the limbers so bilge water drains aft to the transom to exit through drain plugs. These drains are best equipped with a removable plug or cap connected to the main body. It's embarrassing, to say the least, to drop a drain plug overboard or lose it in the bilge... it doesn't hurt to have a spare plug.

**S**ailboats or similar craft that have the lowest point in the bilge close to the longitudinal midpoint will have drains in the bottom. In either case bilge pumps that purge the water from the boat can be used; a must for boats that remain in the water. Fresh water left for long periods, particularly in a wooden boat, can raise havoc. Boats on dry land stored with or without a cover should have the drain plugs removed. If the drains are at the transom the tongue of the trailer should be raised so any rain or condensed moisture will drain out.

**H**ow many and how big should limbers be? On a fully framed boat, where frames contact the bottom, limbers should be cut in the frames on the outside of all longitudinals. Make the limbers as large as practical without weakening the structure. Small openings can be readily plugged by bilge debris. Boats that are trailed to and from the water are usually washed down after use. It is imperative to have all water drain aft to exit through the drains. Having to use a sponge to remove water pocketed in areas that won't drain is tedious and you don't want to have to do this any more than you have to. A common area for water to pocket is alongside the longitudinals, usually battens, as they junction with the transom. A notch cut athwartship on the batten as shown in this [photo](#) enables water to flow to the centerline alongside the keel and out the drains. Such a notch should not cut away more than half the longitudinal and a reinforcing block used on the inside over the limber. Limbers should be cut during the building, usually just before planking the boat. Think ahead and consider how bilge water will flow to the drains. Cutting limbers after the boat is built is both tedious and usually sloppy. Thinking ahead will save a lot of unnecessary hassle.