THE FOGHORN

Newsletter of the Marine Modelers Club of New England

2017-- Our 28th Year!!

January 2017

Commander: Gaspar LaColla	781-396-6462 commander@marinemodelers.org
1st Officer: Mike Hale	508-880-3051 1stofficer@marinemodelers.org
Events Officer: (vacant)	
Publicity Officer: Charlie Tebbetts	508-404-5987 publicity@marinemodelers.org
Treasurer/Membership: Ed Arini	781-640-2625 (cell) treasurer@marinemodelers.org
Newsletter Editor & Webmaster: Bill Michaels	978-760-0343 newsletter@marinemodelers.org

Note: Use officers@marinemodelers.org to reach all the club officers as a group.

Upcoming Meetings

Friday-Sunday, February 3-5, 2017: Providence Boat Show, at the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence, RI.

Sunday, March 19: Our first indoor meeting of the year-- location tbd. The Club Officers will get this sorted out over the next few months.....

Sunday, April 16: Icebreaker Fun Float at Memorial Park Beach in Sharon.

Friday-Sunday, April 21-23: Woods Hole Model Boat Show.

Membership Renewal Time!

It is time to pay 2017 membership dues. The form is posted on the club website. Dues are $25. Contact Club Treasurer Ed Arini if you have any questions.

December Holiday Dinner

Your Editor got called into a work-related emergency that Sunday morning, so my wife and I had to cancel our plans to attend the dinner. Mike Hale and Ed Arini sent along a few notes:
The dinner was held on December 4th, at Prezo Grille and Bar in Milford, MA. Members attending included: Ed and Linda Arini, Shaun Kimball, Lou Hills and guest, Harold Cohen, Mike and Jean Hale and grandson, Gaspar and Joanne LaColla, Bob and Johanna Okerholm, Bob Prezioso, John Cooper, and Charlie and Bonnie Tebbetts.

Mike reported: The food was great with most having steak tips or scallops. Gaspar, Ed and myself gave short talks on events coming and happy holiday wishes. We gave a away some door prizes-- my wife Jean, with her luck, her number was the first one drawn! Gaspar's wife Joanne put together and finished 4 puzzle pictures from Germany that were really great, that she donated as prizes as well. Jean her 60A ESC to traded Shaun for the picture he had won.

Above Left: Bonnie and Charlie. Above Right: Linda Arini.

Below (L to R): Harold Cohen, Shaun Kimball, Bob Okerholm.

Converting the Lindberg Nantucket Lightship to RC

Here is a reprint of my article that ran in the last issue of the SSMA's Journal:

History: The US Coast Guard Light Ship LV-112 was built in 1935, designed for duty on the Nantucket Shoals station. Lightships did not have a name, they were designated by number. The name they carried was the current station they were assigned to. Most lightships were used on various stations over the course of their service careers.

LV-112 was built in 1935, as a replacement for LV-117, which had been rammed and sunk in a thick fog while on duty on the Nantucket Shoals station. The new lightship was paid for by the British government, because the ship that had rammed the old ship was the RMS Olympic (sistership of the Titanic). Because LV-112 spent her entire career (1936 – 1975) on the Nantucket station (except for a couple of years during the war.), she is usually called by the name "Nantucket", which I'll do for the rest of this article.

The kit: The Lindberg kit of the Nantucket was originally a Pyro Plastics kit released in the mid-1960s, and had been available off and on every since. In the last couple of years, Lindberg has re-released a number of the classic Pyro kits, including Nantucket. When I saw this at the Spare Time Shop in Marlboro in 2014, I decided it was time to revisit this old classic. I bought the kit with the intention of converting it to RC, with working lights. I wanted something that would fit in with club members' 1/96 scale ships, and be fun to run at the annual club night run.

My philosophy for plastic model conversions is to make them robust and simple. I also want the model to be seaworthy, and low maintenance. When I convert a plastic model, my goal is to only need access to the interior every 8-10 years or so. I do things like not making the deck removable-- rather, I glue it down with caulk, so I can remove it if needed. I have a Lindberg Diesel tug that is 25 years old, and I've only had to open it twice since building it-- once because the tubing used for a universal wore out, and once because the model's nicads wore out to the point where they wouldn't hold a charge anymore.

The Lindberg Nantucket is a great model for RC conversion. Unlike skinny warships, it has a wide, deep, 19 inch long hull, and it displaces 2 pounds. That allows you to use as large a battery as you want, and you'll still need to add ballast. Plus, it has minimal topside structure, so it is very stable. The downside is that the small deck houses limit access opportunities to the interior.

Conversion basics:

The model is powered by a Graupner 1147 Speed140 motor/gearbox. The unit is a great fit for this model-- it has a 3:1 reduction, and includes a shaft, stuffing box, and a 3-blade prop. An old Futaba 2 channel 75 Mhz radio system was used for control. Power comes from a 2000MAh NiMh battery. The ESC is a small Action Electronics unit.

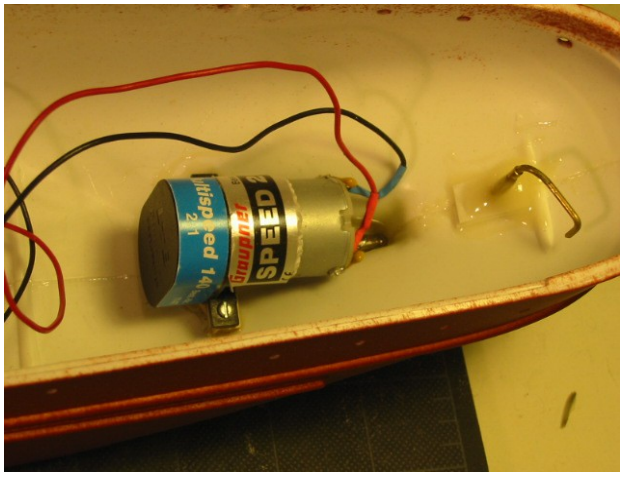
The model has working lights-- both navigation lights (port/stbd, masthead, stern) and the masthead beacon. The model has has a releasable mooring line- a pin that can be retracted to release the anchor line. Even though it has only a 2 channel radio, I can switch between anchored and underway lights, using a bit of a "Rube Goldberg" engineering. I anchor the model out on a mooring buoy, with only the masthead light energized and flashing (on station mode). I can then release the line and get underway. When the line is released, a micro switch shuts off the masthead light and turns on the running lights.

Basic Construction:

When you convert a plastic model to RC, you need to plan ahead, and figure out where you are going to modify parts or change the order of assembly. One of the first things you need to do is decide how you'll install the the RC and running gear, and how you'll charge the batteries

Here's a summary of the construction process:

Assemble the hull halves, then drill out the prop shaft hole and mount the shaft/motor assembly in the hull. (Make sure the prop will clear the rudder and bottom of the hull!)



Fabricate a rudder, shaft and tube. I used 1/16 brass rod for the rudder shaft, mounted inside a brass tube. A small block of pine was epoxied inside the hull to mount the rudder assembly. I like to make the rudder shaft and tiller a one-piece unit-- no risk of a tiller's set screw ever getting loose.

I used an old dead, gel cell battery for ballast. I used a 2000MAh NiMh battery to power the model. I built a simple styrene tray to mount the receiver and ESC an inch or so out of the bilge, in case any water ever gets in.

Installing the deck: Because I was going to be adding lights, I needed to mount the forward cabin and foremast while I still had access to the interior. So I cut the plastic one-piece main deck in half amidships. I then glued the forward half in place with caulk. The aft deck was installed later, once all the controls and wiring had been sorted out.

Lighting:

I like LEDs for small model lights-- if you manage the voltage, you'll never burn one out. I got my LEDs from SuperBrightLEDs.com. They have a great selection of LEDs- be sure to get the ones with a wide angle of light output. (A lot of LEDs have a narrow range-- 15-30 degrees. Those LEDs are intended to only be bright when looking down on the top.) I found some 350 degree LEDs in a "warm" white to use for the masthead beacons.

To animate the masthead beacon, I used a flashing circuit designed for a lighthouse on an HO train layout. It mimics the characteristics of a lighthouse- the light doesn't just flash on and off. Rather it ramps up to a bright flash and then fades quickly- like you see as the beacon rotates and points right at you with high intensity for an instant, fades away, then goes dark for a few seconds. The unit came from Bakatronics, and uses a 9 volt battery to power the circuit. An alkaline 9 volt battery will power the circuit for almost three days of continuous operation.

The foremast carries a white 20 point masthead light that comes on with the running lights. The red and green sidelights are mounted on top of the pilothouse, so it was easy to do the wiring for all of them at once. The stern light is a 10 point white light.

All of the running lights were made using the same process, starting with cylinder shaped LEDs. I sanded flats on two side to make them fit the light boards, and then painted the flat parts with chrome silver paint, which reflects more of the light out the front side of the LED. I then glued the LEDs to the black-painted backer boards. (Made from small pieces of sheet plastic.)

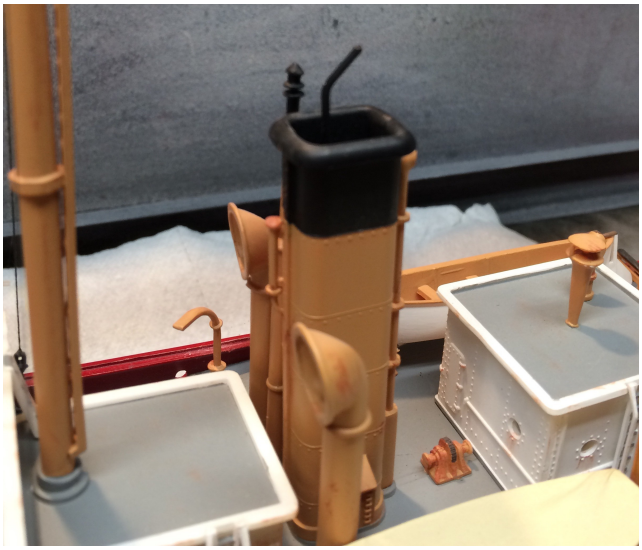
The foremast light is mounted about 2/3 of the way up the mast. Because the real ship is under 50 meters in length, it only needs to show one masthead light when underway- no range light is required on the after mast. The light is made from a white LED, with the wires run inside the tube. In order to get the stiff wires of the LED inside the tube, I cut a small hole in the front of the mast. The hole is then covered with a sleeve made from a piece of larger diameter tube to cover the hole. Later on, the light guards were added and the mast was detailed and painted.

Mooring line release: I rigged a small scratch-built bellcrank under the fore deck, with a brass pin that protrudes through the deck. The bellcrank is connected with a pushrod to the rudder servo. The connection is rigged so that full right rudder, plus full trim, is enough to retract the pin. This allows me to moor the model to a mooring buoy, with a loop of line that goes around the pin. When I want to get underway, full right rudder, plus trim, will retract the pin below deck level, releasing the line. I can then back down and sail away.

Light switches: I designed a simple circuit with a micro switch that would allow me to switch between two separate circuits. The "underway" circuit powers all the running lights, while the "anchored" circuit powers the masthead beacon and Bakatronics flasher unit. I mounted a micro-switch next to the rudder servo, so that full left rudder, plus full trim, depresses the switch and energizes the masthead beacon. With the rudder in any other position, the beacon is off and the running lights are on.

All of the lights are on an independent circuit from the rest of the model, powered by a 9 volt battery. There is a separate master switch that energizes the circuit. That allows me to turn on the lights when I'm displaying the model at a show, without running down the receiver battery. (It also allows me to turn all the lights off when sailing during the day.) That battery will power the masthead lights for days.....

Radio on/off switch: I didn't want to open up the model to turn on the radio. So, I mounted the radio on/off switch below the stack, and attached a brass rod that goes up the stack. I put a slight bend in the end, and painted it flat black, so it looks like a small vent or exhaust pipe. Pulling the rod up turns on the radio, pushing it down turns it off.



To recharge the battery, the small cabin just aft of the stack is removable. Under it is the socket to plug in the charging cable.

Once all the "gizmos" were installed and working, it was time to glue the aft half of the

deck in place. I used caulking to install it, so I can cut it free if I ever need to remove it in the future. I then noticed that the hull has no scuppers molded in it, so I made a couple at the low point amidships, to give any water that lands on deck a way to go overboard.

I then added the rest of the deck fittings and details. I left a few of the more fragile items off, like the main deck railings. The one piece molded plastic boat falls looked awful, and didn't fit well, so I left them off, too.

The model is painted with Tamiya model paints, applied using my airbrush. Note that the colors used by Lindberg for the deck houses in box top photos are wrong, and the model is comically over-weathered. The hull is gloss red, and the decks were painted a medium gray. The deck houses are white, and the masts and deck fittings are a color the USCG calls "Spar". (Model Master Deck Tan is a reasonably close match.) The hull was then finished with the kit decals. Once they had dried, the hull was given a couple of coats of a satin clear coat, to seal the decals and protect them.

At the pond:

The lighting and mooring line release features are combined in this way: I turn on the model and put the rudder hard left, to throw the switch to turn on the masthead beacon. I then shut off the transmitter, and the servo stays in position. I then anchor the model in the pond, using a small mooring buoy. On the top of the buoy is a short mooring line that ends in a loop. The loop is threaded through the hawse hole and put over the pin on deck. The model is now "on station" and the beacon is flashing.

Later, when I want to get underway, I turn on the transmitter. The rudder then automatically centers, turning off the masthead beacon and energizing the running lights. I then put the rudder over to the right and back down slightly. The model drops the mooring line, and is then free to sail.

Once the model is underway, it runs well. The Graupner motor has plenty of power-- I think that if I doubled the power, and that tubby hull wouldn't go any faster. With all that weight low in the hull, the model is very stable. The model tracks well, and the scale rudder is big enough to provide a fairly tight turning radius.

Here's a link to a YouTube video of the model underway, taken at Redd's Pond in Marblehead:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Mbe0J_1y8w

Here's the tinyURL version: **http://tinyurl.com/h7bcq2w**

Nantucket underway on Redd's Pond with Eric Bertelsen's 1/96 scale USCG Famous – class Cutter in the background.

Editor's Notes

Woods Hole Model Boat Show: I have heard back from the folks at the Woods Hole Historical Society-- they let me know that the 2017 show will be held on the weekend of April 21-23, 2017. This is always a good time, and I am looking forward to it-- I have already made my hotel reservations! As usual, we'll have a club table for our model displays.

Health News: For those of you who watch what you eat, here's the final word on nutrition and health. It's a relief to know the truth after all those conflicting nutritional studies.

1. The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans and Britons.
2. The Mexicans eat a lot of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans and Britons.
3. The Chinese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than Britons and Americans.
4. The Italians drink a lot of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than Britons, and Americans...
5. The Germans drink a lot of beer and eat lots of sausages and fats and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans and Britons.

CONCLUSION: Eat and drink what you like. Speaking English is apparently what kills you!

2016 – 2017 Winter Schedule

(updated 3 January 2017)

DATE	EVENT
Friday-Sunday, February 3-5	Providence Boat Show, Rhode Island Convention Center
Friday-Sunday, February 24-26	*AMA Expo East (Formerly the WRAM Show), Meadowlands Exposition Center, Secaucus, NJ*
Sunday, March 19, 1-4pm	Indoor Club Meeting (date and location tbd)
Sunday. April 16, 11-2pm	Icebreaker Fun Float, Sharon
Friday-Sunday, April 21-23	Woods Hole Model Boat Show
Sunday, May 21, 11-2pm	Fun Float at Silver Lake, Wilmington, MA
Sunday, June 11, 12-3pm	Fun Float at Redd's Pond in Marblehead, MA

Note: Items in *purple italics* are not club-sponsored events- they are listed here because we felt they may be of interest to our members and friends.

Check the club website for the latest version: www.marinemodelers.org

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