

Memory Monday 20



It is necessary to back up time to continue our story properly. In this picture, the hull is not yet fair although Memory Monday 19 said, it was. This is because Skip often worked on more than one thing at a time with MISTRESS. Here, the bulwarks have the fairing compound on them. This is the same compound, epoxy with micro balloons, which Skip used to fair her hull.

Each of her deck beams received a bead on the bottom and varnished before they were fastened into place. The bead serves two purposes. First, it looks good below and second, it would make hitting your head a little less painful. Skip told me then, he knew he would be crawling about under the aft deck and wanted to have a rounded edge in which to hit his head, knowing full well, he would.

With everything being finished before it is fastened into place, the effect is dramatic when you go below. Her interior has two fine coats of Fleet White Awlgrip, which should last a lifetime. The beams are finished, the bulkhead is in, and her knees are in place. Skip is beginning to wear a smile on his face now. He has brought her a long way from where she was when she first arrived in our backyard. There is also the temporary cabin sole, which saves him and his tools from falling to the floor timbers. Although we thought this would be its proper location, allowing our good friend Dave who is 6' 4", standing headroom, this would change. In fact, Skip would have to make a compromise and raise the sole two inches all around to give us more space below for custom made water tanks he would build between floor timbers. While it is true Dave can stand tall now, it is necessary for him to be between the beams to do so.



Here you can see the outline of the cockpit. Originally, she had a rather large cockpit. Room enough for several people to sit in. This would not work for us as ocean sailors who prefer to hold less water on deck. Forward, you can see the framework for the engine hatch. Forward of the cockpit, you can see her 90-gallon diesel tank. One of the things Skip made sure of as he was designing her new layout, everything which goes below, can be removed without cutting into MISTRESS. This is a good thing and we know someday, down the road, we will be happy for that bit of forethought.

MEMORY MONDAY 21



In May of 2003, Skip is working for himself, which affords him more time to work on MISTRESS. He took the month of May off and planned the deck as his goal. Here, we see some of that cedar Skip handpicked from 12,000 board feet. He has routed a tongue and groove and then varnished one side. He will face the varnished side down and the effect below is stunning.



On May 30th, I took this picture showing the first layer of cedar in line with the sheer and half of the second layer laid parallel to the centerline. The first layer, Skip fitted dry and glued it to the beams. The second layer he glued over the whole deck, without the tongue and groove. He will finish-up the second layer within the a few days and then begin a different third layer.

MEMORY MONDAY 22



Before the first layer of the cabin sole was set in place, Skip made three water tanks out of fiberglass. Each was templated to fit into an area between the floor timbers below the sole. Once he completed building these tanks, he steamed them. That is what we are seeing in this picture. By steaming them with a little bleach and water, he removes any unpleasant taste that might linger from the glass. The tanks hold, 9.5 gals, 17 gals, and 15 gals. We also bought a 20 gal tank, which lives under the aft end of the settee. Later, after MISTRESS launches, Skip will add an additional tank up on top the cabin house which will store 6 gals. of distilled water for drinking. Additionally, the hot water heater holds 6 gals.



The three tanks he made were then put in place and the water and vent lines were run. The forward smaller tank, we have discovered, has the water, vent line backwards, and needs to be fixed. Luckily, this can easily be resolved by lifting one of the cabin sole hatches and using a few hose clamps. Once completed, this will give us 73.5 gals. of fresh water in out tanks. Skip will put in a reverse osmosis system as well; this will allow us to turn salt water into fresh water at one gallon an hour.



Vacuum bagging the cabin hose sides.

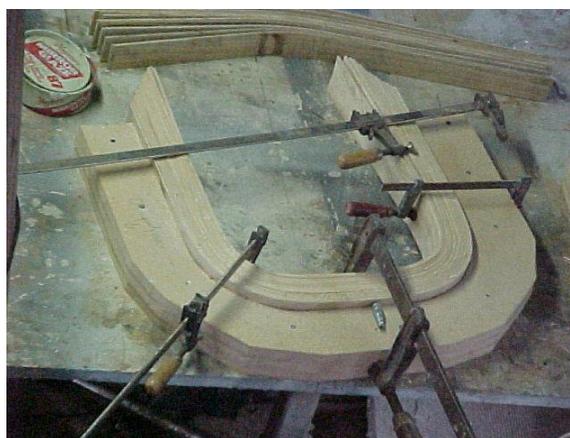


Vacuum bagging the cabin side. The sides are 3 layers of 1/4" Euro-lite plywood, cold-molded over a form. By vacuum bagging, Skip achieved approximately 1800 lbs. per sq. ft. of clamping pressure.

MEMORY MONDAY 23



These are the lodging knees, which Skip made out of White Ash and glued up with Ebond epoxy. There are seventeen layers in each knee. Skip had hoped to build these knees in one piece, however, after days of contemplation he settle for a two pieces lodging knee. To get them to bend to the shape of the mold Skip made, each piece was soaked in the dog pool for an hour first.



He fitted and clamped into a mold he made with the wet pieces of White Ash. He then let them cure for 24 hours to set up.



Although Skip had spent hours trying to figure out how to laminate the lodging knees into one piece, in the end it appears impossible. However, as two pieces they are still something to behold when below, and rarely does it go unnoticed.

MEMORY MONDAY 24



This was the first piece of finish work that went below and I have to tell you, I was very concerned about it. You see, it is Australian Oak, also referred to as Lace Wood, a beautiful veneer with lots of texture and figure. I knew it was Skip's desire to use many types of wood down below and this first one made me nervous. It was so busy I thought for sure it would make me dizzy. I was unsure what other wild woods he had planned and remember him mentioning Zebrawood. Oh my!

Skip attempted to reassure me that when the mahogany trim was set into place, it would look fine and not have the same dazzling affect. I remained skeptical and a wee bit worried. "What had I done", I asked myself. I had let the man loose to use all of his creative talents and now I wondered if letting the artist/craftsman run unabashed and wild, would prove more than I could handle. I tried to have faith.



When he varnished it, all its glittering beauty was brought out, full force. I got on line and ordered cases of Dramamine to prepare myself for my future life aboard this amazing home gone wild. In the end, Skip was right, but I wouldn't be able to see it for at least a few years.



This is all rather funny to me now as I write this because I cannot remember any time in the past few years that the Lace wood bothered me or caused me any ill affect. Not a drop of Dramamine has been required to live aboard since we launched MISTRESS. It really does look good.

MEMORY MONDAY 25

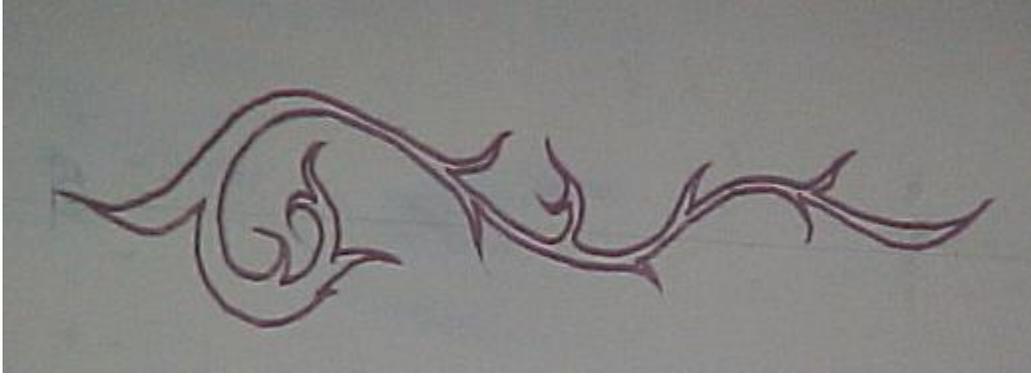


When it was time to carve MISTRESS's name mid-ship into the hull we decided to use Bookman Old Style for ease of reading so I printed out the letters as templates for Skip. With a small router and a V groove bit Skip started the carving. He then finished it by hand with chisels. You can see the fairing compound under the paint in the above picture. The hull has been long-boarded to 220 grit, and there are two coats of primer on her.



The scrollwork took a bit more imagination and the help of another Eastward Schooner owner. We had the good fortune to meet the owners of Eastward #4 after dropping Tim off at The Ohio State University and taking a side trip to Michigan. While visiting, Captain Dave and his lovely wife showed us old pictures they had of Wild Goose just after purchasing her. On the side of the hull was this beautiful scrollwork, which Skip and I took notice of right away. When MISTRESS arrived in our yard, Skip took great pains to copy all the scrollwork, however, once finished, he realized all four were different. Over time, they must have changed slightly with each new paint job or repair and we were unsure, which, if any, was right. This picture I took of a picture of WILD GOOSE, Eastward Schooner #4, before the scrollwork was removed in order to put a goose in its place. They let us spend the night on her and were most kind to tell us to look throughout WILD GOOSE. I remember Skip discovering her rock ballast below. That was cool. When you ask Skip about THE GOOSE he says he remembers her best as being pristine both above and below decks. She is beautiful.

Well luck was with us because it turned out, Captain Dave had made carbon copies of the original scrollwork, had them stored away, and would look for them for us. He then offered to drop them off to us in St. Augustine when they came to their winter home on the west coast. Wow!



When they showed up in Florida, he handed Skip not only the original copies, but the original carbon papers he'd used which were now some thirty years old. Preserved well, that same carbon paper was used to trace the scrollwork onto MISTRESS so Skip could begin the carving process. We owe Captain Dave and his wife many thanks for their thoughtfulness. Over the years, we have had the pleasure of their company on many such trips. Next time we meet, we take them sailing.

MEMORY MONDAY 26



Once Skip was finished with the scrollwork and her name, he did the cove stripe just as he had done the others, starting with a router and then finished with hand tools.

It was now time to move onto setting her water line and we were fortunate that Rick had just the tool we needed. A transit is a tool that allows you to sight a level line over a long distance. Using the measurements Skip had taken off MISTRESS when she arrived and an educated guess, a point was determined at that bow and the stern. The transit was used to draw a line between the two points. Skip then affixed a double line of blue tape.



That evening in just a few hours, Skip put on a heavy layer of coal tar epoxy under the waterline. This coating would give MISTRESS a great water barrier and would fill any pinholes in the primer.



Once completed, we both stood back to look at her. It was amazing how different she looked with her waterline set and the low freeboard was quite evident. This was the first time we saw the new waterline and we were pleased.

Something else that happened involved the new stainless steel hawse pipes. In this picture, you can see a formed hole. Because the pipes are hollow, Skip decided to wax the insides and filled them with an epoxy mixture designed for high compressive loads. Once the epoxy cured, he removed the SS hawse pipes, leaving behind perfectly fitted holes giving us a great fit when Skip was ready for the final installation.

MEMORY MONDAY 27



One again, it was time to invite good friends over for a mast party. It was a beautiful May day. They lowered the main mast from above MISTRESS and then set on sawhorses, next to the fore. Skip would begin working on figuring out what would be needed for her new SS standing rigging and sending out for quotes.



They then moved the stairs to allow Skip room for the work he would do on her transom. Skip would put a drawbridge at the top of the stairs, which reached to aft deck. This bridge would keep the dogs off MISTRESS now that she was coming along.

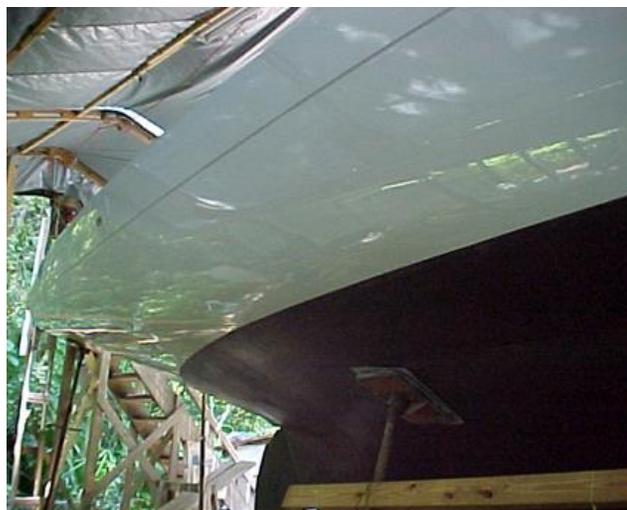


Everyone stood up on the mound and looked at her sheer line for the first time. Several commented on Skip's ability to create such a fine sheer when he was unable to get more than four feet away from her hull. It is now May of 2004. MISTRESS has been in our back yard for four years. Fewer and fewer people still believe we are crazy. We then adjourned to the shade of the pecan trees and enjoyed good food drinks, and many good wooden boat stories. There was just over 350 years of boat building experience in the yard that day. Everyone had a great time and we thank all for coming to help-out.

MEMORY MONDAY 28



By the end of May 2004, Skip has sprayed two coats of Fleet White Awlgrip onto MISTRESS's port side. I find it impossible to shoot pictures because of the mirror images, which reflect in the hull, the dog pool, the frames to the building, even the grass.



We are pleased with the results.



Just two days later, a rather intense storm blew through the area breaking a large limb high above MISTRESS's port side. Nothing but a small amount of bark was keeping it from crashing down on her new paint job. Before the wind died down, Skip gathered ladder and line, and headed up into the tree to save MISTRESS.

By the way, that is Frisky drinking from the dog pool, which often doubled as a soaker when Skip used it to bend hardwoods to his will.



The previous photo showed how high Skip was up the tree. If you look at his face in this picture, you can see he looks still higher and far out from the center of the tree to the broken limb threatening four years' worth of work. After making a few rope ladders, he was able to get above the broken limb and lasso it, securing it to a larger limb above. When the limb finally gave way a few days later, it fell a whole three inches. Skip was then able to lower the limb without disturbing MISTRESS or her new paint.

MEMORY MONDAY 29

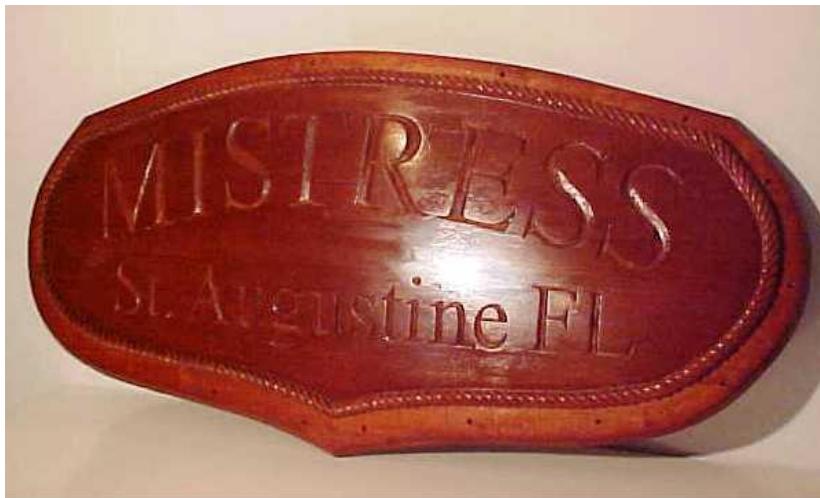


Once Skip had finished spraying the Fleet White Awlgrip on the port side, it was time to work with the transom again. Here, he has taped off the hull to protect the new finish. He coated the transom in wax and then laid up two layers of fiberglass. He formed wood to it to help make it stiff. Once it set, he was able to remove it and lay it on his workbench. This time he waxed the inside of the mold and was able to lay up several layers of

fiberglass. After that cured, he had a perfect replica of MISTRESS's transom to be used as a mold for the final wood transom.



In this picture, Skip has made the transom using mahogany, which he vacuumed bagged over the fiberglass form. There is also an added trim piece; this will be carved, into rope. As it turned out, Skip's Dad has taken up carving in his retirement. He made the offer to do the rope work so Skip dropped it off to him at Thanksgiving time. After Dad had the transom for a few days, Skip called for an update. Skip's Dad said, "At racing speed I can do one foot in eight hours and there's eleven and a half feet". We imagine he wore both a smile and a sneer when he expressed this, but Dad does great work and the rope carving is beautiful. For me the funny thing was when my good brother Paul, having seen the transom throughout several stages asked Skip, "How did you get the rope to splice together so well, you can't see it"? Skip says, "Its wood". Paul with exasperated tone said, "I know the transom is wood Skip, I'm talking about the rope". Skip, "It's wood". Paul looks again, "Damn"



Here the transom has one coat of stain and three or four coats of CPES epoxy and Skip has carved out her name and hailing port. It is getting time to put it in place.