
Wooden Boat

THE MAGAZINE FOR WOODEN BOAT OWNERS, BUILDERS, AND DESIGNERS



The New York 30s Turn 100
Insuring a Wooden Boat
How to Rebuild a Wooden Boat
B.B. Crowninshield's Schooner MARTHA
Australia's Historic Sailing Skiffs

MAY/JUNE 2005
NUMBER 184
\$5.99
\$7.99 in Canada
£3.95 in U.K.

The Schooner MARTHA

*Getting better
and better as
she nears*

100



DEBBIE ARTHUR

by Douglas Cole

In June of 1976 I was living aboard my sailboat on Lake Union in Seattle, Washington. Early one morning, a neighbor who knew my interest in Puget Sound's boats yelled across the slip, "Get your camera and head over to The Boat Yard. MARTHA has fallen over on the lift." Having photographed the 66' classic schooner in the water only a few days before, I was severely taken aback by the grisly scene I found at the yard. MARTHA's port side had split open as she impaled herself on the side of the lift. Her deck was tilted up at a sickening angle. Her chainplates were adrift and her port rigging was all loosey-goosey. Splintered planks, broken frames, and deteriorated iron nails protruded from a gash wide enough and long enough to crawl through. I took a few pictures, then left, assured that this would be the end of the old girl. A few weeks later we saw her, covered with plywood patches, as she went through the city's Hiram M. Chittenden Locks and turned south after reaching open water. It seemed pretty obvious she would soon become fuel for a big beach bonfire somewhere in the South Sound.



DOUGLAS COLE

San Francisco was bustling when MARTHA was launched in 1907. The city was in the throes of a rapid rebuilding after the 1906 earthquake and subsequent fire. As the construction industry thrived, so did its suppliers—one of whom was John R. Hanify (1862–1922), who was in the lumber business. Hanify had been born in New York City and moved to San Francisco in 1876 with his father, Francis, who was involved in the steamship industry. John started immediately in the lumber trade at age 14 as an office boy with Moore & Smith Lumber Company for \$4 a

Above left—Del Edgebert, of Olympia, Washington, saved the schooner MARTHA from destruction and rebuilt her with a lot of help from family and friends; today she's owned and operated by the Schooner Martha Foundation, and she cuts quite a figure around Puget Sound.

Left—A 1976 haulout accident in Seattle left MARTHA horribly mangled along her port side.



Above—After her launching in 1907, MARTHA proved quite tender, and her helm balance was also troublesome. Designer B.B. Crowninshield increased the size of her mainsail and added a second headsail, among other things, to improve her balance. Today she sails as a staysail schooner with a marconi main (see opposite page and page 69). **Left**—Lumberman John R. Hanify, at MARTHA's wheel, with an unidentified crewman, was a noted yachtsman on San Francisco Bay. He and two companions died in a 1922 sailing accident on a different boat.

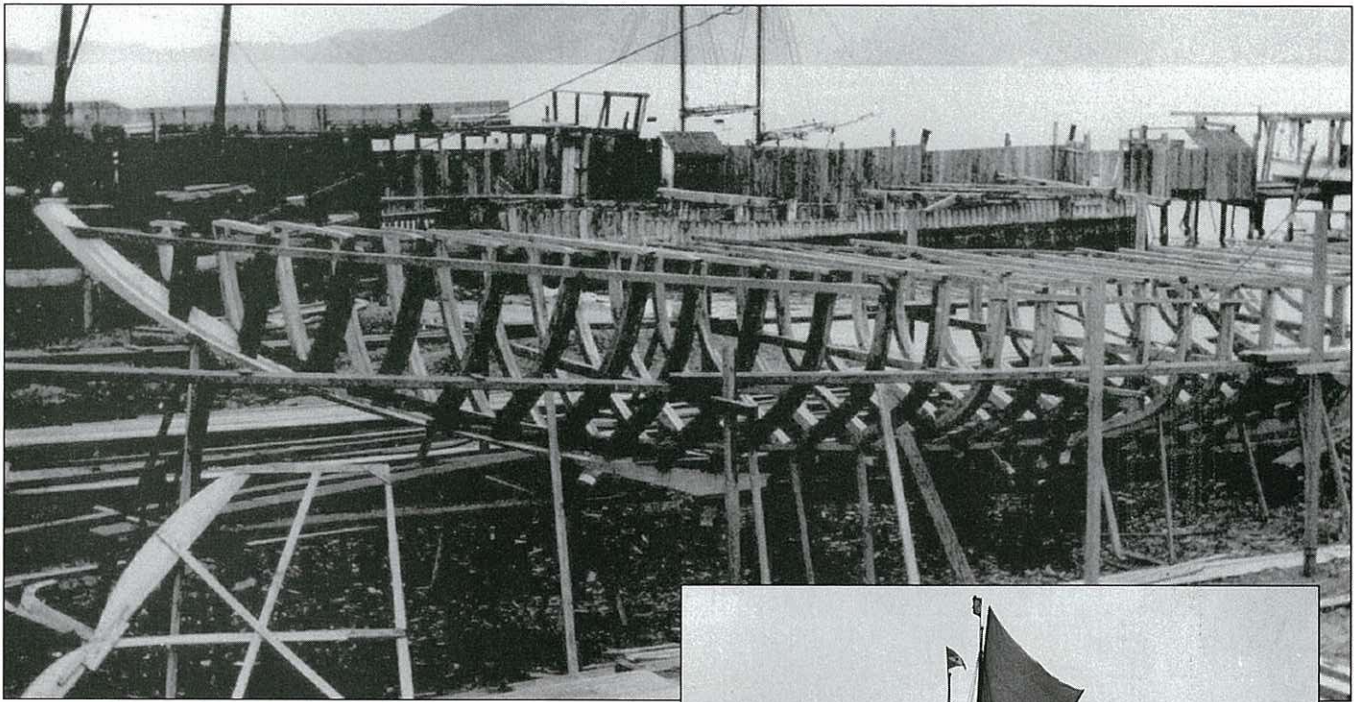
week. After 17 years he became the general manager. In 1897 he started J.R. Hanify & Company, which specialized in lumber transportation and sales on the West Coast. Before long, his firm owned tracts of timberland in Humboldt County in northern California as well as three steam schooners and three sailing schooners used to ship lumber.

By 1907, Hanify was considered one of the wealthiest and most admired captains of industry on the West Coast. He had begun sailing at age 16, and in his prime he was considered one of the most skillful yachtsmen on San Francisco Bay. He was Commodore of the San Francisco Yacht Club in 1909. After owning three smaller yachts,

Hanify commissioned a 66' gaff-rigged racing schooner from Boston naval architect B.B. Crowninshield (1867–1948), who had achieved prominence for his broad-ranging designs, especially for his coasting and fishing schooners, schooner yachts, and knockabout sloops. In 1901 he designed the AMERICA's Cup contender INDEPENDENCE.

Hanify had his schooner built at the W.F. Stone Boat Yard of San Francisco (see WB No. 109). Stone was a logical choice, having previously built six commercial vessels as well as a yacht for Hanify and having earned a reputation as one of the West Coast's premier shipbuilders. Under W.F. Stone, the yard built both sailing and steam schooners, the largest being the 225' five-masted W.H. MARSTON, in 1901. Stone was also known as a great sailboat skipper, and his yard also built an occasional yacht, including YANKEE, a 1906 schooner that is still sailing on the Bay. (The Stone yard is still in business, now in Alameda, California.)

Hanify's new schooner was built with $2\frac{3}{4}'' \times 5''$



Above—MARTHA's builders at W.F. Stone Boat Yard got their first three-dimensional view of the schooner's hull once her double-sawn oak frames were erected on her keel. Later, intermediate steam-bent frames were installed.

Right—Wing-on-wing in the years shortly after her launching, MARTHA shows her considerable press of canvas. Just after her launching, significant ballast was added to keep her on her feet.



SAN FRANCISCO NATIONAL MARITIME HISTORICAL PARK

COURTESY MARY ANN GIGLIUTO

double-sawn oak frames on 24" centers, with intermediate steam-bent frames of 2" x 3" oak. The planking was full-length, 2"-thick fir fastened with galvanized iron nails. Clamps were 2" x 8" and the deck was planked with vertical-grain fir. The masts were solid round spruce. Her dimensions were 66' LOD, 16' beam, and 4'6" draft with the centerboard up. Her sparred length was 84'.

Hanify named the new schooner in honor of his wife, Martha. MARTHA's logbook for her commissioning day, May 10, 1908, describes her first cruise as a sail around the warships anchored in San Francisco Bay. "MARTHA had a reef in her mainsail and was glad of it since the wind blew up the bay into soap-suds." After a full day of sailing, MARTHA picked up her mooring in Sausalito.

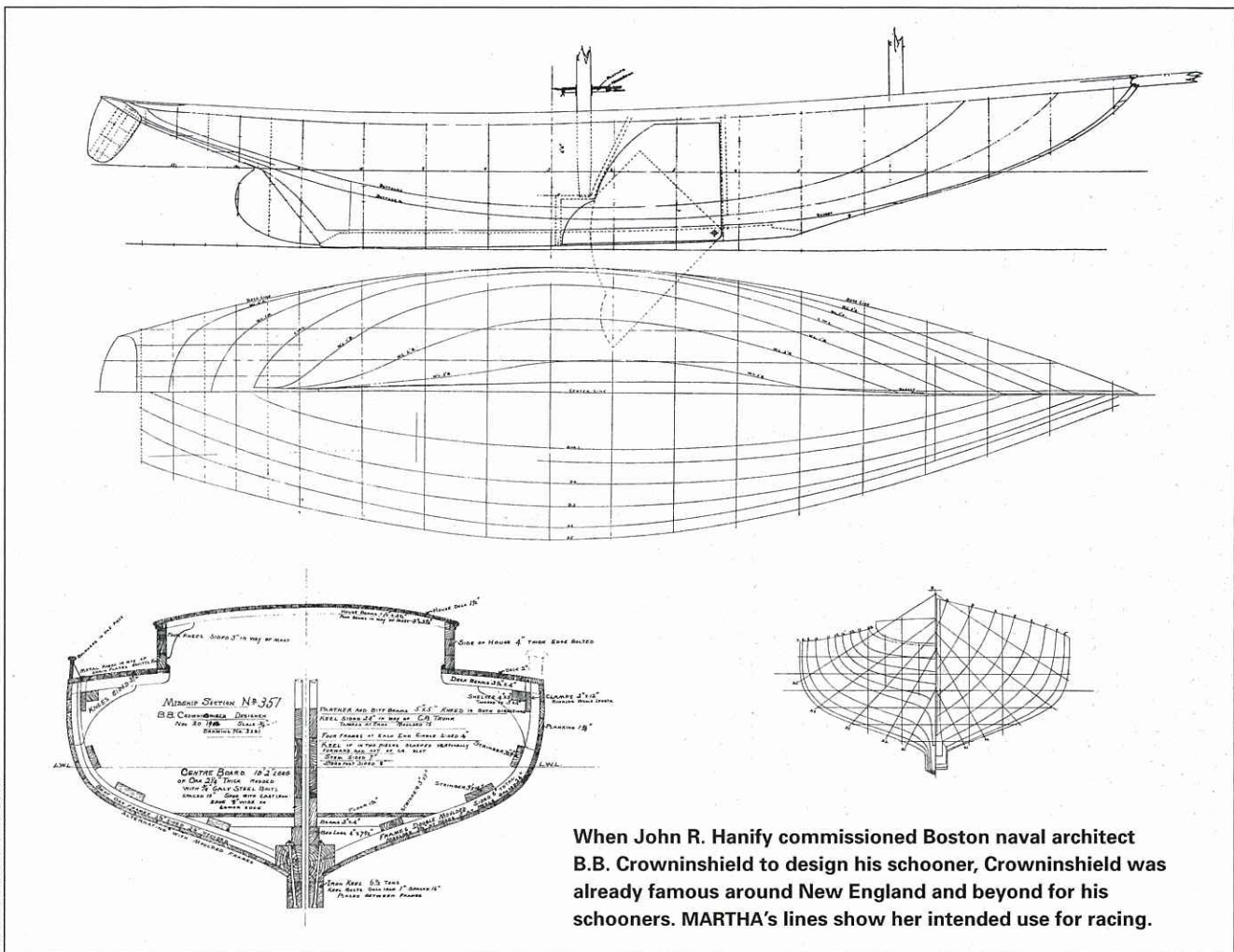
In preparing her for the serious racing that would come in the 1908 season, Hanify discovered that MARTHA was not without a few faults. A story in the January 1908 *Yachting* reported, "From the day she slid down the ways [in late 1907] her owner has been constantly adjusting her trim both as to hull and spars in order to get her to do justice in performance to the beauty of her graceful lines and proportions. At first she was so tender that it required the addition of 2,800 pounds of ballast before she came anywhere near being stiff enough."

In September 1908, Crowninshield observed in hindsight that, "MARTHA proved a little tender and carried a too-strong weather helm. I drew a new sail plan with a slightly smaller mainsail and a double head rig, increasing slightly the sail area and moving the center of effort considerably forward. During the winter her masts were

reduced in diameter and she was fitted with hollow gaffs. Mr. Hanify wrote in May that on his first sail [after the alterations] she seemed to be considerably improved."

The adjustments helped MARTHA show promise as a racing schooner. By September 14, 1908, with San Francisco Bar pilot Capt. Alex Swanson at the helm, she placed second in her first big race, the Farallon Cup, a 49-mile course starting off Point Bonita with a beat to and around the middle Farallon Island and back. *Yachting* wrote in December 1908 that Swanson "got all out of the yacht that was in her. She is a magnificent cruising boat besides being above the average in speed." YANKEE finished first, but MARTHA was only a few minutes behind. W.F. Stone must have been mighty pleased, having designed YANKEE and built both of the yachts.

The San Francisco Call of May 9, 1909, reported, "The booming of the gun on board the flagship MARTHA promptly at noon today was the signal that the yachting



When John R. Hanify commissioned Boston naval architect B.B. Crowninshield to design his schooner, Crowninshield was already famous around New England and beyond for his schooners. MARTHA's lines show her intended use for racing.

season for the San Francisco Yacht Club was formally open." One can only imagine how proud Commodore Hanify was of his flagship that year. The next year, MARTHA won the SFYC race from Vallejo to Sausalito. "Despite having a generous handicap of 20 minutes," the *Chronicle* reported on August 15, 1910, "she did not need half of that time, as she won by over thirteen minutes. MARTHA showed to better advantage than she has in any previous race during the season, and this despite the fact that the weather was light." Though the record of this era is spotty, it does appear that Hanify enjoyed steady racing success with MARTHA. The *Chronicle* reported on her again on June 16, 1916: "For three years MARTHA has been racing against sloops or anything else that happened along. Yesterday in the SFYC Schooner Race with boats of her own class to compete against, and perfectly handled by her owner, she came romping home in second place."

MARTHA would have been fitted out in the typical fashion of the day, with no engine or electrical system. A letter dated July 22, 1910, from Aylsworth Electrical Specialties may be a response to Hanify's pursuit of modernization. "Dear Sir: We propose to furnish six 'Mazda lamps' and necessary fixtures for your yacht MARTHA. We will install plugs for a cigar lighter in the cabin and searchlight wherever you may indicate. We will also install a buzzer in the galley and a push button under or at some

convenient spot near the table. All wiring will be rubber covered and done in a neat and workmanlike manner throughout. Our price for the above complete will be \$183.75. Trusting we may receive your valued order. We remain, H.G. Aylsworth."

Hanify had several other boats during the time he owned MARTHA, including a William Gardner-designed R-boat and the 66' Gardner-designed, Stone-built sloop WESTWARD, with which he won numerous trophies, including the highly prized King George V Cup.

Tragedy struck on May 7, 1922, when Hanify, fellow business titan Edward Christianson, and Hanify's "yacht keeper" Peter Andersen took Hanify's 21' knockabout sloop for her maiden sail on the Bay, near Hayward. A particularly strong front blew through the area, and a day later the bodies of all three men were found among the wreckage of the sloop. The exact circumstances of the capsizing were never discovered. "The waterfront was aghast at the loss of the two men who virtually controlled its affairs," a report in the *Chronicle* stated. San Francisco's mayor echoed the sentiment: "It is hard to believe," wrote Mayor James Rolph, "that the city has lost in a single stroke two citizens of such worth and power."

MARTHA was soon acquired by George Kohn, who moved her to southern California. Probably the most notable of MARTHA's



SCHOONER MARTHA FOUNDATION

subsequent owners was actor James Cagney (1899–1986). “To expand the boundaries of private entertainment, Jimmy bought himself a boat in 1934,” according to *James Cagney: The Authorized Biography*, by Doug Warren with James Cagney (St. Martin’s Press, New York, New York, 1983). “He kept MARTHA, a 66’ schooner built in 1907, moored at Newport Beach. The boat was used frequently to traverse the southern California coastline or to travel to Catalina for overnight outings. The clan, or the ‘Boy’s Club,’ as it came to be known, would usually be present on sailing excursions, and the most enthusiastic sailor of all was Spencer Tracy.” In a letter, Cagney wrote, “The interior was of perfectly beautiful mahogany throughout. She had a GMC diesel in her which was new about 1941. She was a very reliable old craft and could sail with the best of them around San Diego.” The GMC diesel replaced a Kermath Sea Eagle 6–60 installed in 1935. Cagney also commented that he sailed MARTHA with a marconi-rigged main and a gaff-rigged fore. Until he sold her in 1943, Cagney moored MARTHA at Cagney Island just off Balboa. On more than one occasion, Cagney had to cancel a trip to Catalina due to an extended movie shooting schedule. Rather than disappoint his guests, he would send MARTHA over to Catalina with a professional crew.

Alan Chase owned MARTHA during the late 1940s and at one point contracted a crew to sail her from Newport Beach to Hawaii. She sailed in the 1949 and 1960 Ensenada Race, the latter with then-owner C.T. McElroy. That year she placed first in the “Arbitrary Handicap” fleet. In 1965, owner David Dinsmore sailed MARTHA in the first revived Master Mariner’s Regatta on San Francisco

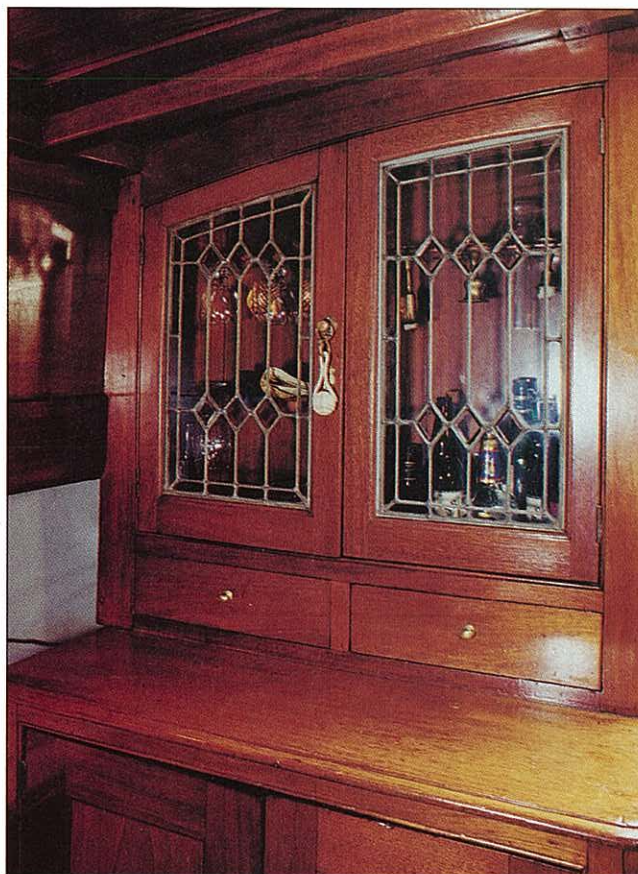
Bay. On board as crew was Lester Stone, age 73, the son of MARTHA’s builder. Fifty years had passed since his last visit to MARTHA, aboard which he had sailed frequently as a young man. MARTHA by then was rigged as a stay-sail schooner, and a permanent solution to her tenderness had been sought by replacing her centerboard with external ballast on a fixed keel.

In 1968, MARTHA was sold to aluminum magnate Edgar F. Kaiser. Kaiser’s daughter Carlyn was director of Camp Four Winds on Orcas Island, Washington, and MARTHA was to be used as the focus of the camp’s sailing program. She sailed north that spring under the command of Myles McCoy, first to Orcas Island and then to Blanchard Boat Company in Seattle for a major refit. The main boom was shortened and a boomkin added to accommodate a permanent backstay. The standing rigging was renewed, and the engine was replaced with a GMC 4–53. “She was a heavy old boat,” McCoy recalled, having skippered MARTHA for three camp seasons. “We had a fo’c’s’le full of old sails. The spinnaker boom was so brutally heavy that we never used it with campers on board. On one trip from Nanaimo to Pender Harbour, we covered 25 miles in two-and-a-half hours—pretty good for an old girl.” Nanaimo is on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, and Pender Harbour is to the north on the B.C. mainland side of the Strait of Georgia. “She had a lovely motion and was fun to sail; there were always plenty of jobs for a young sailor,” said McCoy, who made two or three cruises each season to Princess Louisa Inlet, a trip always sought after by the senior campers. “She wasn’t built for comfort, but for the kids it didn’t matter.”

Early in 1976 Kaiser donated MARTHA to Camp Four



Facing page—Racing may have been MARTHA's prime objective, but her interior also shows that owner John R. Hanify had an eye for fine joinery as well. **Above**—A spacious cockpit makes MARTHA efficient to race and cruise. **Right**—A leaded-glass cabinet is one of the interior touches that, together with MARTHA's important history, convinced Del Edgebert of Olympia, Washington, to save the boat in 1976. He owned her until 1995.



Winds. Everett Johnson was her skipper at this time. In June she was hauled out on a vertical-screw jack lift at The Boat Yard on Lake Union in Seattle. Some say she was there for routine maintenance, but others said she was there for a "surgical procedure" to bob her transom in order to avoid compliance with a Coast Guard requirement that vessels over 65' long have watertight bulkheads. Regardless of the reason, during the night one of the screw jacks failed. MARTHA rolled over and impaled her port side on the edge of the lift, opening her topsides and lifting a 20' length of her deck. She was declared a total loss, hastily patched with plywood, relaunched, and auctioned to the highest bidder.

The only bidder not a scrap dealer was Del Edgebert, a 42-year-old longshoreman from Olympia, Washington. He considered MARTHA, with her mahogany interior and leaded-glass cabinetry, a rare find. Over a six-year period, Edgebert worked with his father; his wife, Paulette; and friends Doug and Rex Keyes to put MARTHA back together. After the refit they took her to San Francisco for the Master Mariner's Regatta and then cruised to Alaska. In 1981 she was awarded "Best Restored" and "Best Sail" at the Victoria Classic Boat Festival in British Columbia. MARTHA also served as their home.

In 1995, after 19 years of ownership, Del and Paulette Edgebert donated MARTHA to the Northwest Schooner Society (NWSS) with the understanding that she would be used and maintained. The society had been formed in 1994 with the dual goals of historic ship preservation and creating youth and elder sailing opportunities. After a time, Tim Mehrer, the skipper of the 127' schooner

ZODIAC who was acting as a NWSS agent for the care of MARTHA, came to the realization that the NWSS was not going to be able to properly care for MARTHA. He set about finding the right person to take over the project.

One of Tim's crew was Robert d'Arcy, who had worked with him for several years on a variety of projects aboard ZODIAC. A third-generation shipwright, d'Arcy grew up sailing with his family back East on Narragansett Bay. He was used to working with heavy timber, having assisted his father in rebuilding the 46' schooner GEORGE V. GRAY and having later worked under Roger Hambidge at Mystic Seaport in restoring the whaleship CHARLES W. MORGAN and the fishing schooner L.A. DUNTON. Tim offered MARTHA to d'Arcy, but it wasn't an easy sell. Knowing she required extensive work, d'Arcy initially had little enthusiasm for the schooner. Nor did he have the financial resources to take on such a huge project. Over a period of four months, however, he researched her past and became aware of MARTHA's historical significance. In 1997, he began working with a fellow crew member from ZODIAC, JoAnn O'Connor, to create the nonprofit Schooner MARTHA Foundation to handle the legal and financial aspects of the schooner and design a sail training program. (O'Connor left in 2001 to work for the VIRGINIA V Foundation.)

After consulting old records and photographs and engaging a marine surveyor, the new owners identified significant deficiencies and established a restoration plan. During the off-seasons of the past eight years, they have made numerous repairs and upgrades. The transom, boomkin, and stem have been replaced, as have numerous frames, using angelique timbers in place of white oak.



TUPPER KAYS

MARTHA seems to have taken warmly to her home amid calm Puget Sound and British Columbia anchorages with such backdrops as Mount Baker. The Schooner **MARTHA** Foundation hopes to take her on at least one voyage back to her birthplace on San Francisco Bay for the Master Mariners Regatta in 2007—her centennial year.

All new fastenings are of silicon-bronze. Topside planking has been replaced, using silverballi instead of fir, fastened with 4" No. 20 silicon-bronze screws instead of galvanized steel. Her iron chainplates have been replaced with new ones of silicon-bronze. **MARTHA** was also fitted with a new Isuzu 100-hp diesel (her fifth engine) along with new fuel tanks. During the winter of 2003–04, the deck planking was replaced with $\frac{5}{16}$ " silverballi glued over two layers of $\frac{1}{2}$ " marine plywood glued and screwed to repaired deckbeams. Her new covering boards are of teak and her bulwarks are of angelique.

Maintenance, of course, is what enables **MARTHA** to continue earning her keep. For the past eight seasons, she has been engaged in sailing programs designed primarily for youths 12 to 18. One of the things that makes sailing on **MARTHA** unusual is the instructor-to-crew ratio, which is generally one-to-two when six cadets are on board. "On a big schooner with 30 guests, your job for the week might be to trim the foresail," d'Arcy said. "With **MARTHA**, you are instructed on how to handle all aspects of the vessel. What we try to do with both youth and adult students is to give them an overall picture, from standing watch at the helm, trimming the sails, striking and furling, to cleaning the heads and washing dishes. We expose them to every aspect that makes **MARTHA** a successful place to live for one to three weeks while sailing on Puget Sound or in British Columbia. I think it's the whole perspective of how the vessel works, including elements of teamwork and leadership, that makes sailing on **MARTHA** a fulfilling experience."

The students come from all walks of life. "We tend to

think," d'Arcy said, "that at-risk kids are from poor or less-educated backgrounds. We've actually found just the opposite. We've worked with organizations that specialize in very expensive rehabilitation of wealthy kids who have gotten themselves in a great deal of trouble. They can often be the more difficult kids with which to work." By comparison, "We seem to be able to reach those with social and monetary challenges more quickly than others. They are eager to dive in and get their hands on things." When asked about discipline problems, d'Arcy said the most common problems were laziness and lack of motivation. "You have to learn your job and how to do it accurately," he said. The day always starts with a morning swim, usually around 7 a.m. "The kids gripe about it at first, but later on they look forward to it, often checking the water temperature gauge to see how tough they're becoming." They have had only two severe discipline problems that resulted in expulsion: one for disobedience and one for drug use. Both the Wooden Boat Foundation in Port Townsend, Washington, and the Center for Wooden Boats in Seattle offer tie-in programs with **MARTHA**. Alternate High School No. 1 in Seattle also is involved. Scholarships are available. So far, the supply of interested students has just about matched the number of open berths.

The occasional adult trips might find **MARTHA** involved in the week-long Capt. Raynaud International Schooner Race with 12 to 18 other schooners, or perhaps the Around the County Race in the San Juan Islands or one of the wooden boat festivals in Seattle, Victoria, or Port Townsend. "We've been fortunate with our older guests,"

Right—The staysail schooner rig proves handy for the sail training cruises MARTHA does today.

Below—Young trainees such as, left to right, Christine Kiely, Chris Stohlman, Tristan Jones, and Noah Johnson get a fully rounded experience—which is MARTHA’s central purpose.

d’Arcy commented. “The fact that we’re not the ‘Love Boat’ and don’t serve martinis in the cockpit kind of thins out the crowd. We expect our guests to become part of the crew.”

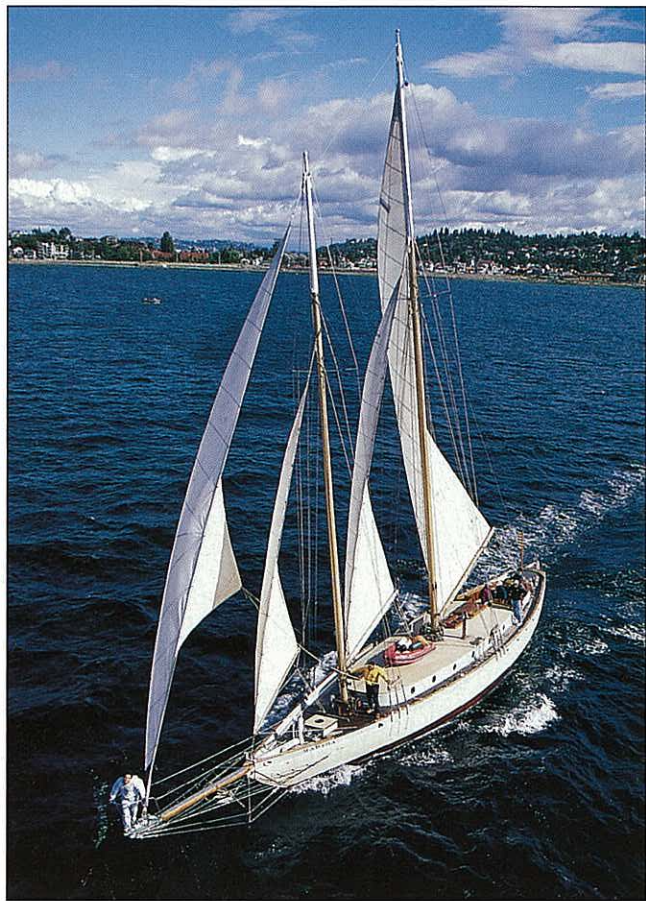
A three-week cruise for young people tends to be the most rewarding. “The kids really get into the rhythm, absorb their surroundings and figure things out,” d’Arcy said. “It’s a wonderful feeling to be able to send one watch below to navigate and leave the other to stay on deck and handle the vessel.”

Today, MARTHA’s operating partner with d’Arcy is his wife, Holly. A native of Oregon, she was on the Oregon State University crew and the national doubles sculling team. She later worked as a sailmaker. In fact, she met d’Arcy while building sails for MARTHA. “Getting involved with Robert meant getting involved with MARTHA,” she said. They now share the schooner with their two-year-old daughter, Mary.

The Schooner MARTHA Foundation is a nonprofit corporation and has no paid employees. Robert and Holly are strictly volunteers. Their primary source of income is off-season shipwright work. This tends to result in a very simple and frugal lifestyle. When asked what advice he would have for others seeking a similar life, d’Arcy replied, “Being a steward to an old schooner is very altruistic. You need to stay focused. This life is full of sacrifice—it will not lead to wealth. As long as we enjoy it, we’ll carry on.”

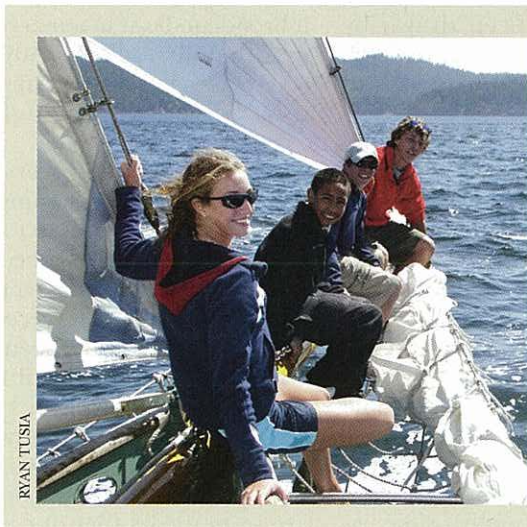
Although MARTHA’s condition is much improved, the work list still includes over 30 items, the biggest ones being the replacement of the deadwood, bottom planking, ballast keel, rudder, sails and foremast. Galvanized plank fastenings have been used to match the metal of the originals. The long-term goal is to make MARTHA capable of cruising offshore. Ultimately, d’Arcy would like to take MARTHA around Vancouver Island and also to have her return to San Francisco Bay for the Master Mariners Regatta during 2007, the year of her 100th birthday.

The projected cost of the work ahead exceeds \$250,000. “Raising funds has been a challenge, but so far we have been very fortunate,” d’Arcy said. “There were a handful of people who stepped up in the early days of the restoration to make sure MARTHA had what she needed both financially and with services and materials.” Donations of labor, supplies, equipment, shop space, and cash have all helped the project.



NEIL RABINOWITZ

MARTHA is in good hands and her future is bright. As the end of her first century approaches, Messrs. Hanify, Crowninshield, and Stone would doubtless be pleased to learn that she continues to inspire those who sail aboard her as well as those who admire her from afar.



RYAN TUSIA

As I was reading in the cockpit of our Concordia yawl, IRENE, while at anchor at Newcastle Island near Nanaimo during summer of 2004, I happened to look over the top of my book and spotted a beautiful and well-kept schooner entering the harbor. “It’s MARTHA!” I exclaimed to my guests. “Isn’t she lovely? Look at the kids standing by to let go the anchor. Did I tell you about the time she...and was nearly...?” Gosh, that was nearly 30 years ago!



Douglas Cole sails IRENE out of Bellingham, Washington.

MARTHA’s home port is the Point Hudson Marina in Port Townsend, Washington; Schooner MARTHA Foundation, 1010 Valley St., Ste. 100, Seattle, WA 98109; 206-310-8573; <www.schoonermartha.org>. For more about B.B. Crowninshield, see WB No. 37 and Maritime Life & Traditions No. 24.