

# RESTORATION QUARTERLY

Summer, 2008



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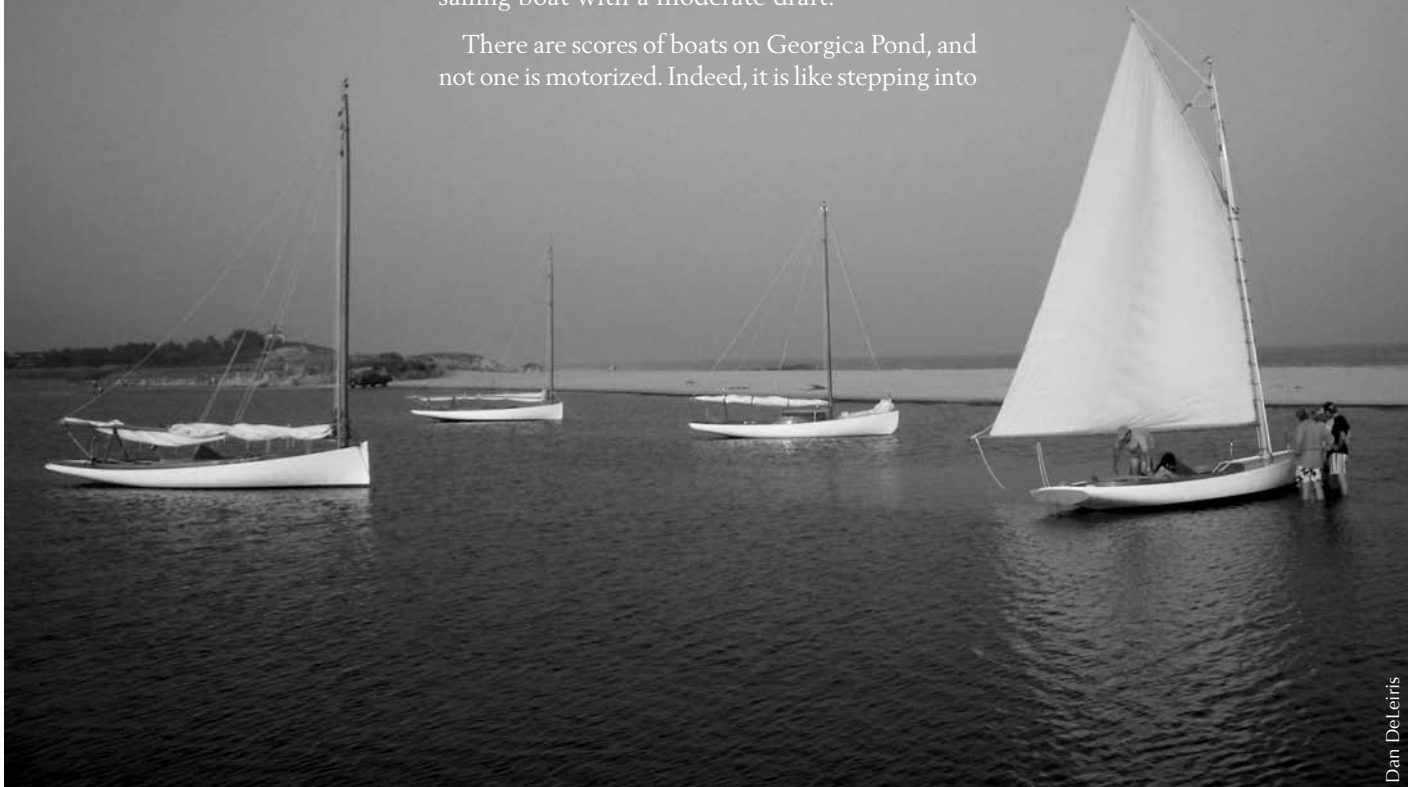
# Sailing Along on Georgica Pond

## *A Rich Tradition and a Fine Partnership*

By Joe Sayre, IYRS '06

Georgica Pond, on the south fork of Long Island, is a catboater's paradise. It is separated from the Atlantic by the slightest sand bar, and therefore receives the ocean's prevailing onshore wind for most of the summer. At 290 acres, including its many coves, the pond is small enough to explore in one afternoon, but also large enough to get lost-beyond-hope in the fog. Georgica's brackish water is too shallow for any sailing boat with a moderate draft.

There are scores of boats on Georgica Pond, and not one is motorized. Indeed, it is like stepping into



Dan DeLeiris

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a bygone era when the Beetle Cat® can be used for some utility and Gil Smith originals deliver bathers to the beach. Georgica Pond and the neighborhood that surrounds it could be compared to the neighboring Hamptons; however, it is its own unique enclave of friendliness and camaraderie and therefore an excellent home to sailors.

I was introduced to Georgica in 2006 after graduating from IYRS and gaining a position at Wooden Boatworks in Hampton Bays. Most all of the pond's sailing boats are under their care.

#### THE BEETLE CATS AND THEIR FANS

There are 55 Beetle Cats on Georgica, making this fleet the largest in the world. Around shore there is a rainbow of well-

used and well-maintained Beetle Cats dispersed among stands of phragmites. Each Beetle has a carved mahogany nameplate mounted above the tiller port to distinguish it from its neighbors. *Late for Supper* is perhaps the perfect name for a Georgica Beetle.

Although summer residents of Georgica would likely walk down their lawn any morning, afternoon, or evening; step into their Beetle Cat; and in moments be pleasantly sailing—these Beetles are principally racers.

Each Saturday morning, from June to September, Donn Costanzo, co-owner of Wooden Boatworks, arrives at the pond early. By 11:00, he has set up a race course depending on the day's breeze. At noon, Beetles begin swirling around the pond populated by fathers,

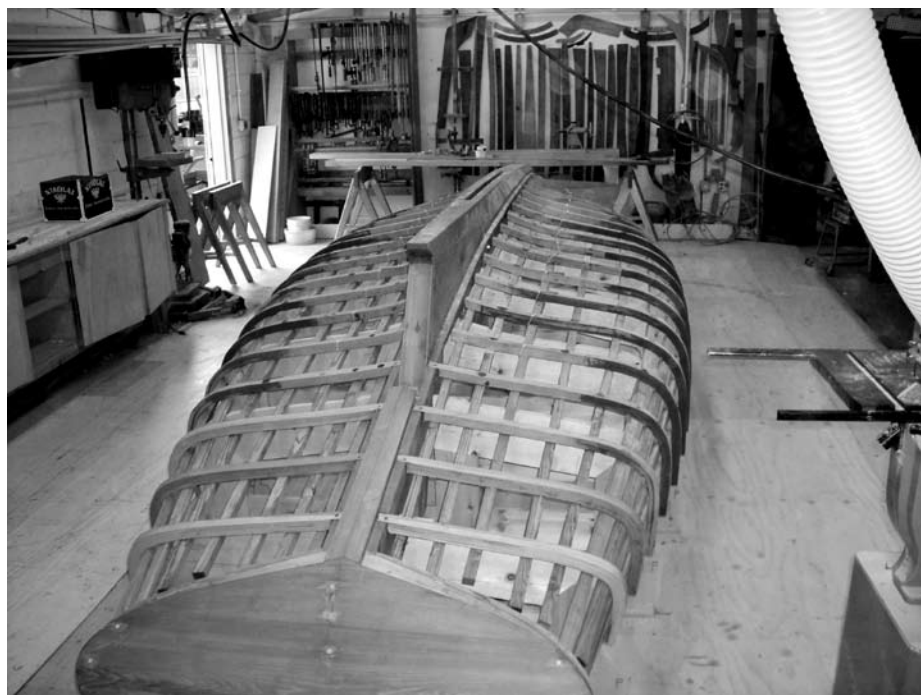
sons, mothers, daughters, and every combination thereof. At 1:00, the race begins. Usually anywhere from one to two dozen boats participate. Every year, Commodore Michael Schulz presents a trophy, for which competition between neighbors can be intense.

There are seven IYRS-restored Beetles on the pond. I recognized two of them from my first year at IYRS and can report to their builders (Tom Copps and Andy King, who restored one, and Thibault deLenclos and Tim Mueller, the other) that they are looking fine and sailing often.

#### B-CLASS BOATS, THE BEETLES' "BIG SISTERS"

Although Beetle Cats serve the pond

*Continued on page 16*



Dan DeLeiris

ABOVE *Tamayasamoz under construction*  
FACING PAGE *Gil Smith-designed boats grace Georgica Pond*

# Georgica Pond

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community perfectly as racing one-designs, they can be stiflingly small for taking a group of adults on a tour of the pond. For this purpose, B-Class yachts seem to be just the right size.

Built in 1885 at Gil Smith's yard in Patchogue NY, *Windward* is an early B-class designed by Smith, the preeminent yacht designer of that era, to be raced in the shoal waters of the Great South Bay, Long Island. At the time, expansion of the Long Island Railroad was making the island's south shore a popular summer destination. The oystermen of the area had long been earning their living on catboats, but by the 1880s yacht racing had taken a strong hold.

With their long overhang aft, graceful tumble home quarters, and elliptical radius transoms, Gil Smith's designs are distinctively sleeker than their New England counterparts. Smith's early designs are characterized by their "cod head and mackerel tail," and *Windward* embodies this description.

In 2006, boat builder Manny Palomo and I began *Windward*'s restoration under the direction of Donn Costanzo and Bruce Wahl. In the course of this seven-month effort, Manny and I replaced her stem, keel, and centerboard case. We used a forest of natural oak and cherry crooks to replace 85 percent of her sawn frames. She also received a new deck and sole. Astonish-

ingly, her planking was sound, and, except for her garboards, she boasts original planking. In 2007, after 123 years, she was relaunched and spent the summer breaking in new cotton sails on Georgica.

## CONTINUING THE TRADITION

*Tamayasamoz*, a replica of a 1925 Gil Smith, B-class catboat, *Gay B*, represents the last phase of Smith's B-Class design evolution. On *Gay B*, the plumb stem is nixed in favor of a swooping cutaway stem profile, and her mast is stepped substantially further aft. *Gay B*'s performance to windward is ironically, improved over *Windward*'s.

Lofting on *Tamayasamoz* began in January 2007. Lead shipwright Daniel DeLeiris and I spent the following seven months completing the project. Her steam-bent oak frames are covered by Atlantic White cedar planking, and she is decked in Port Orfred cedar with cherry king planks. As in the original, the elliptical combing, bulkhead, and trim work are also cherry. In July 2007, after a long spring, *Tamayasamoz* sat on her mooring next to a Beetle Cat of the same name.

At 21 feet, both *Windward* and *Tamayasamoz* have large

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Windward and Blue Moon

Dan DeLeiris

cockpits and low comfortable combings. Both designs impart a brilliant harmony that would suit even a novice sailor. No lines crisscross the cockpit, as the mainsheet is ingeniously made off to the tiller, and the halyards are cleated on either side of the centerboard case. Both boats are easily single-handed yet they are comfortable with several onboard.

In August 2007, Georgica Pond was host to the largest gathering of Gil Smith designs in recent history. At the first annual Gil Smith Regatta, six boats were present, including *Windward*, *Tamaysamoz*, *Madigan* (built at the Apprentice Shop in 2002) and three Moonbeam replica sloops adapted from Smith's original cat rig.

### THE STRENGTH OF PARTNERSHIP

Wooden Boatworks has grown from a small maintenance business into a large operation, responsible for vessels ranging from 12 to 59 feet. This year, we are breaking in a new shop and blue-water railway at the old Hanff Boatyard in Greenport, New York. The relationship between IYRS and Wooden Boatworks has been a crucial part of the success of the business. In fact, Donn Costanzo was introduced to Georgica Pond by his friend, IYRS program director Clark Poston, to work on an IYRS Beetle. Continuing this tradition, Wooden Boatworks has recently hired freshly minted IYRS graduate Ben Bentley '08 to join former *Java* instructor Daniel DeLeiris and me in finishing a 36'8" replica of the Gil Smith sloop *Kid*. ♠



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