

Down to the seas in ships ...in a Vic Carpenter sailboat

by Don Lawrence

The open sea has always held a certain lure for man, rivalled only by his love for his ship.

Vic Carpenter of Port McNicoll, knows this better than any man, and he, unlike so many others, has the unique experience of being able to work at his passion.

Carpenter is a craftsman, which is all you need to say when you're describing him.

Carpenter has been building custom boats for close to 30 years, having learned his trade from the doing. His wife, Hazel, helps him sharing the same feeling about wooden ships that he does.

Also Carpenter has three workers that he trusts, knowing they are craftsmen in their own right.

Willi King comes from Port McNicoll and started with Carpenter about 12 years ago at the age of 17 as an apprentice.

King is especially skilled with his hands, and seems to enjoy working with wood. Perhaps this comes from his Indian background.

If so, King's ancestors can rest assured that the craft they studied so many years ago has not been forgotten.

Then there's Bill McCollough from Midland, who knows how to work his way with wood as well as any of the crew in Carpenter's place.

Varnishing

As mentioned before, Carpenter's wife Hazel, helps out doing the painting and varnishing, as well as the sanding. She adds the often necessary "woman's touch", as needed in almost everything we do.

Lastly, there's Kevin Tigwell from Midland. Tigwell attends Midland Secondary School, and then goes to work for Carpenter after school.

He also works on the boats during the summer months, learning the trade from Carpenter, possibly the best in the business.

The reason that it is necessary to describe each member of the group in such detail, is that it would not seem right to do otherwise.

They are so much like a regular family that it is hard to imagine one as the boss, and the other the employee.

This must be why the work is so well done. The craftsmanship is excellent, and just has to be the product of a well organized team effort.

The 'Carpenter family,' if I may call them that, is proud of their work and how they do it.

All wood is carefully stretched over the frame of the boat, and glued down with the same glue used to secure the nose cone to the

re-entry vehicle used in the moon shot.

Lead is cast right on the premises for use in the boats, and all metal parts are forged right there as well.

This professionalism does not appear in the work of the mass-producing giants, and it doesn't go unnoticed either.

The editor of the magazine, "Wooden Boat," John Wilson, had heard about the work of Vic Carpenter and his crew, and flew down to see it for himself.

One look and he knew that this was the pictorial he had been looking for.

Picture

A six-month picture spread is planned for the magazine in the very near future, with many photographs already being taken.

Other people have also commented on Carpenter's product, claiming that it rivalled, if not bettered, that work done in Germany, France, and the other so-called ship-building capitals of the world.

Carpenter has overseen perhaps 20-25 boats in the last 30 years, with some taking as long as a year and a half to complete from design to the final touches.

His most recent project was the "Stinger", which he built for Joe Kindswater of Port Huron.

The Stinger was a 35 foot racing boat, which took seven months to build, those being made up of 8-hour days.

Carpenter would rather not have said how much one of his boats cost, but did say that it will depend upon the size and materials used.

A 45 foot yacht, that was near completion in his workshop was valued roughly at \$250,000, a small price to pay when you consider the workmanship involved.

Carpenter's wife, Hazel, said that all of the boats built, even those of 30 years ago, still are afloat, and none the worse for wear despite the rough weather they've seen in their many trips around the world.

Carpenter has built them all, from small racing dinghies to the big 45-foot yachts. He has built the "Flying Dutchman", of Olympic fame, and the "Golden Goose", which he built for Canadian singer and soon to be film star, Gordon Lightfoot.

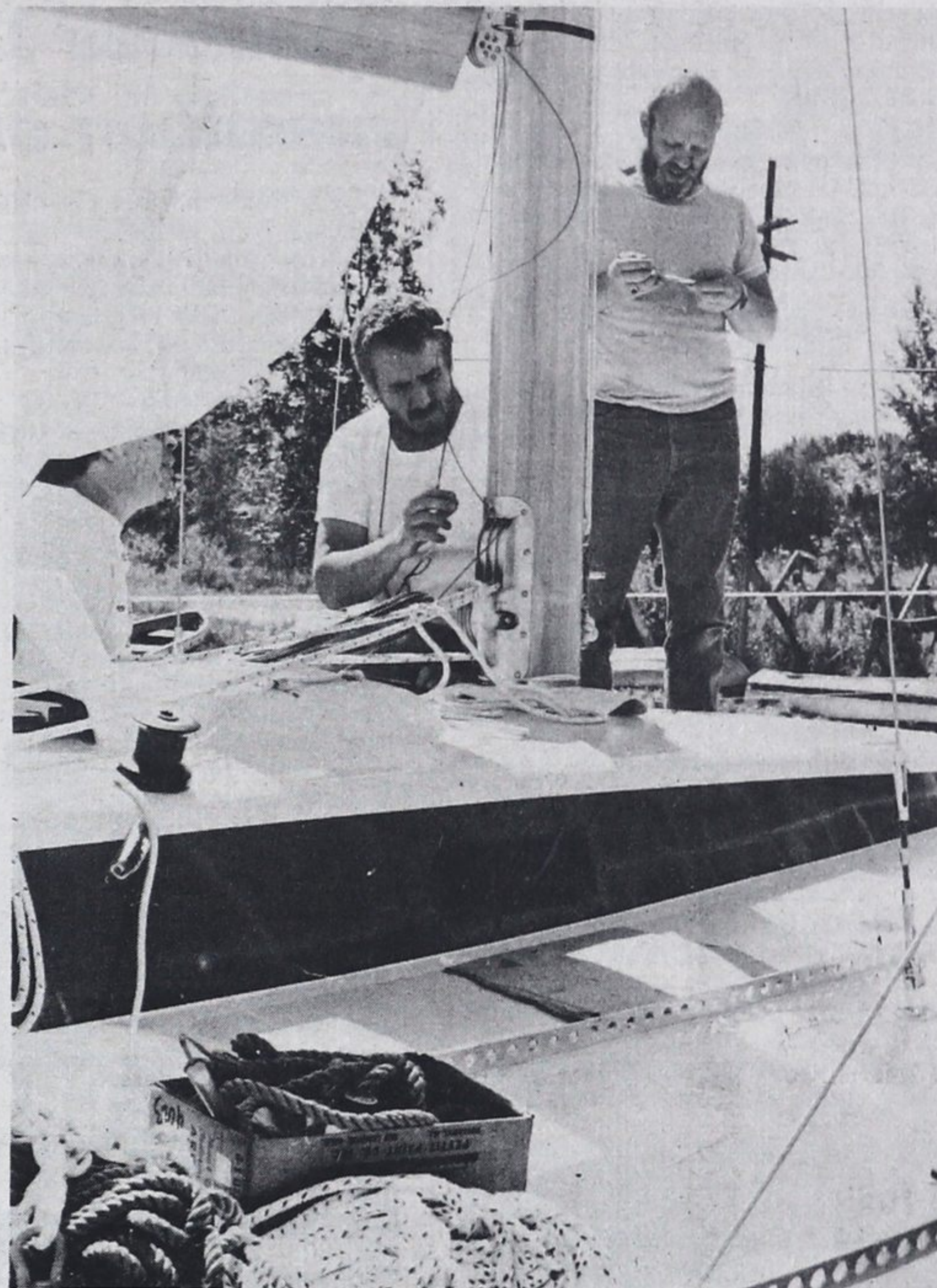
Lightfoot allows Carpenter and his wife to take his boat out when he is not using it.

Carpenter, like many others in various fields, has not built a boat for himself exclusively, never really finding the need.

So, through the thousands of hours of labour and loving attention, Carpenter's devotion to his art shines through.

Vic Carpenter is one of the best in his field, and intends to keep it that way, with his constant dedication to details. In this way, it

is assured that he and his crew will be remembered "When men go down to the sea in ships."



Sailing in his blood

Vic Carpenter, of Port McNicoll, center, adds some finishing touches to the "Stinger", a 35 foot racing boat he built for Joe Kindswater of Port Huron. The "Stinger" took Carpenter and his crew seven months of steady labour to complete. Bill McCollough of

Midland, stands next to Carpenter, while Willi King of Port McNicoll, to the left of Carpenter, watches on. McCollough and King are both members of Carpenter's crew along with Hazel Carpenter, and Kevin Tigwell from Midland.



PENETANG - MIDLAND GYM CLUB

Gymnastics Corner

Once again another gymnastic season is in full swing. Last Wednesday and Thursday saw approximately 75 gymnasts try out for the Hurons Gymnastic Club.

Corpus Christi School was indeed a very busy place as gymnasts whirled and twirled in an effort to make the competitive gymnastic team. Although many were not successful, all found a place in the club.

In an effort to make room for as many gymnasts as possible, the Hurons have developed three levels at which the gymnasts may participate. These are based on three criteria: fitness level; ability level; and the amount of time that the gymnast is willing to practice.

Gymnastics

The competitive section of the club is divided into three age groups and is designed for gymnasts of above average ability. They must practice for 12-15 hours per week in order to master many of the more difficult moves.

The life of a gymnast is not an easy one!

This year members of the competitive section of the Hurons will be competing in the Metro-West Region of the Ontario Gymnastic Federation (O.G.F.).

Out of the seven regions in Ontario, Metro-West is considered to be the top area. Therefore, these gymnasts must be thoroughly prepared.

Top level

Obviously, not everyone is ready or even interested in competing at the top level. As a result, the pre-competitive section of the Hurons Gymnastic Club was formed. They practice 9-12 hours per week.

Its design is to allow the young, up-coming gymnasts the opportunity to prepare themselves for future competition. The pressure of competition is kept to a minimum. This is their chance to learn at their own pace various moves and routines on all the equipment.

Exposure to competition is carefully screened. When ready, they are allowed to take part in selected competitions and displays.

This section also caters to gymnasts who for various reasons, have no desire to compete. They may be the older gymnasts who want to work out regularly. To them, the pre-competitive section may be of value to maintain an excellent level of fitness or for the companionship of friends who have the same interests as they do.

Fitness

Last but not least, is the developmental section of the Hurons. This is for everyone who is just beginning to learn gymnastic or for anyone who only wants to practice for two hours a week.

At this level the club stresses the three F's -- Fun, Fitness and Fundamentals. These gymnasts are grouped by ability and their progress is carefully monitored.

By the way, there are still openings in this section. It starts Sept. 18, 1980 at Corpus Christi School (5:30 - 7:30). Registration will occur then.

As one can see, the Hurons are attempting to serve the needs of as many children in

Huron as possible. The club's rapid growth is the result of its flexibility and its eagerness to accommodate as many children as possible.

The Hurons would like to thank the over 70 gymnasts who came out to the testing sessions. It was hectic but very worthwhile.

Tryouts

All in all, the Hurons club tryouts last week were an outstanding success. The gymnasts were tested for both physical fitness and ability. Generally the coaches were impressed with the fairly high level of fitness shown by most of the gymnasts. The only complaint that I heard was from a parent who was upset that after three hours of gymnastics practice, she couldn't get her child to go home!

Gymnastic Calendar

Sept. 12-13 -- tag days
Sept. 13 -- Club work out, Fall Fair
Sept. 13 -- 50-50 draw
Sept. 18 -- start of developmental section of Hurons