



EDUCATIONAL PASSAGES

Open your classroom to the world with one small boat

2015 WINTER NEWSLETTER

THREE LANDINGS AROUND THE WORLD IN ONE MONTH!

“CHARGER’S” AMAZING VOYAGE

“CHARGER” is a 5 foot unmanned self steering GPS monitored sailboat from Deep River, Connecticut and is powered solely by ocean winds and currents. She made this remarkable voyage and may now attempt to complete “The Atlantic Circle” and sail back to America.

-  Launched June 2012 north of the Bahamas
-  Myrtle Beach
-  Newfoundland
-  Wales
-  Lisbon, Portugal
-  Georgetown, Guyana
December 14, 2014



COULD THIS BOAT COMPLETE THE ATLANTIC CIRCLE???

“CHARGER” belongs to the John Winthrop Middle School in Deep River, Connecticut and is under the tutelage of teacher Mrs. Barbara Nidz whose class has done a superb job of getting their boat around the Atlantic Ocean. As the above map shows she has made 5

landfalls after being launched just north of the Bahamas in June 2012. Ten days later she was blown ashore in a tropical storm with 4 other mini boats onto Myrtle Beach where she was re-launched by surfers. She then sailed to on to Newfoundland where she was repaired by Dr. Howse, Director of the Marine institute of Newfoundland and had her re-launched 300 miles off their east coast by an oil supply rig ship. Several months later “Charger” was found on the beach in Wales and was then taken to several schools and then driven to Thamesport, England and loaded on to an 800 foot ship called the “Philadelphia Express” by Captain David Sulin from Camden, Maine.

This time she was re-lunched well north of the Azores and ended up on the shores of Portugal and was taken to the University Of Lisbon Department Of Technology. There she was fully repaired under the direction of Luis Sebastiao and the University who arranged to have her re-launched by the **PORTUGESE NAVY** in June 2014. On December 18th “Charger” was plucked out of the sea by a fisherman approximately 20 miles offshore from Georgetown, Guyana. The boat will now be taken to a local school and their students will correspond & probably Skype with the students in Connecticut to figure out what to do next with the boat.

“Charger” has now completed about 80% of what sailors refer to as the Atlantic Circle. This is an unbelievable feat for a 56” self-steering unmanned sailboat that is powered solely by the ocean winds and currents and greatly exceeds the expectations of the program originators.
Congratulations to John Winthrop Students!



OTHER RECENT

LANDINGS:

“SCOT” from Bonny Eagle middle school in Maine landed in La Coruna, Spain on November 14, 2014 and was taken to a local school so their students could learn. Students in Spain are now corresponding with Maine students and they are planning to repair the boat which will need a new mast, sail, and keel. Hopefully she will join boats from Portugal, Newfoundland, the Canary Islands and the USA to participate in our event to study the historic sailing routes of the Atlantic (see page 4).

“WEST” from the Westbrook middle school in Westbrook, Maine landed in Portugal in mid November as well. She was severely damaged when she came in downwind in a rocky area on Portugal’ coast which broke her keel off as well as her mast. Luckily Luis Sebastiao sent his friends out to recover her and has already organized 6 different organizations to help repair her and get her ready for re-launching this summer.

MORE ON THE INTERNATIONAL FRONT:

We recently shipped a boat to Portugal so it appears they’ll be launching 2 boas this summer. Their new one plus *“WEST”* which is the American boat that was badly damaged making landfall in Portugal November. We have sent them a replacement keel and mast and she could be ready for re-launch this summer.

We also have a boat ready to ship to the Canary Islands. They may start producing mini boats in their islands as shipping & custom costs make the project pretty much prohibitive.

ANOTHER MAGAZINE ARTICLE:

Edward Lajoie a friend of Educational Passages wrote a magazine article “Bound to the Sea” which has just been sent around to numerous magazines for possible publication and the responses so far have been very positive (see following pages). Our next marketing strategy will be to write articles exclusively for such publications as the National Science Teachers Association and National Scholastics. We also go around to speak and exhibit at various teacher and marine educator conferences.

YOU COULD DO A BOAT FOR \$250!

Because these boats are monitored online it makes it easy for schools and other organizations to share a boat. We therefore would like to try doing a *“TEAM USA”* boat where schools and other organizations could team up and do a boat together. If we are able to get enough boats to participate we should be able to get costs down to \$250 each! Contact us if you are interested.

OR YOU COULD SPONSOR A BOAT FOR A SCHOOL:

We became a 501 (c) 3 non-profit so we could help schools afford to do boats. We have thus started working on grants to reduce costs to our schools. We are also encouraging schools to share boats, and attempting to find individuals who might want to assist schools. We will match you up if you are interested. If you’d like to see a draft of any of our grant proposals let us know.

Bound to the Sea

By Ed Lajoie

Anyone who is fortunate enough to spend time with Dick Baldwin will come away understanding the impossibility of separating the man from his dream. The avuncular Baldwin talks with such passion about his creation, Educational Passages, that his enthusiasm becomes viral. One need not look far into Baldwin's biography to discover the source for the pillars of his non-profit organization: vicarious adventure, educational opportunities grounded in practical application, and experiences that bring together nautical buffs from all over the world. His five foot, self steering, self righting boats equipped with GPS units, now numbering over fifty are set on course to sail with the wind and entice their sponsoring organizations to share a love of the sea that Baldwin has nurtured for more than sixty years.

Graphically represented, Baldwin's life, from birth to the present, is a parabolic arc with little boats on either end and larger boats in the middle. Dick Baldwin has been breathing salt air since his childhood in Essex, Connecticut. Raised at the mouth of the Connecticut river, family lore has it that Dick's first taste of salt water came around age one while lying in a basket secured in the bow of the small motor boat the Baldwins used for weekend excursions. "I wouldn't say I lived a privileged childhood, but it was pretty happy and carefree. Some summer days, I'd 'borrow' a spoon from my mother, stick it in my pocket, buy a pint of coffee ice cream, and chow down while sitting on the pier." No doubt, such early memories encouraged him to leave shore and learn how to sail. He took lessons on the Connecticut River in a fleet of Bluejays. Later, he and his dad built their own Bluejay and Dick became, "a pretty good racer. I'd practice by running a slalom course through the pilings at the yacht club in that boat." Quickly rejecting the confinement of the local coast line, he began to expand his parameters. "The one thing my father didn't want me to do is sail to Woods Hole and Cape Cod." In his own intrepid fashion, and exercising the perversity of his teenaged years, Dick set sail with nothing but a paper sack of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and his sense of adventure. Unfortunately, his father, a well known and well liked dentist in town, saw quite a few people each week, and one of them had spied Dick on Nantucket Island and later on Block Island. He was well past the relative safety of Long Island Sound, and defiantly close to the forbidden fruit. A crucial decision was at hand, Dr. Baldwin had to decide whether to cut the dinghy free or dry dock it. "Dad came to terms with the fact that he just couldn't suppress that thing inside me that lured me into sailboats and the open water. After that, my father decided that my love of sailing was better controlled than forbidden." He supported and encouraged Dick until his death in 2013 at the age of 97. Paying tribute through his passion, Dick memorialized his father by launching the *Bob Along* that same year.

Missteps, miscalculations, and misdemeanors aside, Baldwin formed the conviction that life without adventure is diminished, and Educational Passages is predicated on satisfying the adventurer in us all. To hear him address a group of elementary students is a study of infectious enthusiasm. Baldwin often goes to sponsoring schools to deliver their boat and to give a formal presentation which ends with a question and answer period. It is during this Q and A that students have a chance to touch the beautiful little craft and talk directly with Dick. After all, the face and soul of Educational Passages is Dick Baldwin; but the star is the mini-boat itself. It is the sleek and sturdy culmination of nautical design, manufacturing experience, and quality materials. Rejecting any suggestions that would diminish either form or function, the self-reliant Baldwin sprinkles a little of his personality over each craft. “Call me obsessive. I just love being out here in the boathouse putting the final touch on a boat before setting it loose. This is not just a message in a bottle, it’s a collective and cooperative intellect setting out on an educational adventure. I used to make my formal presentation the major chunk of time, but I found that the kids’ excitement leads to long engaging Q and A periods; so I kind of reverse things and leave more time for the one-on-one questions and comments at the end.” And the questions do come:

Q: “What makes it go?”

A: “They will sail thousands of miles using only the most ancient forces—the winds and the currents—to propel them around the ocean. As long as the sail is up, they’ll continue to sail without any outside assistance.”

Q: “How do you know where it will go?”

A: “The boats circle the Atlantic in a clockwise fashion. They follow the routes of the early sea explorers. The boats have a GPS transponder attached to them. Every two hours, they report their position; and we put the information on a web site so you can see the track of the boat.”

Q: “Can we launch it down at the dock?”

A: “Well, you could; but in order to make sure it gets out to the main current, the boats are launched further out to sea from NOAA research vessels, commercial ships, private yachts, the Maine Maritime Academy training ship and, sometimes, by offshore fishermen. The captains and crews of these ships have really gotten involved, and make a special effort to help the boats on their voyages.”

Q: “Is it going to stay that color. White is kind of boring.”

A: “That’s one of the important jobs for you guys. You get to pick your colors and laminate information about your school onto the hull. See that compartment? That’s a watertight hold where you can put messages and anything else you’d like someone along the route to find.

Maybe they'll find the boat, put their own message inside and send it on its way. Maybe they'll call or e-mail your school. ”

Q: “Will it go to England? My Gram lives in Liverpool.”

A: “We never know quite where the boats will travel. Take a look at this globe. I'll tell you about an interesting trip. A boat named *Charger* from Deep River, Connecticut, was launched just here, north of the Bahamas in June of 2012. It was blown ashore here, on Myrtle Beach, North Carolina. Some surfers found it and re-launched it. From Myrtle Beach, it sailed up here to Newfoundland and crashed on the southeast coast. The Canadians repaired *Charger* and relaunched her off an oil supply ship out here. From here, she sailed all the way over here to Wales. That's kind of close to where your gram lives. It was taken to a local school. From here, it was trucked across England and launched once more by another commercial ship. It sailed from here to Lisbon, Portugal. Some people found it and took it to the University of Lisbon. A man named Luis Sebastiao became so enthusiastic about Educational Passages that he arranged for the Portuguese navy to relaunch *Charger* in June of 2014. Today it is sailing back to the US. It's following the route taken by Columbus. Before too long, it will be in the main showcase at the Winthrop School in Connecticut.”

Meetings like this reinforce Baldwin's view that education is better experienced than endured. Good learning comes from the practical application of abstract ideas and concepts, and it is that conviction that underpins the second mission of Educational Passages—education through practical application. While Baldwin was a good student, he always faced windward and had one eye on the sea. He went on from high school to the landlocked University of Denver, then to the prestigious Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, where he became a credentialed physical therapist. In graduate school, Dick met his wife and fellow PT grad student, Rosemary. Off hours were spent on ski trips and motorcycle excursions. But, as the saying goes, even though Dick was taken out of the ocean, the ocean couldn't be taken out of Dick. “Even while in school, I'd make small sailing vessels out of balsa wood and brown paper bags. I'd coat them with clear varnish and then paint them. Watching them navigate down wind, across the reservoir kept me connected and kind of scratched an itch.” After school, the siren call of the coast drew the newly married couple back east. Taking a sabbatical from sailing, he and Rosemary started a business in Rockland, Maine, and raised three daughters. Eventually, Dick purchased a Luders 33, a blue water boat that he could handle by himself. He competed in two Bermuda 1-2 races and made a solo sail to Tortola and back. Having sated his appetite for sailing and proven his nautical skills, Baldwin turned to the mission of communicating his love and knowledge of the sea to school children through the deployment of the small, sleek, unmanned boats he had fabricated in his home workshop. As Educational Passages grew, its mission of practical skills education continued to involve students of all ages. Local technical school students mold and manufacture the hulls. Students become involved in map reading, mathematical modeling, communicating in foreign languages, cooperative efforts in deployment and retrieval and adventures just short of stepping aboard one of the lilliputian craft.

Hundreds of scholars from elementary students to college professors and ships' captains have rallied around Dick Baldwin's vision that has matured into the non-profit Educational Passages.

“I resisted going non-profit because of the bureaucracy, time, and red tape involved; but I formed it because schools didn’t have enough money and needed grants; and it’s nearly impossible to get grants without being a non-profit. Spaghetti dinners and fund raising dances were not going to cut it.” Again, Baldwin’s instincts and hard work were rewarded. Institutions such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), The Maine Maritime Academy, the University of Lisbon, the American Embassy in Panama, the University of Maine, and the University of Xiamen, China have formed a constellation of talent and technology around the lodestone mini-boats. In these boats is seen the promise of studying historic Atlantic sailing routes, measuring the PH, salinity, chlorophyll, oxygen level, and temperature of the water; mapping currents for direction and strength, counting salmon smolt, promoting international curiosity and goodwill, and having an unparalleled, vicarious sailing adventure that is accessible to everyone.

What’s next? “This winter we will launch seven boats in the Pacific Ocean and eight in the Atlantic. In May, we hope to launch more boats from the Maine Maritime training vessel to study the historic Atlantic sailing routes. With the cooperative help of the University of Maine, and a Chinese university, we hope to do the Pacific Challenge. We will invite schools from across the nation to participate in our attempt to get a mini-boat from California to China.”

While it is true that life often molds a personality, it is also true that a personality, if strong enough, can direct the course of a life. If fate and temperament are two words for one and the same thing, Dick Baldwin and Educational Passages are inseparable. There seems little doubt that the non-profit will continue to expand into the Pacific Ocean and sail its missions of education, goodwill, and adventure. The wind and the currents are favorable.

To learn more about Educational Passages visit their website at www.educationalpassages.com or email Dick@educationalpassages.com.

EDUCATIONAL PASSAGES

ORDER FORM

Complete Boat Includes:

Simply glue mast and keel in place. Includes GPS unit and up to 1,000 position reports and Teacher's Guide. Launching from the *State of Maine* training ship and Maine Maritime Day for local schools.

Cost \$ 2,000.00

Kit Boat Includes:

Hull, deck, keel, mast, sail, 4" deck plate, deck hardware, water tight compartment, GPS unit and up to 1000 position reports. Construction Manual and Teacher's Guide. Requires using epoxy glue, and fiber glass resin but no fiber glass cloth/fabric. Prior building skills required.

Cost \$ 1,500.00

Partially Assembled Boat Includes:

Easy for your vocational school to assemble. Parts pretty much snap together and are fastened with epoxy glue or marine sealers. You add a sand & fiberglass resin mixture for ballast. No fiberglass cloth is necessary. Includes GPS, 1000 position reports, and manuals.

Cost \$ 1,800.00

All specifications & prices current as of September 1, 2014 and subject to change.

Plus Shipping & Handling

School Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

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