

## The Adventures of the Madison Boatworks, by Mark Madison as shared with Don Marske



*Madison Boatworks looks much more than a "hobby."  
How/when did it start?*

Here is the back story: I was a Boy Scout scoutmaster, and my three sons were in my troop. We hiked 250 miles on the Pacific Crest Trail together. We slept on an aircraft carrier and got the aviation merit badge taught by a carrier pilot, and we went to a week-long sailing camp on the Oregon coast. The sailing camp got new boats donated, and we sailed them hard every day. We volunteered in the marina to prepare the new boats and remove the old boats. At the end of the week, the harbormaster gave us an old 16' sailing scout boat to take home and restore. By this time, it was clear. We were hooked. We sailed that old boat to death. Then we got a little bigger sailboat, SERENITY, (a 24' Columbia "fast boat") from the Columbia River Sea Scouts. We restored that one including rebuilding an old diesel engine and converting the boat from an outboard to an inboard engine. We sailed it on the Columbia for several years; and then when Jonathan, our oldest, moved to Seattle for a job, he put it in Puget Sound and sailed it for a few more years everywhere around the Sound and San Juan Islands.

Back up a few years. When the boys were in high school, we bought a Formosa 41' cruiser sailboat that was abandoned in a boat yard after the deck had been torn off, the engine removed, part of the interior gutted, and the owner learned of the real cost to restore it. The yard sold it to us for \$3,000 as-is if we just get it out of their yard. We spent a winter restoring it. It became a village project. Our neighbor electrician rewired it; the local artist painted the new name "REVELATION" on it; and all neighbors helped cut wood, tighten screws, polish the newly built deck and wood cabin, and paint the hull. A neighborhood metal worker helped the boys build a 54'-aluminum mast to replace the rotted wooden one. My brother donated a farm semi-truck to haul it out of the boat yard, let us keep his trailer all winter, and then towed it 200 miles up the Columbia River to launch at McNary Dam. He put the mast up with his crane, and we were set to sail home. Jonathan lived on the boat for a couple months and learned to handle the bigger boat. On Thanksgiving, the whole family loaded up and sailed for a week over 200 miles down the Columbia to Portland. The boat was sailed often and hard, including a CH2M WATER GROUP SAILING PARTY.

When the boys were ready for college, they sold REVELATION for \$40,000 cash and had 400 \$100 bills on the dining room table for days. They counted it many times,

threw it in the air and picked it up then split it up, and went to college. After college, Jonathan went on to build several wooden sail boats starting with trees in my forest and having them cut to boards to fit the designs. He married his college sweetheart, Whitney, left a half-built 24' sailboat in my garage, and moved to Seattle with Whitney and SERENITY. Whitney became a sea captain on SERENITY.



They had a dream of sailing to Mexico and up the sea of Cortez in a wooden boat. To this end, they bought JULIA, a 38' wooden Ingrid design 2-mast ketch built in 1960. They spent 4 years restoring it, and the rest is on video.

*Jonathan and Whitney are clearly highly skilled and talented. Can you share a little of their background?*

Whitney is an Architect from U of Oregon; and, of course, Jonathan is a mechanical engineer from Oregon State! They have skill, courage, and little fear of failure. They sailed halfway around the world in JULIA with a good stash of spare parts including boards and a saw just in case the boat sprung a plank! I was honored to ride along on most of the journey. I loved being the night shift captain navigating by the Milky Way and watching either sunset or sunrise on the open sea. It was heaven.



*I understand your wife was a full partner in Madison Boatworks.*

Jan was in all my adventures up until sailing to Australia. Sadly, she died of cancer the year before we sailed away. She helped to restore the boat and wanted to make the journey.

*Madison Boatworks clearly involves a tremendous investment of time and treasure. How do they do it?*



I helped a little, but it is their love. They don't watch TV!! You can build a boat to sail around the world in less time than most people spend watching TV IN JUST ONE YEAR. I have always had a big shop full of

tools that was always open; and the boys all had old cars and boats to work on, and they learned to build and fix. We didn't watch TV WHEN THEY WERE GROWING UP - we went to the shop in the evenings.

*It was so cool that you documented your adventures with YouTube videos!*

They have a good clean fun description of an amazing journey, and people love that. Over a million views on the Pacific Crossing video! There will be a book — someday. But at least we captured the excitement in the film. Check out the YouTube channel “Madison Boatworks.” We have 22 half-hour videos, and I even show up in some but mostly was filming or at the helm. [Madison Boatworks - Search Videos](#)



*The goal beyond the Australian passage?*

We have just discussed and started a plan to buy a wooden sailboat in the Mediterranean Sea and sail around Europe then all the way home. It is the next big adventure.

We have rented bare boats to sail for a week or two in Croatia, Greece, Turkey, British Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. I am a captain; and if you need a captain to go on a cruise with you, give me a call.

Cheers

Mark

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