

A Boat Builders Story

By Ken Simpson
September 2013

This is a tale about the experiences of **Bayard “Stix” Cook of Florida**, and his build of the “1 SHEET +” pram. For the purpose of this story we will call him Stix. Now, don’t ask me how he got that name, but it is how I address him in our emails. Oh yes, I have never met him, and until recently did not know what he looked like, but that has no bearing on the subject at hand, which is the construction of a small plywood boat. A lot of people read my web pages, and some of them email a few questions regarding a certain boat that appeals to them. Stix, on the other hand, seems to have an interest in everything boat related. About a year ago he inquired about the T&G Process, asking if material substitutions could be made. He then went on to say that he had used a thin drywall tape, commercially available, and that the results were very good. Well, if you read my updates you will know, that after extensive testing, I recently revised the T&G Process to include that exact drywall fiberglass tape. Thank you Stix. Anyway, I sent him a couple of plans that interested him, one being the Mini-Cat, the winner of the 2012 Design Contest. Fast forward about 6 months, and I get another email asking about the optional canopy shown on the plans for the Mini-Cat, and I informed him the it had not been constructed, and it was just a concept. As a matter of fact, no Mini-Cat had been built at that time. Now his interest suddenly changed to the 1SHEET+ design, which was the other plan I had sent him. I tend to send plans to people who show a sincere interest in my designs, and who have something to offer in improving the portable boat concept. Another lapse in time and another question; Can a thinned Titebond 3 glue be used as a waterproofer for sealing a plywood boat. A man after my own heart, I tell you. And of course it can, as I do it all the time, especially in areas that are to be enclosed, and not visible. So with this information in hand, Stix began construction of the 1SHEET+.



An early photo of the construction



Photo of **Stix** in his 1SHEET+

Construction Details

As time went by I was receiving photos of his construction progress. And it was a pleasure to see the exactness and attention to detail he was putting into such a small boat project. The following pictures will help describe the level of thought involved, where my words are lacking. Much of this is not detailed on the plans, and only a perfectionist would bother.



Construction Details



Part of building a small boat is determining how everything will fit together. That includes the seat, oar locks, paddles, trolling motor and battery. Another thing about small boats is that there is little, if any, room to move around. In the case of the 1SHEET+, once you are sitting in the boat, you are there until you return to shore. Therefore, the location of strategic items such as the steering arm, speed control, and even a water bottle, are all critical to your comfort. It is in this area that Stix has taken it to the next level. Note in the photos below the careful placement attention to these items.



Disassembled the motor speed control, and put it in a remote box.



Mounted the box on the bulkhead within easy arms reach.



Bent the steering arm so it would be at hand level.

Completed Project

After all the details were worked out, the hull sealed and painted, the motor and battery location established and the seat selected and purchased, the only thing left to do was to get it in the water. These are the following pictures.



Neatly tucked in the back of the wagon.



Custom hull assembly-bolt knobs.



Ready for maiden voyage.



Stix is one happy builder !

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Hi Ken,

Thank you for all of these kind words!

I guess I really started building boats when I was a teenager, my first when I was in junior high school shop class. It did float and I ran it with a small outboard for a couple years. I built a 12' outboard racing runabout and used to fly around the bay near the house with a few other guys that had about the same kind boats. Lots of fun in those days! Took some time off, got married and started raising a family. Then I built a 20' house boat that never got finished. Used it a while when the second child came along, we found it was too small. I then found some rot in the hull and brought it home. Instead of fixing it, I took the cabin off the hull and made a playhouse for the kids. They had a ball in there for a while.

Another bit of time off then the kids were grown and I started back building boats, again. I built a 13' stitch-n-glue canoe and still have it hanging in the garage. Saw some plans on the internet and built a 8' Flats Rat (like a pram) that is still hanging in the garage as well !

Decided to build an 18' cuddy cabin outboard cruiser for my wife & me to do some day cruising. That boat was great but my wife didn't enjoy boating at all (except for cruising on a 1000' cruise ship!). So, I sold that boat.

As I am approaching my mid-seventies, I have slowed up a bit (heck, a LOT!). I still like to build boats and found your website about Portable Boat Plans on Duckworks website. I like the small boats and the ease of building them and find it a lot of fun. My wife has me pegged as enjoying the building of the boat more than using the boat! The 1SHEET+ is my first of your boats to build but it will not be my last! I plan to build your Mini-Cat next as it is a platform boat and I will be able to move around on it easier than in the 1SHEET+. Who knows what I will build after that !!

Thanx, Stix

