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A
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TO

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A Guide to Buying & Servicing Boats in Maine is published by:

Maine Built Boats, Inc.

PO Box 153 | Belfast, ME 04915 USA | info@mainebuiltboats.com

mainebuiltboats.com

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Cover photo: JAX, a custom cold-molded sloop built by Brooklin Boat Yard, photographed by Billy Black.



By Andy Tyska

Originally published in *Capstan* by American Boat Builders & Repairers Association (ABBRA)

As we prepare to deliver our second 30-foot Downeast-style outboard-powerboat to a customer near our Boothbay Harbor, Maine, shipyard, I'm reflecting on the journey that brought us here. An unplanned project that began over a year ago, it's a source of pride and valuable lessons for our entire team.

The venture into boatbuilding wasn't a strategic decision for Bristol Marine. It arose organically when we acquired Southport Island Marine to expand our storage

space. The yard's previous owner had just begun constructing a new boat, so we faced an early decision: whether or not to continue the project. We recognized the potential for our company's growth, but we also know there were challenges in finding efficiencies in small-scale production. Ultimately, we committed to building not just one, but three boats.

Building a custom boat is a complex process that balances meticulous engineering with hands-on, real-time decision-making. It's

a dance between careful planning and adaptability. We quickly learned that the design spiral and construction spiral often merge, requiring constant adjustments and problem-solving. Some aspects we nailed on the first try, while others needed multiple iterations to get right.

For me, the collaborative spirit of our team is what stands out most from the process. Across our three facilities, our best painters, mechanics, carpenters, electricians, and composite technicians all came together, supporting each other to overcome challenges. This project became a unifying force, fostering a sense of shared purpose and pride.

At the end of the first Bristol 30's boating season, she returned to us to be hauled. As its Kelly-green hull caught the light, I overheard one of our team members remark, "Hey, that's one of ours!" Another added,

"That's one pretty boat!" These simple comments encapsulated why we embarked on this project: to create something that instills pride across our entire organization.

There were even more takeaways for me and my team:

1. Opportunities often arise unexpectedly. What began as a search for storage space led to a new business venture.

2. Effective teamwork is crucial for navigating complex projects. The diverse skills of our staff proved invaluable in addressing unforeseen challenges.

3. The process of creation is as important as the final product. The journey of building these boats has strengthened our team and improved our capabilities.

4. Pride in craftsmanship is a powerful motivator. When team members take ownership of their



work, it elevates the entire project.

5. Flexibility and adaptability are key in custom manufacturing.

The ability to adjust plans and solve problems on the fly is essential.

We're now looking ahead to building our third Bristol 30 with a mix of excitement and informed caution. We have a better understanding of the challenges that lie ahead, and we're also confident in our team's ability to meet them. This project has not only resulted in beautiful, high-quality boats but has also honed our skills, tightened our teamwork, and reinforced our commitment to excellence.

The Bristol 30 is more than just a product line; it's a testament

to what we can achieve when we combine skill, teamwork, and a shared vision. In many ways, this boatbuilding venture mirrors our broader approach at Bristol Marine. We're constantly building — whether it's creating something from scratch or improving upon existing work. It's a continuous process of overcoming setbacks, celebrating successes, and always moving forward.

Andy Tyska is the founder and CEO of Bristol Marine, a full-service network of boatyards with four locations including Boothbay Harbor, Maine. More information about the Bristol 30 is online at bristolmarine.com.



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Schooner HARVEY GAMAGE's NEW LIFE

Story by Maine Coastal News

Originally published in the newspaper's July 2025 edition.

After a two-year hiatus, the schooner HARVEY GAMAGE is once again gracing the waters of the coast of Maine. There is an important difference in her mission; unlike the other large schooners sailing among our islands she is carrying students instead of being part of the tourism industry.

The roughly week-long trips she is taking the youth of Maine and beyond are designed to foster improved critical thinking skills, leadership, and teamwork among the young crew members by giving them experiential learning opportunities simply not found in the classroom or on our playing fields. While manned with professional crew, as quickly as students can engage, the experienced hands will ease

away and have the middle and high school students take over the operation of the ship to the extent possible, organizing getting her underway, navigation, and handling the 131' sparrer length vessel.

The educational opportunities will not stop there. Course modules developed by Alyson Graham, a high school educator in Wiscasset, adds in layers of marine science, meteorology and other learning based on what the youth see during the voyage. The day-to-day routine will open the eyes of these fortunate students to employment opportunities in our communities in Maine be it visits to aqua-culture centers, high-tech boatbuilding, marine laboratories, Maine Maritime Academy etc.

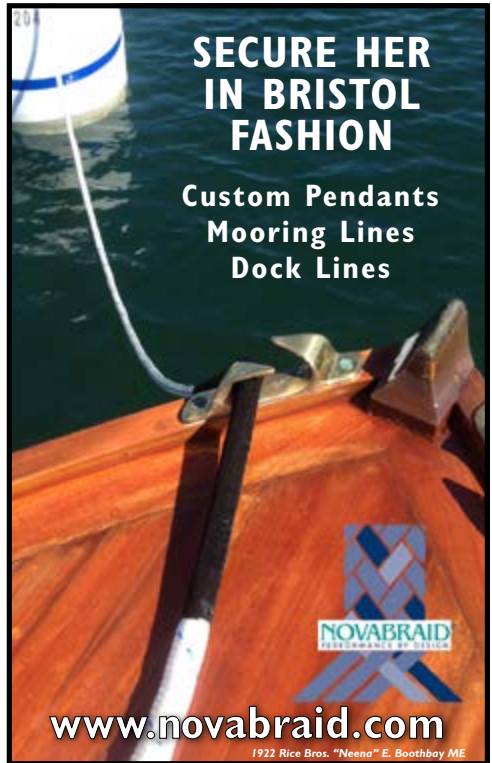
HARVEY GAMAGE, referred to as “the GAMAGE” in shorthand, is a purpose-built vessel designed for providing educational experiences at sea. Her berthing, while adequate, is not luxurious or spacious and amenities are purposely kept minimal while adequate. There won't be any long hot showers onboard as there is no hot water! The cook heats it on the stove purely for sanitizing dishes. Want a shower? Dawn your swimsuit; there is a hose and spray nozzle on deck!

For almost 50 years since the 95-foot-long (on deck) ship was launched in 1973 at the Harvey Gamage yard in South Bristol, Maine, she carried her precious cargo along the coast of Maine in summer. Most years, she sailed off to the Caribbean in the winter months working under various operating entities. The last of those dissolved in 2022 and she was laid up with owner, Phin Sprague, who had purchased her in 2014 and brought her to his Portland Yacht Services yard.

It was clear to Phin as well as to many GAMAGE alumni that there was an unmet need for the type of education that she had provided for so many years; there simply needed to be a new operating entity to get her going. Alyson Graham, a GAMAGE alumna, was among the most ardent advocates and her colleague, Kim Andersson, Superintendent of the Wiscasset School System, immediately grasped the concept, having for years observed student disengagement brought on by

social media and further impacted by COVID. She started working with Phin to get the GAMAGE back in service. Other early volunteers include Mark Winter and Bill Full, Maine Maritime Academy alumni who understand the value of this type of education.

Working together, along with many other supporters, they created the Marine Learning Project to provide a nonprofit entity under which the GAMAGE could operate. The timing was not perfect, as it was not clear there was enough organization, volunteers, and funding to get her into operation after two years of being laid up. However, with many hands helping, she was



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The advertisement features a photograph of a wooden boat deck with a white mooring line and a blue and white buoy. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image. At the bottom right, there is a logo for Novabraid, which consists of a stylized blue and white geometric pattern above the text "NOVABRAID" and "ESTABLISHED 1988".



given her U.S. Coast Guard Certificate of Inspection in mid-June 2025, just in time to attend Boothbay Windjammer Days. Now she is off doing the work she was designed and built to do, providing an unparalleled experiential learning experience to the youth of Maine and beyond.

To help spur participation, funds were raised to provide generous scholarships for in-state students so the cost per student of running the program would not be daunting to virtually any family. Her first week "in program" was the week of July 7, 2025, and four more weeks followed during the summer, culminating with her visit to the Maine Boats, Homes, and Harbors Show in Rockland on August 10, 2025, where people were able to visit her and get more information on the programs.

The goal is to build this program back for the long term and have her doing at least ten trips during the summer months, and then expand further into her longer trips south during the fall, winter, and early spring.

If you're looking for opportunities to contribute to this project, there is still a need for more volunteers and financial support. Visit the website at marinelearningproject.org/harvey-gamage or email Victoria Hubbell at info@marinelearningproject.org.

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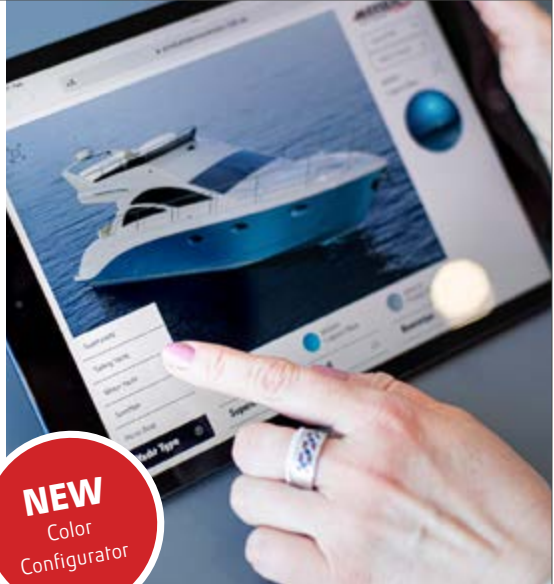
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