

## Why the Book?



*Marionette, Hull #12, S&S Design #1497, built 1960, on her mooring behind Chatto Island, Brooklin, Maine*

**Not content with many years successfully campaigning *Marionette*, designing and building her barn and tender, Ron Breault is writing a book about his custodianship of *Marionette*. Here he explains why.**

The book will contain the historical record of how finding, buying, restoring, maintaining, and using a 'classic' small sailboat opens doors - not just to enjoying sailing in a boat you 'saved' but unanticipated experiences/rewards. Specifically:

Using stories and pictures I want to share *Marionette's* 'rescue', and my pride in her performance and appearance in the 25 years I've been her caretaker. After her restoration under a blue tarp, designing and building her barn, building her dinghy in the barn woodshop, several years of mostly single handed cruising the coast of New England, and some successful racing, *Marionette* inspired me to save a piece of history, continues to do so, and leads me to even more interesting adventures.



*Marionette's barn*

I had met Olin Stephens and Bill Shaw (the S&S project designer of the Dolphin 24) at the S&S 75th Anniversary celebration at Mystic Seaport in 2004 - both men were well along in years. *Marionette* was the invited Dolphin 24 class representative. When I read a couple of years later that Bill Shaw had passed away - Olin was already in his 90's - I realized something had to be done to collect and preserve the history of 'our' boat.

So, with little knowledge about what I was getting into, I decided to start a website devoted to the Dolphin 24 that

- a)** researches and records the history and technology of a boat designed and initially built in the wood to fiberglass transition period

- b)** recognizes the people and early owners who made the Dolphin 24 happen, build a lasting reputation, and in its own unique way, helped usher in the next generation of racing sailboats (The J/24 and its offspring)

- c)** provides a meaningful technical resource to owners and would be owners

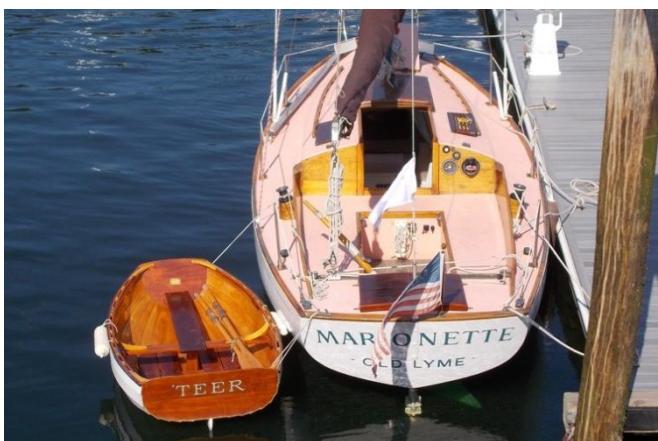
- d)** gives a deep sense of kinship/community to boat owners and readers

By exposing me to the stories of others in the Dolphin community the website led me to 'explorations/tangents', and eventually into unanticipated and fascinating side trips - including writing a book based on the website, then (based on club demand) another book about my yacht club's 75th anniversary, and now contemplating a 3rd book about all these experiences. *Marionette*'s competing in the Sparkman & Stephens Association annual Global Challenge competition for the best performance by an S&S designed yacht "anywhere in the world", winning 3 times plus a 2nd place finish - to *Dorade*, the winner - was a real eye opener.



Ron's daughter Nicole, and her husband Bruce Stone, sailing Marionette on Eggemoggin Reach in Maine - photo by Benjamin Mendlowitz

As a 78 year old single handed sailor in a 24', 60 yr old sailboat, thinking about the next phase, reading John Rousmaniere's article '*Farewell to the Gulf Stream*' was the 'kicker' into action. I like to write and have been told I'm not bad at it. Writing a book (with lots of photographs) that is interesting, and 'successful', about something I actually know something about, would be a nice way to ride out my last few years.



Marionette and 'Teer together'

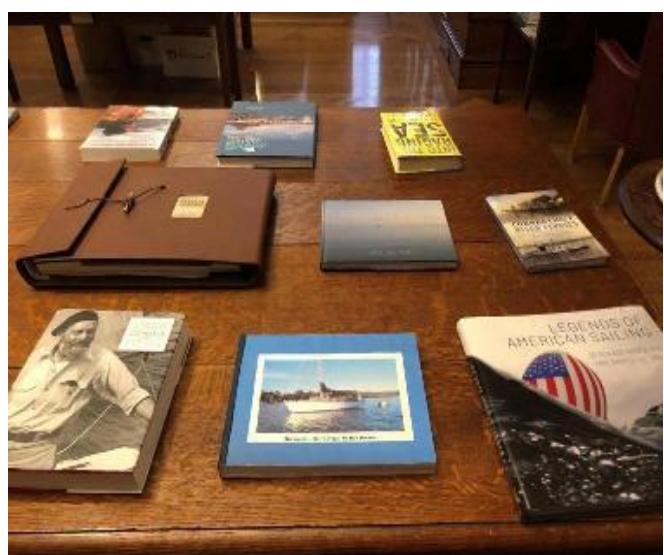
Thru the book I want to reach not just sailboat owners, but others who, approaching their retirement years may be wondering what the next 25 years have in store - not

necessarily buying, restoring and sailing a 'pretty' older boat like I did, but undertaking a project that requires significant upfront effort, and ongoing support in a field/discipline that they enjoy or are learning. There are unknown experiences lurking in such a project that are fun and that can sustain and stimulate in one's later years. I am hoping my *Marionette* story and example will appeal to them.

Having a good crew for such an ambitious book voyage is important. Reaching the readers by having a well-known and respected 'navigator' on board to provide guidance to help stay on course, and who could possibly take the helm occasionally, lends credibility and attraction for potential readers - the reason I initially contacted John Rousmaniere. John's experience with *Marionette* goes back to 2004 when he 'inspected' her at the Sparkman & Stephens 75th Anniversary at Mystic Seaport for the "Best Restored Boat" - won by *Bolero*. And, having a respected and experienced nautical publisher in the crew can only help reach those readers.



John Rousmaniere inspects Marionette, S&S 75th Anniversary, Mystic Seaport



The book, draft #2, on display at the New York Yacht Club Library. I sent a copy to John Rousmaniere, the club Historian, and he liked it!

**Ron Breault**

*Marionette*

*Old Lyme, Connecticut, US*