

Mike Carlsson

My senior year in high school my dad bought a 12foot catboat. With lots of help from people whose boats were expensive scows and fearful that my fitful sailing might end in disaster for them, I learned how to sail.

The summer after my high school graduation, I bought a 20 foot C class scow which I (and every one else in my family) sailed every summer until I left the country.

During the winter when Gazela was getting her new deck my wife saw an announcement in the paper to visit the metal workers union to learn about this ship in Philadelphia. I met Robin whose enthusiasm convinced me to start going down to learn about how Gazela works.

A not especially interesting story. So why continue on Gazela? What's so special? Well, mostly, at first, it was a way to get away from Philadelphia schools where I was a teacher and then Asst. Principal. On Gazela I had no responsibilities. I was asked to do something and I did it. Better than therapy, as someone on board once said.

Now it's different. I've sailed on the Chesapeake several times and look forward to getting to sea this summer (2010).

Imagine sailing into Yorktown and seeing dolphins come out to greet us! We left Yorktown late because tide and wind were against us. So we sailed back up the Chesapeake at night, one day past full moon. Before moonrise and with no ambient light, there are more stars than you can imagine. Then came the full moon. A quiet, warm night with this huge moon. That's why I continue to come down during the cold winter days to freeze.

I can't even begin to count the new skills I've learned from such as Nick and Fran and others.