

Volunteers of the Month: Brain Swing and Bill Bryan

Brian Swing Continued....As he puts it, he started “in the deep sawdust” doing millwork with Jesse Mann. The frames were mostly up but planking was not yet started. In August 2015 he went up to Bob’s place in the forest to fell the donated trees and did a day of Alaskan Mill work with Franz and a crew of 8-10 volunteers. Brian was very impressed by the scope of work, milling a 60’ long x 22’ width, x 3” slab on a hill and maneuvering it onto a trailer & driving it down a narrow windy road. On the ship saw, he learned to make planks, patterning and learning about angles. The mill and ship saw were the 2 tools Brian had never worked with before. He also found the Planking dramatic, steaming the wood, then an intense 15 minutes to get the plank in place. Brian thought being involved with the finishing of the masts was really special. It was fascinating to work with both Newcomb and Richard, each differently planning how to shape a mast. Brian had always been a finish carpenter and found Richard to be a tough teacher. Over time he was able to gain Richard’s confidence and move into some finish work on the ship. Highlights have been some of the Oak interior finish work, such as the doors, bunks, & navigation station as well as the exterior helm station. Brian’s career in electronics aided him in his role in the instrument installations. That was when he first started teaming up with Bill Bryan. They get along well and have similar working and conversational styles. “It was a joy to work with him!” Now they are partnering on adding cabinets & dish racks to Dan Shugrue’s beautiful galley design. When asked if he plans to continue working on boat building after Matthew Turner is complete? He replied, “When is the ship ever complete?” and said he would do it again given the opportunity. During Covid he has watched the Youtube series, “Tally Ho”, which was recommended by other tall ship volunteers, enjoying another boat building project vicariously. Hiking, skiing and backpacking have always been his favorite pursuits. He also wants to make his home workshop more efficient and make more furniture which he makes items for friends and family. After working with White Oak on Matthew Turner, he has better appreciation for selecting the best wood, rejecting knots and twists to get the best result and show off the beauty of the wood.

Bill Bryan Continued.....He is a mechanical engineer by training. His father in law (a sailor too) told him about the tall ship project and Bill was able to visit the Matthew Turner project in 2015 while here seeing family. After retiring and moving back to Novato he was able to volunteer, from Nov 2016 until 2017 after the ship was launched. In the summer of 2019 he came back to the project after a couple years spent working on his own house. That is when he met Brian Swing. Bill joined Brian to finish it up the helm station project and they have been a team ever since, though the pandemic suspended working together in person. In June 2020 Bill started working on the ship again after the Covid lockdown to finish sealing and finalizing the helm station. Now that both are vaccinated, they will work in Brian's workshop in Los Gatos, on a galley dish rack cabinet. He has enjoyed the process of working on cabinets, designing and then building, using the CAD software, Sketchup. They present ideas to the “committee” for input and approval. Bill says working on solo projects has been lonely during the pandemic. The camaraderie in the past has been a great part of the project, and hopefully volunteers will soon be able to gather again for group/team meetings and lunches. He learned a lot about wooden boat construction on this project, working with hand tools such as high end planes and Japanese saws, observing construction techniques for building the masts & hull, and all the little things like different fasteners, glues and lumber, what materials, tools and fasteners were best for each project. As for the future, he has no plans to build a boat himself, but sees continued involvement in woodworking on Matthew Turner.

Call of the Sea thanks Brian, Bill and the many other volunteers who brought the ship to life
and continue to keep her in good shape!