

# The Masthead

The Journal of the Westlawn Institute of Marine Technology

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## Westlawn and ABYC Meet Their Public

**Westlawn Institute's Maryland Meet Brings Students and Faculty Together at the ABYC Office - Page 1**

**ABYC's First-Ever Boating Safety Clinic - Page 2**

## Westlawn's Maryland Student Meet

On Saturday and Sunday, July 28 and 29, Westlawn students and guests turned out for Westlawn Institute's sixth annual student meet—The Maryland Meet. Held at Westlawn Institute's parent company, ABYC, in Annapolis, Maryland, the event provided students with the opportunity to meet each other and their instructors and to further their knowledge of boat design.

After morning coffee and breakfast, the guests boarded a bus for a quick ride to the U.S. Naval Academy. There, Naval Academy grad, Gavin O'Hare guided the group on through the Academy grounds, showing everything from the exercise facilities, to the sailing program building and boats, to typical dorm rooms. Gavin made special arrangements for entry to the Rickover building (the engineering building), where Professor Joel Schubbe took the crew to see the two towing tanks, an assortment of wind tunnels and the incredibly detailed and enormous (over 16 ft. long) cutaway model of the destroyer USS Agerholm (DD-826) on deck 2.

From the Rickover building, the Westlawn crew headed to the Naval Academy Museum. Not only did the group get to take in the Rogers Ship Model Collection on deck 3, but many truly remarkable items. These included the captured World-War-II, German Enigma code machine and the Nobel Prize awarded to Albert Michelson along with the half-



Instructors Holohan & Gerr working with students

Continued page 4

**Westlawn Drives Down Education Costs - Page 6**

**Design for Serviceability - Page 13**

## Westlawn / profiles

# Laurie McGowan of McGowan Marine Design



Laurie McGowan

My deciding to design boats for a living stems naturally from a fascination with water: lots of time spent on and in it, and an eventual desire to design and build boats that I could sail. Around the age of 15 I started drawing boats fairly seriously by first copying the work of others then drawing my own. It was a good way to develop a 3D way of imagining shapes from 2D plans. The central library near my High School in London, Ontario in the

late 70s had amazing boating, adventure, and boat design sections, so I was especially influenced by books about and by a lot of British designers, that were in circulation there at the time. It was hard to concentrate in school as I'd draw boats all the time, and I imagined how they'd move through the water and how they'd take me to distant shores.

After one year of engineering in university I realized that - at that time (it's still the same now, unfortunately) - one couldn't get to designing boats through the regular educational system very well or quickly in Canada. I checked out Westlawn, and after asking the well-known Naval Architect, Robert Harris, about the school ("yes, it's good", and "sail, sail, sail" was his reply) I started the course at the age of 19 . . . mostly to learn how to design multihulls. It was the perfect way for me to learn at the time as I could work part-time in a string of jobs, participate in several sports, and concentrate really well on the course, which I eventually completed at the age of 22.

To make a long story short, I couldn't decide how to get into designing full-time (I was worried about getting 'stuck' designing certain types

of boats while working in someone's design office) and ended up sailing a lot, working as a finish carpenter, and eventually moved with my wife to historic Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia.

Strangely, it was while renovating historic homes that I developed a different way of seeing design elements: how built-heritage details could be incorporated into modern work and how sometimes asymmetry works better than symmetry. I always dreamt about working as a boat designer during this phase of my life, but in a way that allowed for a lot of time to be spent with our new son and to be active in our community - especially in environment and social issues. With this in mind, it was after marine illustrator Sam Manning suggested I learn how to use a computer (funny, as Sam and his wife Susan are known mostly for their use of hand tools and old ways of doing things) that I learned Mac-



**LeBlanc 50:** This hull was designed for experienced builders for all kinds of inshore and offshore fishing, but is mostly used for fishing lobster of southwest Nova Scotia. Despite a L/B ratio of 2:1 these boats are very seaworthy and fuel efficient.

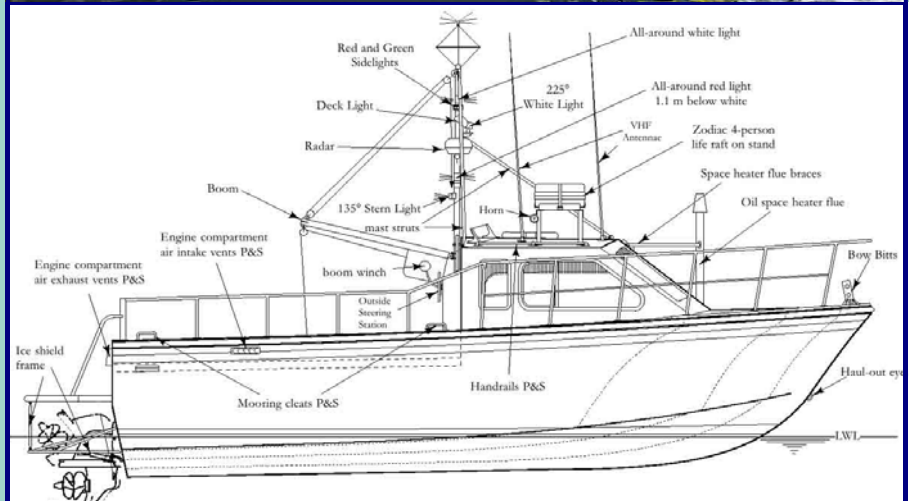
Most LeBlanc 50s are used in the winter fishery and frequently head out to fish against 40+ knots of wind and big seas while other boats remain in port. The builders of Southwest Nova Scotia are very creative and are always coming up with new hull and gear developments and the LeBlanc 50 has turned out to be a good platform for these.

Typical dimensions for the boats from this mould are 45' to 55' (13.7 - 16.8 m) with widths of 23.5' - 27' (7.2 - 8.2m), and engines are 400 - 600 hp (300 - 450

**Westlawn / Profiles Laurie McGowan** (Continued)

Surf and other computer applications.

Changing jobs from finish carpenter to boat designer involved five dangerous and grueling transition years as a Sea Urchin diver in the Bay of Fundy - work that's done in the Canadian winter months and in tides over 25' where we live - but that gave me a unique perspective on how water moves and how things move through water . . . especially in 6 knots of current, at times. It also gave me a way to enter local boat shops at ground level, so to speak, and not show up as the so-called expert who tells builders what to do from on high. Though my interest has always been to design cruising and racing sailboats, the reality of the past 11 years has been that most jobs involve commercial fishing boats. I've been fortunate to live in an area of Canada (Southwest Nova Scotia) that has some of the most creative workboat builders imaginable: where anything gets tried . . . at least once. The power boat work has been both varied and interesting, but also at times extremely challenging . . . especially when it comes to the application of some government regulations (I'm being polite).



**LeBlanc 32 Pilot Boat:** Using a demountable female mould first used on a 35' jet Lobster boat for off Cape Cod, this 32 footer is used on the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence to bring pilots to iron ore ships near Sept Isles, Québec. It has turned out to be very able design and is also used for hand-line halibut fishing there. Built to LeBlanc Brothers' high standards.

**Particulars:**

- LOA - 32.44' (9.89m)
- Beam - 11.53' (3.51m)
- Draft - 1.82' (0.55m)
- Displacement - 10,000 lbs. (4.54t)
- Power - Twin Volvo stern drives 220hp (164kW) dual prop
- Top Speed - 35 knots



**Halifax Submarine Climber:** 50-ft. wood/epoxy playground climber beside the Museum of the Atlantic, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Lately, work has become really interesting - some for pay, and some on-spec: from a Pilot Boat for the Gulf of St. Lawrence; to an entry

designer Michael Schacht); to a really fun playground submarine built by Tern Boat Works for the Halifax waterfront; to a small but powerful solar electric catboat cruiser; to a motorsailer cruiser for the coasts and inlets of the Carolinas. More multihull work is in the offing, which has been a long time coming and is really great.

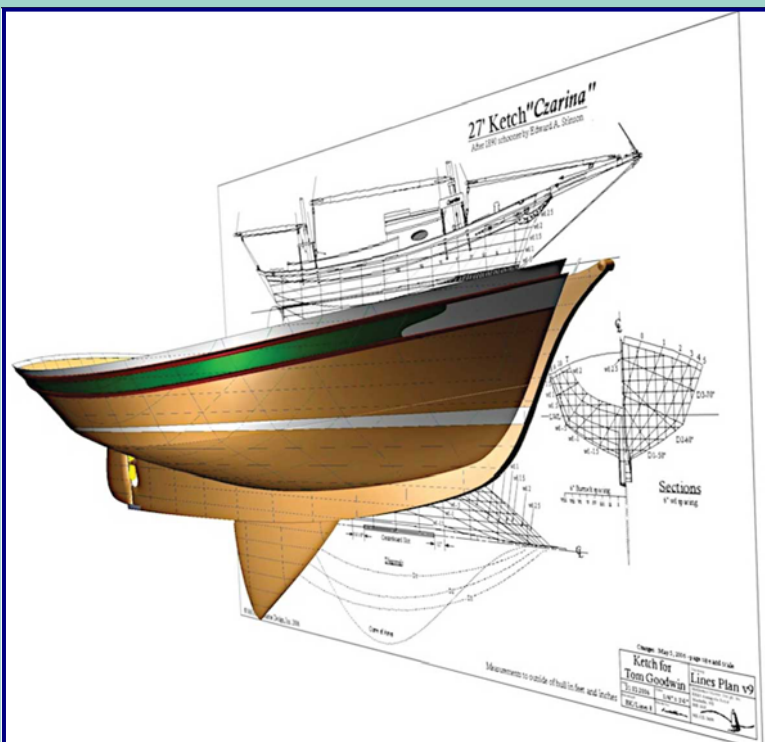
I mostly use a neat design program called TouchCad 3D that allows one to almost 'sculpt' amazing shapes, and also to send movies and pictures of work to clients in a really helpful way. This Fall I will be on a panel of Naval Architects and

entry in the last WoodenBoat design competition (the 6m catamaran *Evergreen* - a collaboration with industrial/multihull

**Westlawn / Profiles Laurie McGowan** (Continued)

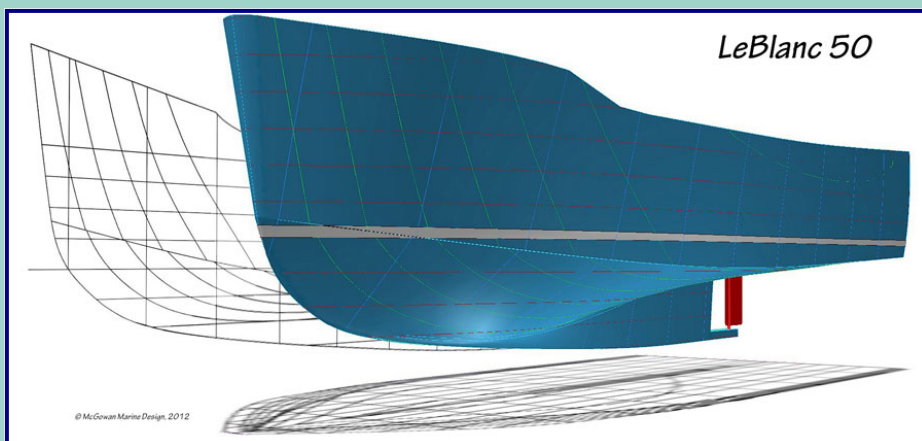
Designers at the IBEX show to explain some of TouchCAD's main features.

Designing boats is a thoroughly enjoyable, challenging, and interesting way to make a living, and though I'm not getting rich doing it (especially while living in the middle of nowhere, as far as pleasure boating goes) I realized a few years ago that I had already retired . . . if your definition of 'retirement' is *finally* to be doing what you love, while counting your pennies. For this I can thank Westlawn, in part . . . but especially a very patient wife!



**Czarina:** a custom 27' centerboard solar/electric ketch designed for an experienced sailor in The Bahamas. Built by Covey Island Boatworks of wood/epoxy. Featured in the Sept/Oct. 2007 WoodenBoat magazine.

LOD - 27' 1-5/8" (8.27m)  
LWL - 22' 5-3/8" (6.85m)  
Beam - 9' 2" (2.79m)  
Draft - 3'-1" to 5'-9" (0,94 - 1.75m)



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### Who We Are

Westlawn is a not-for-profit educational affiliate of the [American Boat and Yacht Council \(ABYC\)](#). Our school is nationally accredited by the [Distance Education and Training Council \(DETC\)](#), and is listed as an accredited school by the [U.S. Department of Education](#) and by the [Council for Higher Education Accreditation](#). The Westlawn Yacht & Boat Design Program is also accredited by the [Royal Institution of Naval Architects \(RINA\)](#).

### Our Mission

Founded in 1930, the mission of the Westlawn Institute of Marine Technology is threefold:

- To provide our students with the skills and knowledge required to build a rewarding career in the profession of yacht and small-craft naval architecture via distance learning.
- To support continued growth of the recreational and small-craft marine community through the development of well-trained, safety-oriented, boat designers developing better products for the benefit of the boating public.
- To provide continuing education to marine-industry professionals.

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