

Looking Back &

Moving Forward

1981 - 2021

By Ralph Cattaneo

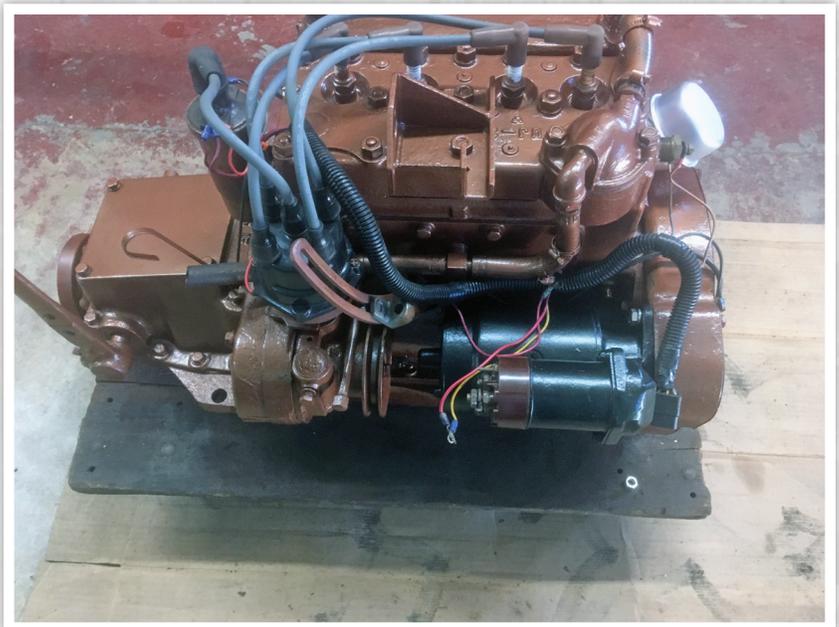
I first put eyes on the *John D.* back in 1984 while attending the Classic Yacht Club of America Boat Show held at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, MD. The 21-foot launch was designed and built in St. Michaels by the Higgins Yacht Yard in 1981. The boat's owners were Sir Bernard Ashley and Laura Ashley, former owners of The Inn at Perry Cabin. The launch was used to shuttle guests to and from the Inn into the harbor. In 1999 Sir Ashley sold the inn, and the Launch was put up on the hard by the new owners. After being out of service for 20 years, I purchased the *John D.* in early 2021 and started planning for the needed restoration.

The first step was to relocate the launch. With new tires and lights installed on the trailer, and help from several friends who live in St. Michaels, the *John D.* was ready for the long trip to Galesville on the Western Shore of Maryland.

The boat is now comfortably housed in a building that was once the home of the Galesville Fire Department. It's a great location to work on a restoration as it has multiple boat builders and repair shops within walking distance, along with a host of knowledgeable shipwrights willing to give a helping hand.

With the hull work largely completed, the attention is now on updating the cooling, electrical, and fuel systems. The Atomic 4 engine is freshly rebuilt and sporting a new paint job, and the plan is to install it by mid-December. Throughout this project my good friend and Executive VP of Maryland Maritime Heritage Foundation, Bruce Ogden (seen hard at work in the photo), has been a big help keeping me straight and preserving the originality of the boat.

The *John D.*'s launch date is uncertain at this time, but hopefully it will be ready for the Maryland Maritime Heritage Festival to be held June 4-5, 2022 in Chestertown, MD. For more information, go to mdmhf.org. Mark your calendar and come join us for two fun-filled days in Wilmer Park on the banks of the Chester River in Chestertown.





■ Ralph Cattaneo (2nd from right), president and founder of the Maryland Maritime Heritage Foundation. Photo by Rick Franke



■ Bruce Ogden, executive VP of the Maryland Maritime Heritage Foundation, hard at work.

