



SLOPOK

This is the end of the second story but it has to be tied with the first story because we used that boat and covered up the name. Well the vinyl name missing Poppy was simply peeled off to return the boat back to its original self. So let's get to it and tell the original story the u-22 has made since it was built. This is a one owner boat so the story has not been forgotten. I don't recall how the boat made it to torch Lake but it has been there since it was purchased. There is no trailer it has been there in the boathouse all of its life. The two sons and dad were the only people who took care of it. In order to gain the opportunity to use the boat in their youth the two brothers had to do the maintenance with dad's instructions to learn the value of having and using a wooden boat. They had to hoist the boat high enough to get under it in the boathouse to sand and paint the bottom. Now this could only be done while you were standing in the water moving around doing the work and having the muck suck off your tennis shoes. The boathouse was small the boat was driven in bow first with a small landing built to fit the shape of the bow. The portside was tight against the side of the boathouse and the starboard side had a narrow walkway from the landing at the bow all the way back to the door. To get the boat in and out the door hinged at the top and a pulley and drawstring were used to lift the door tall enough for the boat to pass through. This job was not for a weakling and leather gloves were a must. Those who didn't have the proper gloves were left with a lasting impression on both hands. The roof was covered with galvanized corrugated steel. This boathouse was not going to win any awards for beauty but it certainly cared for the boat perfectly. This hull is a war boat as I call it, the inner bottom was cedar, the DASH, paneling, kick plates, bow and stern poles are all fir. The decks, hull sides and transom is the traditional varnished Philippine mahogany. The outer bottom was also mahogany. The bottom on the boat now is new. It is still a traditional bottom but changed a little bit, all of the frames in a bottom should be replaced due to age and oil

saturation. The fasteners should all be replaced with silicon bronze that means every nut, bolt, screw, washer. Brass is weak and it fatigues and corrodes as it ages and that is a fact. The owner allowed me to put a 1950s style of bottom on it that has proven to be superior. The inner bottom is marine plywood, the canvas moisture barrier in between is impregnated with white lead then a mahogany outer bottom. It's all done as a traditional style but improved upon and assembled with common sense. It will last way longer than the original but like all original boats it must stay in the water to remain swelled up. This boat still has its original 6 V system which was partly the reason I had to put a new bottom on the boat. The owners only vacationed here on Torch Lake they lived many states away so the boat would sit in the boathouse for long periods of time between use. 6 V batteries have long been noted for their lack of reserve. So to solve the problem of having a dead battery all the time a charger was put in the boat and plugged in. Well it kept the battery up but created an electrolysis field around the boat and it ate the bottom and hull side fasteners all to hell. Well the bottom and Hull sides have been completely re-fastened. The decks and interior have not, they look good and still retain the original finish from Chris-Craft. It has been Boathouse kept and never refinished. Aside from that the upholstery and Marshall spring units are all original. I had to remove the original linoleum off the floor to put a new bottom on. Both flagpoles are original and the ML 145 hp engine is the same one it came with. The two brothers had this gem to play in if they pulled their own weight and did their chores on the boat as dad commanded. Dad was your typical parent, not wealthy but did all right, in order to have a boat and cottage one needed to be good at many things because the money just wasn't there to hire it done. If you want it or want to use it then you will have to work for it and prove you're responsible to care for it. I was brought up the same way, the way it should be. The two brothers were young and full of hormones they were instructed how to use the boat as dad wanted. Well as we know dad is not always around and when that happened it meant... go for it. Don't get me wrong the boat does not have any scars from crashes I refinished the hull sides when I refastened them so I know they did not do any dock banging, all in all that is impressive for a new boat to live through the hormone years without any scars. They used the horsepower in that engine to have fun, and everywhere they went it was at full throttle as long as dad was gone. Pretty soon there became common talk amongst the local neighbors as to the way the brothers were using the boat. Whenever chores outdoors needed done and behind you out in the lake came the rumble of that exhaust belching out that 3 1/2 inch copper pipe, zipping around but going nowhere then it was commonly asked (who the hell is that?) The local neighbors would say, oh that's "SLOPOK" I wanted to add just a little more to the story, I worked for the owner of the boat for several years. He was the oldest son and he loved that boat. Over the years I continued to hear stories from the past about the boat and his life. Not all of the memories about the Chris-Craft were positive and to be completely honest with you most were negative. Is that a surprise? Okay let's say it this way, he loved the boat, the way it looked, the way it rode over the waves, the big open cockpit, the sound... oh that rumble out that 3 1/2 inch copper pipe was beautiful music... Yeah right when the damn thing would run right. You see dad did the maintenance on the engine as well. He could not afford to pay for it if he could do it himself. I am sure his father was a very fine man I do not believe that we had ever met while he was alive but I got a taste of his efforts when it became my job to care for the boats and the boathouses. There were two boathouses side by

side. Many of the things in and around the boathouses that required some attention were built very well showing that he liked to have things done right, however some things were not given enough thought or attention. For example the timbers that were made to cradle the boat were built with quality lumber and had to be put into place by hand on top of the dock and bottom sill plate of the boathouse. The boat was lifted by hand with chain falls out of the water, there was very little room underneath the boat to place the timbers for the cradle. The timbers were very well built but they were built to support a bulldozer not a Chris-Craft it did not take me long to realize some modifications needed to be made to make placing the timbers under the boat easier. We are all just men not Hercules, the amount of strength it required to move the timbers in place made it necessary to change your shorts when the job was finished. There is nothing wrong with over engineering something but there is a limit... Who do you know that carries around an extra pair of shorts? When I was first contacted to go down to the boathouses and inspect the Chris-Craft and determine whether I was interested in taking on the job to get the boat off the cradle and down in the water and running. It had not been in the water since his father passed away some 15 to 18 years before. Since my whole life has been spent caring for other people's toys of course the answer was yes. It was another adventure and the owner was a really neat man that I grew over the years to become very fond of. I lowered the boat in the water to soak, got the engine up and running but after a week or so the boat just could not stay afloat. I had to haul it out and took it to my shop to hang it from the hoist and inspect the bottom. The planking was swelled up tight but that chine had dropped down on the one side which was keeping it from floating. In order to repair it the bottom had to come off. This is when I discovered the fasteners were all eaten away. Bolts were eaten in half that's why the chine had dropped. Then I heard the story about the battery charger being left in the boat while it was on, which was the source of the electrolysis that ate the brass screws. If bronze fasteners would have been used that problem never would have happened. Let me mention here that an electric powered bilge pump is a safety item every wood boat should have. The auto bailers that the boat companies installed in their boats were not electric powered. They only worked while the boat was moving forward 3 to 5 mph thus creating a vacuum over the fitting and discharging the water. They really work well and I am very fond of them but an electric one works all of the time. This boat does not have a hole drilled through the hull's side for the discharge of water from an electric pump. It has never had one and I could not bring myself to drill a hole through that pretty wood.

Besides the boat now has my traditional bottom on it so it's not going to leak anyway. The boat is now back in the water, I gave the engine a valve job, a complete tuneup, installed my reproduction oil filter, installed the original Holly thermostat assembly on, and the engine just purrrs. It's ready for the water test ride with the owner. Well it had been a lot of years since he drove the boat but he did not forget very much he was a true wood boater. As the days and weeks passed one day I received a call from him about the boat. Now here is the good part... He told me he went down Torch River at an idle of 550 RPMs to Lake Skegagog then out into Elk Lake then back up the river at the same rpm then into Torch Lake then all the way up to the dockside bar for lunch and a beer. After lunch he came out to find the boat still floating, and when he hit the starter button... It started and purrred as it did before. He then drove all the way

back to the boathouse. I could not believe my ears, that is an incredible story I said, but I don't get it is there something about this story I missed? He said that he had always wanted to do that trip. I said I still don't understand how you could have grown up in that boat and never made those trips? He said we tried but something always happened and we broke down and had to be towed back. "Sorry Dad" I love you very much but you were not a very good mechanic. Now that moved to me when he told me " thank you" and it moves me now that I put pen to paper and write it down. I will miss you Don, I thank you for touching my life and leaving me with your special kindness. I have spent my life helping people because I enjoy it. I remain proud to be that person they selected to be the caretaker of their toys. My reward is their happiness with my repeated efforts to make sure their summer boating is filled with fun and everything works as it should. They know I'm available for them 7 days a week, rain or shine, even holidays, that's the old school service I was brought up with.