

Resident assistants play a key role in college dorms

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# THE SUNDAY GAZETTE

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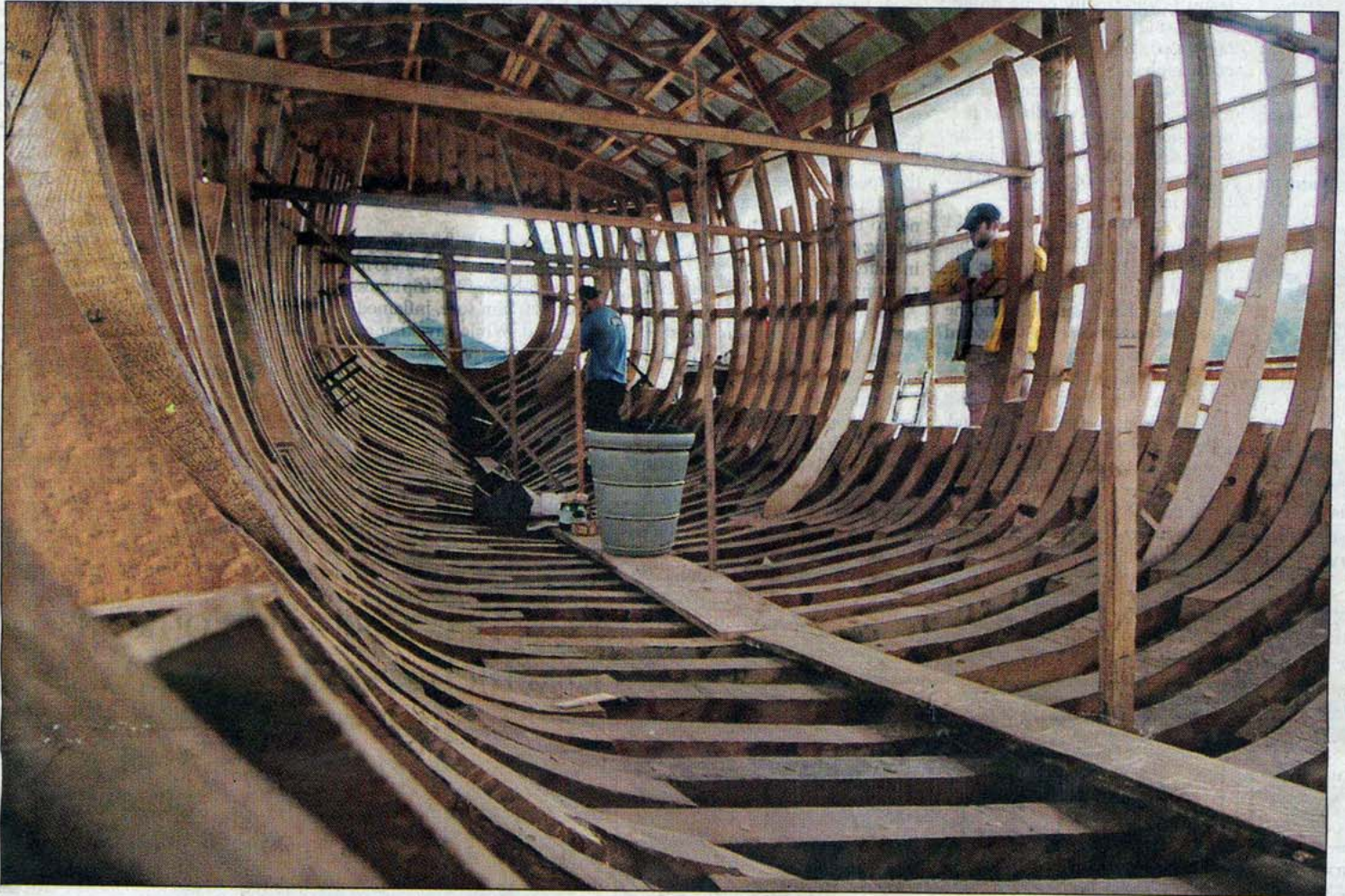
THE LOCALLY OWNED VOICE OF THE CAPITAL REGION

SCHENECTADY, NY ♦ TWO DOLLARS

OCTOBER 7, 2007

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## Shaping up



BRUCE SQUIERS/GAZETTE PHOTOGRAPHER

Constructed of white oak, the hull of the sloop Onrust, a replica of a 1614 design, takes shape at the Mabee Farm in Rotterdam Junction on Saturday afternoon.

### ROTTERDAM JUNCTION

# Bronx teens help build ship replica

BY R.J. KELLY  
Gazette Reporter

When the replica 17th century Dutch yacht Onrust is finished in 2009, some small, but important parts will have come from the hands of teenagers from the Bronx, who worked at the Mabee Farm historical site this weekend.

"I'll have the satisfaction of being able to say I worked on this boat," said Mellissa Mulcare, a 17-year-old senior at Bronx Lab High School.

She and Geraldine Reynoso, a senior at the Satellite Academy, were among teens methodically chiseling

and sawing small wedges to be used to tighten wooden pegs, called trunnels, that will hold oak planks forming the side ribs of the boat's framework.

About 5,000 of the trunnels and 10,000 of the little wedges will be needed to complete the 50-foot-long boat, according to Greta Wagle, vice president of New Netherland Routes, the nonprofit group constructing the Onrust using traditional Dutch boat-making methods of the Colonial period.

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Carlos Santana, foreground, and Jesus Maldonado work Saturday on the hull of the Onrust. Both youths are part of a Bronx-based program.

BRUCE SQUIERS/GAZETTE PHOTOGRAPHER

# Teens: Crucial boat parts built

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"All of these little mundane jobs are very crucial to building the ship," Wagle said.

The original Onrust, built in 1614 in what is now New York City, measured 44½ feet and weighed 16 tons, according to Onrust Project records.

Mulcare and Reynoso were among 30 students, including 12 girls in the contingent, from the Bronx-based Rocking the Boat program that focuses on boat building, navigation and environmental studies, said Chris Kautz, the nonprofit group's boat building director.

About half the group spent much of Saturday on the Mohawk River in four handmade rowboats the group brought with them. Aside from honing rowing skills, the students also took samples of river water and aquatic insects to compare with water conditions along the Hudson River near the Bronx, Kautz said.

Helping out was J. Kelly Nolan, an ecosystem expert from the Mohawk River Research Center.

The group camped in tents they brought to the Mabee Farm.

Although city teens, the outdoors was nothing new to

most of them, Mulcare noted.

As part of the Rocking the Boat program, they often go on hikes or other outdoor activities, she said.

Over the summer, Reynosa and Mulcare spent a week sailing on a 150-foot schooner from New York City to Boston, with stops at Cape Cod and Nantucket.

The program includes opportunities for students at various high schools to earn credit by participating, said Javier Diaz, 18. Diaz started with the program in high school, now as a business student in Lehman College, he also works as a staff program assistant with Rocking the Boat.

On Saturday, work on the Onrust, Dutch for "restless," took center stage.

Under a sheltering shed, volunteer workers, many of them engineers or retired engineers from local General Electric facilities, were busy shaping the ship.

After more than a year of weekend work, the ship's skeleton rose from curved ribs of white oak crafted using an authentic design provided by master Dutch builder Gerald de Weerd, director of the Maritime Museum in the Netherlands.

"Nobody [here] really has expertise in this now," acknowledged Tony Dellavecchio, but crafts skills and engineering experience helps follow the detailed de Weerd's design.

"You spend your life looking at old designs ... and building models," said Dellavecchio, a GE electrical engineer and a woodworker interested in boats.

"This is an opportunity of a lifetime," he said as he helped install a rib on the partially completed frame.

Although the weekend work visit was the first for the Rocking the Boat group, it likely won't be the last, according to Wagle, a Belgian-born researcher in New Netherland history, who's lived in the Schenectady area for about 30 years.

"These kids are great," she said. "They're at home here, and we try to make them feel at home."

A campfire and marshmallow roast was planned for Saturday night, but that was before evening thunderstorms swept heavy downpours through the region.

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BRUCE SQUIERS/GAZETTE PHOTOGRAPHER

Elsie Gonzalez, left, and Javier Diaz make wedges to be used in the construction of the Onrust sloop at the Mabee Farm.