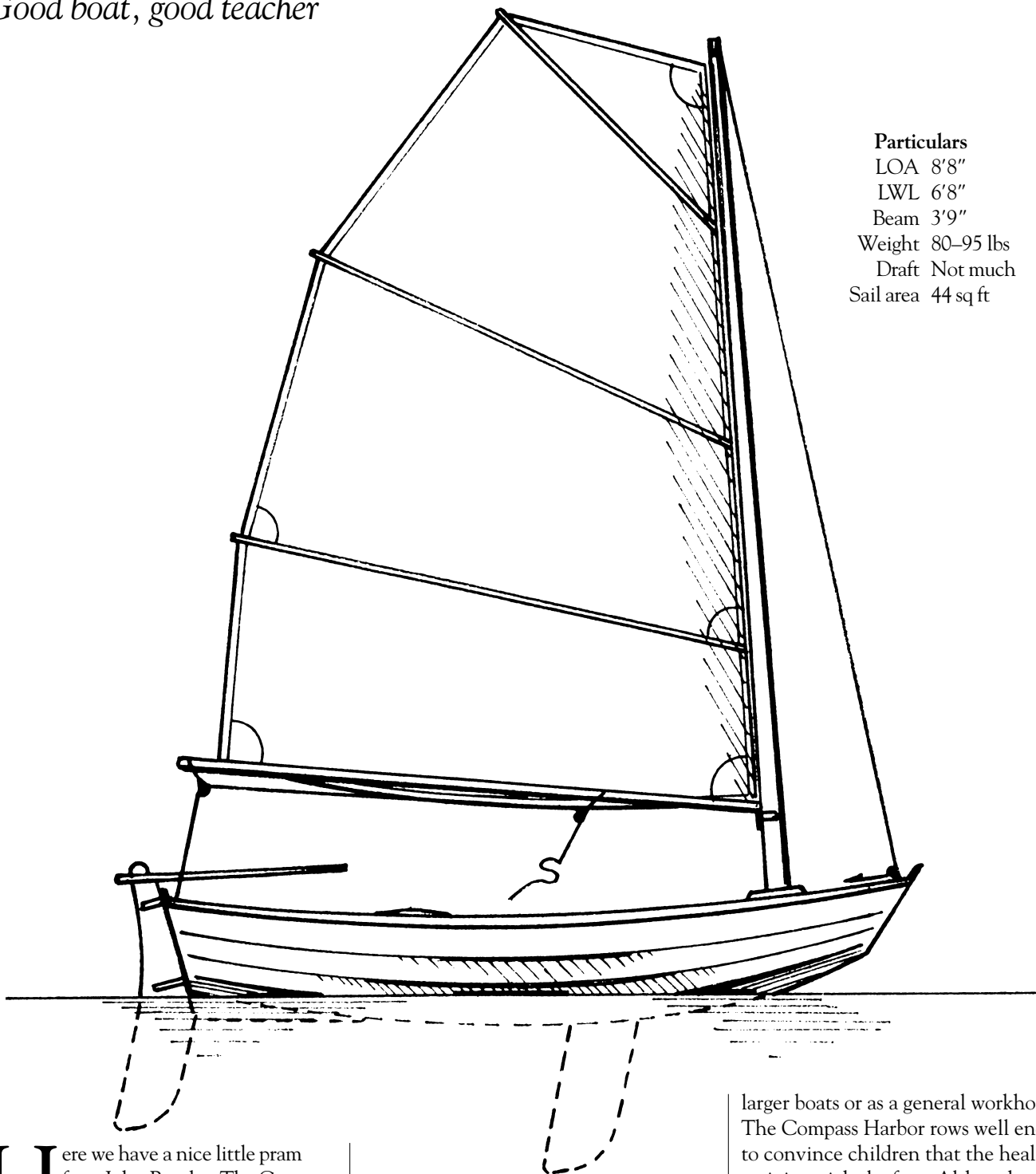


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# COMPASS HARBOR

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*Good boat, good teacher*



**Particulars**  
LOA 8'8"  
LWL 6'8"  
Beam 3'9"  
Weight 80-95 lbs  
Draft Not much  
Sail area 44 sq ft

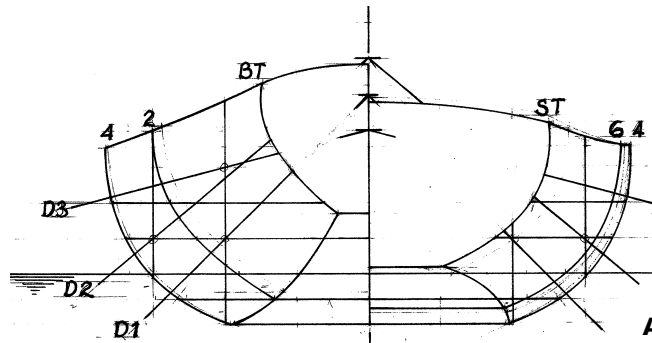
**H**ere we have a nice little pram from John Brooks. The Compass Harbor's narrow flat bottom shows strong rocker, and its lapstrake topsides sweep easily aft from a raked forward transom that sits well above the designed waterline. The designer didn't want that transom to "snow-plow the water." All of

this shape helps the pram move easily and ensures good manners in fairly rough conditions, whether under its own power or at the end of a towline.

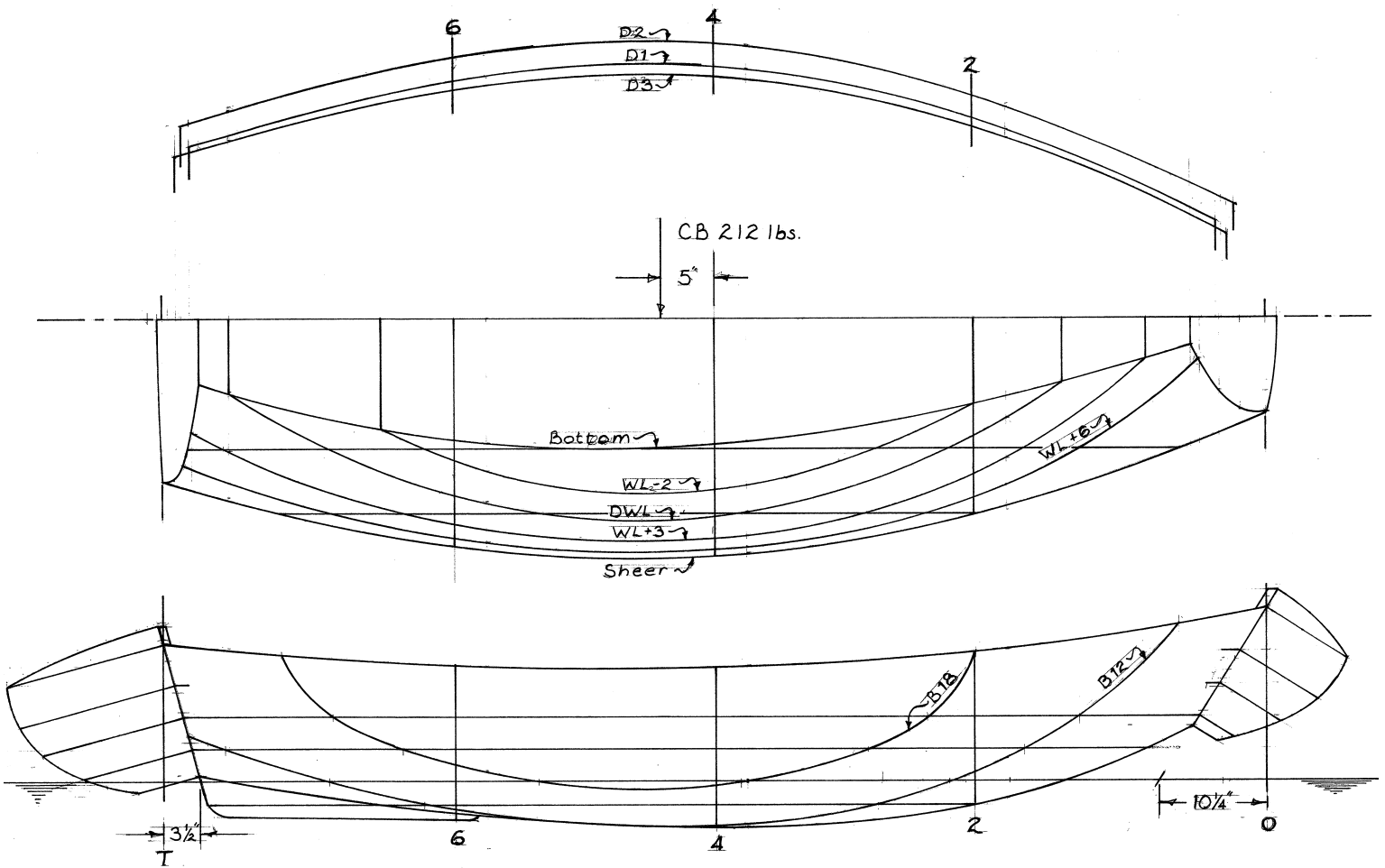
This pram can serve as a tender for

larger boats or as a general workhorse. The Compass Harbor rows well enough to convince children that the healthy activity might be fun. Although no pulling boat that measures only 6'8" on its designed waterline can be truly fast, the sense of motion is acceptable.

Everyone knows that working with the wind to move our boats (getting something for "nothing") is one of life's



**A narrow flat bottom and raked forward transom help ensure good manners under sail or at the end of the towline.**



great pleasures, and a proposed sailing rig awaits finishing touches on Brooks' drawing table: "I'm trying to hit something halfway between a traditional batwing type and a sailboard sail. We want a rig that will work well, fit the style of the boat, and look cool." He has sketched a promising fully battened sail with plenty of roach and a low geometric center.

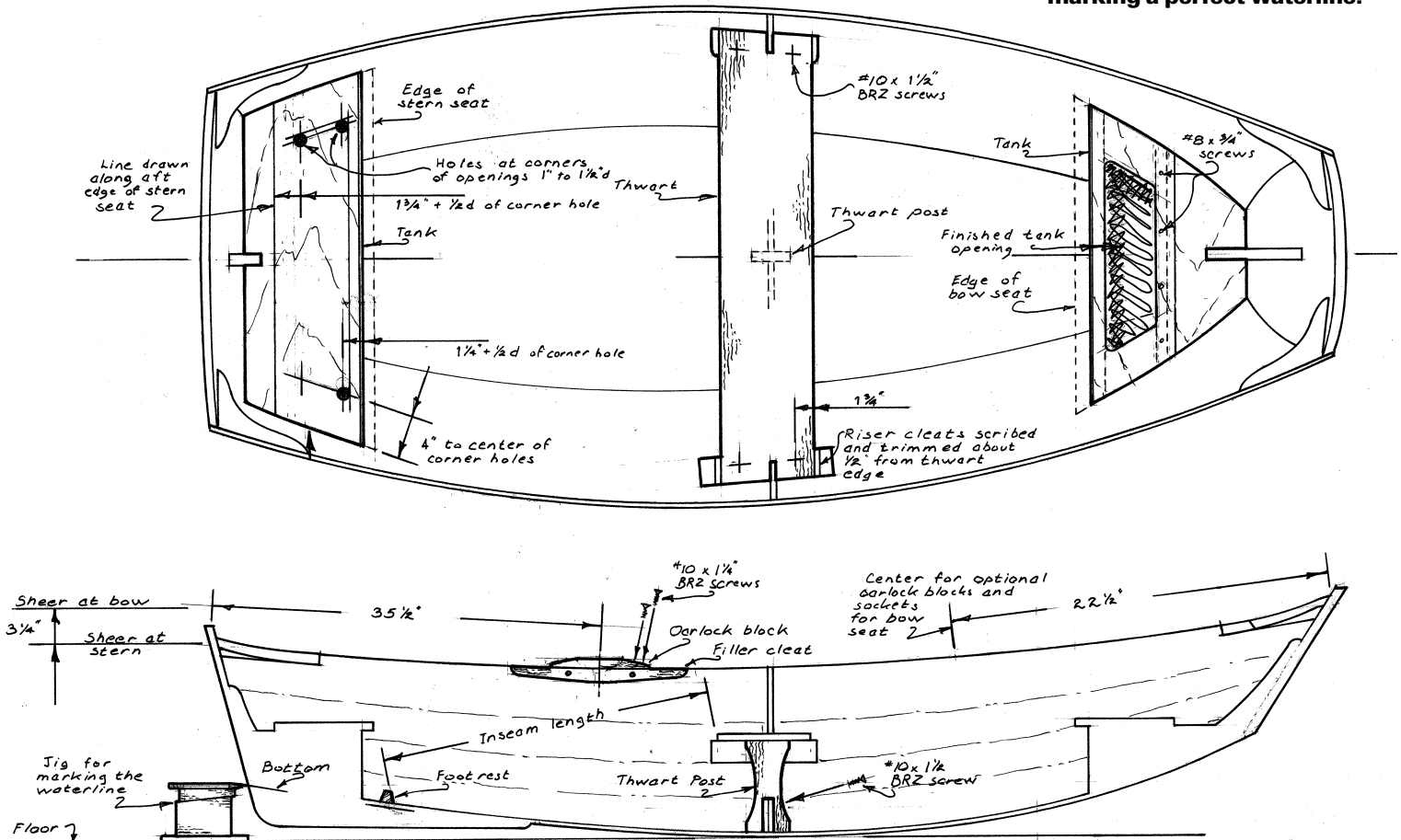
The stern transom will support a 2-hp outboard motor. Learning to handle a powerboat constitutes part of a complete waterfront education. No matter that the world might be a more pleasant place, ashore and afloat, if the internal-combustion engine never had been invented.

Brooks drew the preliminary cartoon

for this pram back in 1991 at the request of an experienced sailor. As happened, the drawings sat incomplete and unused for almost a decade. Finally a couple of orders for the pram came through...one for a garden-pond boat, the other for a tender to a 45' high-end sailing yacht. Then the designer chose his Compass Harbor as the class project for a course at WoodenBoat School. Given proper



The traditional layout works well for various loads and purposes. Note the simple jig for marking a perfect waterline.



exposure, the design flourished. This little pram goes together glued-lapstrake fashion. Pioneered decades ago by Joel White and others, this building method depends upon high-quality plywood and epoxy resins. The technique's advantages are many: glued-lapstrake hulls tend to be light, strong, and perpetually watertight, whether kept afloat or ashore; the strakes self-fair as we hang them, which means they'll need few molds and not too much sanding; materials are readily available, if not really inexpensive; and the shadows cast at the laps help to define sweet hull lines. Designers have not overlooked these sterling characteristics, and we now find plans for boats of many types and sizes intended for glued-lapstrake construction (see, for example, page 20). This would seem to make the Compass Harbor Pram a worthwhile first step for neophyte

builders. Build the tender now, start on the mother ship next winter. The plans package appears particularly complete and, in some ways, unique. Brooks, an experienced teacher, thought of the first-time builder as he detailed the process of building. He provides patterns for just about every part of the boat. Most of them are full-sized, but his necessarily small-scale patterns for the planks will be particularly welcome. The backbone of the plans package consists of "assembly drawings." These illustrations, spread over a number of large sheets, describe each building step with a separate drawing...one plank at a time. In effect Brooks has created a how-to-build article, with large- and full-scale drawings, that arrives rolled in a tube. He intends that this boat can be built by folks who don't yet know how to

build boats. Those in need of further reassurance might consult *How to Build Glued-Lapstrake Wooden Boats*, which he wrote with his wife, Ruth Ann Hill (WoodenBoat Books, 2004). I'll leave you to study the drawings shown here, as they describe the process more efficiently than words. Building this likeable pram should prove a pleasant and satisfying experience. Brooks issues only a single caution before letting us have at it: "The forward part of the hull's bottom is highly curved. Bending it into place for the first time might prove 'exciting.' After that, it's smooth sailing." —M.O'B. Plans from Brooks Boats Designs, 831 Reach Rd., Brooklin, ME 04616; 207-359-2491; brooksboatsdesigns@gmail.com; www.brooksboatsdesigns.com.

**Glued-lapstrake construction: light, tight, and handsome. Bending the bottom into place up forward will prove challenging. After that, the strakes should hang easily.**

