

His fairy-tale endeavor

FREEPORT, Maine — From the time he was in college, Harold Arndt dreamed of building a boat

Detours

and sailing it around the world.

The problem was how to pay for it. While working as a waste minimization officer at Bath Iron Works, he found the solution: He would build it from salvage.

Nine years ago, Arndt, 53, took early retirement and started mining the state's scrap yards for steel, lead, canvas, wood — anything with potential.

Today, the 113-foot frame of his steel, two-masted topsail schooner, *Island Rover*, is taking shape in a sheep pasture behind his home. He has rallied construction expertise, financing, and enthusiasm from a growing circle of friends and volunteers, some of whom will become crew when Arndt sails his ship around the globe — as he hopes to do — to demonstrate what a little creative recycling can do.

The boat, which will sleep 19, is a monument to waste conservation. For the 39-ton keel, Arndt melted down a hodgepodge of discarded lead from underwater cable shielding, spent bullets, elevator counterweights, even fishing sinkers. For the hull, he salvaged steel from Navy surplus. He recovered an anchor windlass from an Alaskan fishing boat that had been rebuilt, and outfitted the galley with kitchen equipment rescued from a Friendly's restaurant that had gone out of business.

With each year, the momentum grows. He worked through the winter putting on decks, and



GLOBE STAFF PHOTOS/IANET KNOTT



aims to complete the hull plate, the boat's outer skin, by autumn. His hope now is to recruit volunteer welders, fitters, and fabricators, anybody who knows how to work with steel.

"Basically, people with a strong back," Arndt said, "especially if they have welding certificates."

In 2000, Arndt formed the non-profit *Island Rover* Foundation to see the ship through launching and promote his pied-piper mission of reducing the amount of

Harold Arndt's *Island Rover*, a labor of love in progress: Arndt surfaces on a temporary ladder from the hull; recycled faucets; a row of steel frames, called ribs, for the 113-foot schooner.



trash generated throughout the world.

"This is a statement to society as to how wasteful we are," he said. "When you can build a vessel this size from someone else's unwanted stuff, you know there's something wrong with society."

A marine biologist and licensed sea captain, Arndt plans to make the schooner available to research scientists and eco-vacationers interested in exploring such unspoiled natural environments as New Zealand, Tahiti, the Galapagos Islands, the Aleutians, Iceland, and the Azores.

To watch the progress of the *Island Rover*'s construction, click on www.islandrover.org or stop by in person. For directions, e-mail harndt@islandrover.org.

DIANE FOULDS