

# GOOD OLD BOAT

*The sailing magazine for the rest of us!*



MAY/JUNE 2008

ISSUE 60

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## About the cover ...

Herb Browne and his son, Jim, sail Herb's Sea Sprite 23, *Scot Free*. For more on the boats built by Clarke Ryder, please turn to Page 48. The photos of *Scot Free* are by Onne van der Wal.



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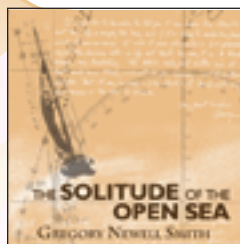


# Circumnavigations and other true sailing tales!



John Guzzwell:  
**Trekka Round  
the World**

Legendary sailor John Guzzwell narrates the adventures he had while circumnavigating in *Trekka*, the 20-foot yawl he built. This is a must-have release for all who now follow in his wake and those who dream of doing so.



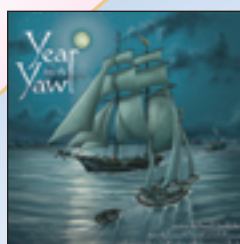
Greg Newell Smith:  
**The Solitude  
of the Open Sea**

In this series of narrative essays, Greg Newell Smith reflects upon the many adventures he had and discoveries he made during his world circumnavigation. *The Solitude of the Open Sea* takes you to the most unexpected places.



Dave and Jaja Martin:  
**Into the Light**

Well-known circumnavigators, Dave and Jaja Martin possess the power to touch your heart and soul. The Martin family's true story of their travels in Iceland and Norway offers an honest look at life aboard in the best and in the worst of times.



Russell Doubleday:  
**A Year in a Yawl**

*A Year in a Yawl* is a true tale of four young men traveling the Great Circle Route of the eastern United States over 100 years ago. Their youthful enthusiasm and resourcefulness make this a powerful and well-told classic.



Good Old Boat:  
**Bookends**  
50 View from Here and  
Last Tack columns

These musings about sailing and boat ownership from the editorial pages of *Good Old Boat* will entertain you whenever you miss being near your sailboat, as well as any time you're aboard or driving to the marina.



Joshua Slocum:  
**Sailing Alone  
Around the World**

In 1895 at the age of 51, Joshua Slocum began a three-year circumnavigation aboard *Spray*. The first man to ever successfully complete a solo circumnavigation, he recounted the adventures he had along the way in this classic tale.

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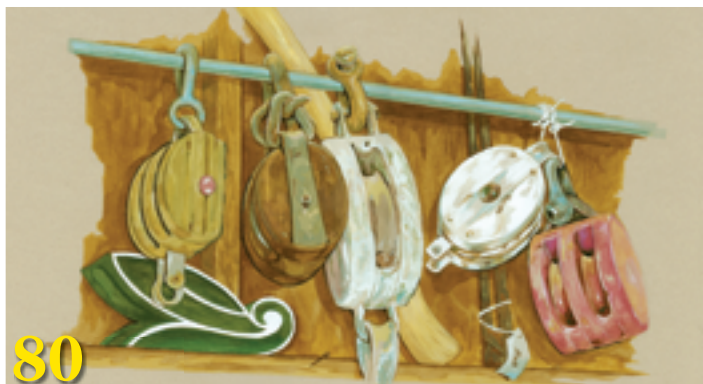
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# Great listening for young sailors!



John Vigor:  
**Danger, Dolphins,  
and Ginger Beer**

Join Sally, Peter, and Andy Grant as they sail their way through the unpredictable waters of childhood. A great two-part series for children ages 8 to 12.

*Danger, Dolphins, and Ginger Beer* takes readers on an exciting romp across the islands of the Caribbean as the children save an injured dolphin and fight to save their own lives.

*Sally Steals an Elephant* finds the Grants in the South African jungle, where the children encounter a kindly elephant, her cruel circus owner, and even a witch doctor.



John Vigor:  
**Sally Steals  
an Elephant**

Foxtrot Charlie just wants to get along with his foster family. But sometimes being an ordinary 13-year-old boy gets him into trouble — messes, explosions, accidents — the harder he tries, the more he fails. Just when he thought things couldn't possibly get any worse, Foxtrot is lost at sea with his foster father, foster sister, and a friend. With the lives of three other people in the balance, Fox is faced with a challenge that helps him understand what's really important.



John Vigor:  
**So Long,  
Foxtrot Charlie**



Russell Doubleday:  
**A Year  
in a Yawl**

Not long after Joshua Slocum completed his historic circumnavigation, four young men from Michigan set out on another adventure that had never been done before: the Great Circle Route of the eastern U.S. They built a boat and traveled down the Mississippi, around Florida, up the

Eastern Seaboard, back through the Erie Canal, and home to the Great Lakes. Their youthful enthusiasm and resourcefulness make this classic true story of a century ago a powerful influence on youngsters today.

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## The view from here

# Ugly can be beautiful

## A cruiser debates the advantages of homely boats

Guest editorial by Dave Martin

**M**OST ANYONE CAN APPRECIATE THE LOOK OF A CLASSICALLY DESIGNED YACHT: THE delicate sheer, the elegant mast, the handsome overhangs. When I see one in the harbor or in the pages of a magazine, I envision myself at the helm, hip jammed against coaming, fingers nudging the grand wheel as its sails convert wind energy to forward motion. Pull up to a dock and heads turn. Small crowds gather. Men in yellow slacks ask about pedigree. Their gals marvel at the brightwork. Strangers buy drinks. Children bring flowers.

To tell the truth, I'd rather own an ugly boat. Take my yacht, *Driver*, for example. She's a robust, go-anywhere, expedition-style boat that has more character than a Shakespearian actor. Her slab-sided steel hull is unfaired and her welds look like dredging spoils. I painted her hull with a roller. When I pull up to a dock, people run away. I like that. If I need a fuel hose or a water hose one is always available.

The first question anyone asks is: "Build that boat yourself?" An accusation. I like that too. When you own a beautiful yacht people ask where she was built. As a hands-on guy, I enjoy being directly, or indirectly, responsible for creating my assets.


Looking at *Driver* is like witnessing an car accident: wrinkled metal and broken glass. The people who are brave enough to stick around are people I can be friends with. That's the other advantage of owning an ugly boat: you weed out the boat snobs right away and get down to humanity.

“That’s the other advantage of owning an ugly boat: you weed out the boat snobs right away.”

### Things would change

If I faired *Driver's* hull and gave her a spray-paint job, everything would change. It's a strange fact that a glossy, mirror-perfect paint job changes the way people perceive quality. For some reason, glossy paint makes a boat look more seaworthy. Modern coatings are much more resilient than they used to be, but adding a 3-mil layer of paint is not going to drastically improve the structural integrity of an already flimsy hull.

Cars can be shiny because they are not designed to come into contact with other objects. You would never nestle the car up to a telephone pole while parallel parking, nor would you let the shopping cart rest against the door. A boat lies next to floating docks and pilings; the barnacle-encrusted mooring ball bangs the bow on calm days; and no matter how carefully planned, the dinghy is going to come into contact with the painted topsides...especially if children are in the same harbor.

I like a tidy boat. Fresh paint, whether brushed or rolled, works miracles. The difference between a professional spray job and a pretty good brush job is about 15 feet. Good enough for me. The best part is that I can do it myself and save a bundle. This cash allows me to put money into better quality sails and rigging. When I go for a sail I want to enjoy my time off, not get stressed about scratching the paint. 

### Barefoot and up the mast?

In your March 2008 article, “Rig Inspection and Maintenance,” a photo of a woman (author Petrea Heathwood?), suspended in a bosun’s chair, dropped my jaw and bulged my eyes! As a veteran of many trips up a mast, I choked at the folly of doing so barefooted. Any slippage of halyard, winch, fitting, and so on can (and has) led to torn flesh.

Apparently, the risk of regaining the deck minus a large amount of blood or even a toe, hasn’t entered this brave lassie’s thought processes. While I’m sure the article contained many sage bits of rigging wisdom, after viewing this photo (with no disclaimer in its caption) any advice would have been lost in the translation.

**Roland Gove**  
North Royalton, Ohio

*Roland, go ahead and read the article. We promise it’s safe. The woman in the photo is not Petrea, as we explain in the nearby caption. Petrea states in her article that she prefers to wear shoes when she goes up. Still, you know there are sailors in the tropics who seldom wear shoes and who, even when on the deck, may stub their toes on a cleat that gets in the way. It’s their preference. We think it’s OK for them to choose the risks they want to take.*

### Single-handed sailing off the anchor

After reading the wonderful article, “Sailing Off the Anchor,” by Vern Hobbs in the January 2008 edition, I thought I’d share with you a variation on the theme so aptly described in that article.

Being mostly a single-hander, I rarely have the luxury of a crew person. I have learned to do a number of two-person tasks alone. I love to sail away from an anchor for many of the reasons mentioned in Vern’s article. While the seamanship aspects of sailing off one’s anchor really appeal to me, there’s another reason. When cruising, I often find that I’m up and ready to go soon after the sun rises. (I have to admit this is not in my personality when I’m at home.) Have you ever heard how far the sound of an engine oil pressure horn can carry when you hit “start” at daybreak? Even though my engine usually starts after only a few seconds of cranking, I really don’t want to be the culprit who wakes others in the anchorage.

While I do most of what Vern describes in his article, the one thing I do differently is that once the main is up and I’m up at the bow hauling in the anchor rode, I’ve often found that my big Danforth will have buried itself quite deeply in the primordial ooze that passes for Chesapeake Bay mud. Many times I have not been able to break the anchor free even when right on top of it and the rode is straight down. When I suspect this may be the case, I begin hauling in the last 20 feet of rode very rapidly. I’ve found that unless I have a very stiff breeze right on the nose, I can pull my 7,200-pound Hunter 28.5 at enough speed to pass over the buried anchor fast enough for me to snub the line and let the weight of the moving boat break it out.

Then it is a matter of getting the muddy mess into the anchor well quickly and getting back to the cockpit. The boat has usually veered off the wind a bit by then and I have enough headway to steer around any other boats or obstacles in the anchorage. I often have my roller-furled

genoa out and am sailing at a good clip only minutes after the anchor came up.

When I do this just as the sun is coming up and I haven’t scared the shorebirds, it always brings a smile of pride to my face.

**Warren Milberg**  
Annandale, Va.



### Don’t forget to go sailing

Niels Daugbjerg sent this photo of Mahalo and an important sailing philosophy: “I am a romantic and I love those idyllic sunset cover photos but here’s a good old boat doing what good old boats should be doing. After more than two years of work, this is how our derelict 1967 Bristol 29 looks.

“The photo was shot February 8 by a friend. It was 70 and sunny when the photo was taken and Steve, my boat partner, and I had gone to the boat with the intention of getting some interior work done. It was not difficult to convince ourselves that we really needed some motivational therapy and the work could wait. I remember Jerry [Powlas] doing an editorial piece on this very subject.”

**Niels Daugbjerg**  
League City, Texas

### Seeing things?

I thought I was seeing things for a moment. The beautiful Islander 32 on your March 2008 cover is a close match for my *Varekai*. It’s probably even the same production year. Please consider a boat review of the 32. They were not as numerous a boat as Islander’s more popular 36, but this was one of Robert Perry’s great designs from the ’70s. *Varekai*, like *Seahawk* on your cover, gives newer and “faster” boats a run for their money. Nice photo!

**George Braun**  
Hockessin, Del.

### New Nimble website

I’m in the process of building a Nimble Boat Owners’ website to cover all of the boats built by Nimble: <<http://www>.



nimbleboatowners.org>. I'm the owner of a Nimble 30 and had a difficult time finding anything written about my boat.

**Michael McConnell**  
Seattle, Wash.

### Another site of interest

There are many good old boats out there roaming the high seas, but there is one particular boat and captain that I think would make an interesting story for your magazine. Glenn Wakefield embarked in September aboard *Kim Chow*, a 1969 Cheoy Lee OS-40 sloop, on a non-stop, singlehanded circumnavigation, west-around. He set out from his home port of Victoria, British Columbia, and is currently off the southern coast of Australia. *Kim Chow's* prop shaft is sealed — sail power only. Glenn has a website — maintained by his wife, Marylou — that follows his progress. It also has a nice section about the refit of this classic Phil Rhodes design. The website address: <<http://www.kimchowaroundtheworld.com>>.

**Bill Travis**  
Leesburg, Va.

### Ahoy, Tartan 34 Classics!

In the several years since it was founded, the Tartan 34 Classic Association has been working to bring together owners of these very good old Sparkman & Stephens classics. Of the 525 or so Tartan 34s built in the '60s and '70s, we've put together a database of about 200. If you own a T34 or if you used to own one, please contact me at TCA34\_Treasurer@comcast.net. If you know someone who owns one, please pass the word about us and this effort (and about *Good Old Boat* too!). We'd also be interested to learn about any 34s that are known to have been lost or scrapped.

**Chris Crighton**  
Severna Park, Md.

### What was that material?

I enjoyed the hull insulation tips in the January 2008 issue by Connie McBride. Of special interest to me was the white plastic cushion ventilation underlayment in the photo on Page 55. Any idea what it is and where to buy it? Looks like the best material I've seen so far.

I relish every issue. Keep up the excellent effort.

**Richard LaPalme**  
Havelock, N.C.

### Connie McBride answers

I am so glad to hear that you enjoyed the article. I never thought to identify our cushion ventilation. It's just one of those things that you stop seeing because you have had it for so long. It is Dri-Dek <<http://www.dri-dek.com>> that we pieced together, then cut to fit under the cushions.

Originally (eight years ago) when we bought the boat and replaced all of the cushions, we bought a dry bunk material (I cannot remember what it was called) that was recommended in a book on cruising. In theory, you were supposed to be able to hang it up to dry for a few hours when it became saturated with moisture, then put it back under the cushion again. In reality, we spent our first winter aboard in Maryland,

where the material took a day to get saturated and a week to evaporate. We obviously needed something different.

We had lined our bilges with Dri-Dek because we store our food cans there and — in the event that we ever took on water — we didn't want all of our cans rusting. We seriously overestimated how big our bilges were and had a lot of material left over, so we made our cushion ventilation out of it.

It may be expensive, but WOW is it ever wonderful! Since we put it down, we have never had a problem with moisture, even when we have spent the winter "up north." It gets folded back every time I get under the bunk (far too often from my point of view!). It is showing absolutely no signs of age. When it's time to clean it, I simply put it on deck and use the deck brush to scrub it. It cleans up perfectly and dries in the sun in minutes.

We have since lined our galley and head lockers as well as the bookshelf with it. Before we thought to put it under the books, the bottoms were mildewing. Since we put it there we have had absolutely no problems with our books. If you plan to use it for years, the expense will be well worth it.

**Connie McBride**  
Out cruising

### Antifoulant question

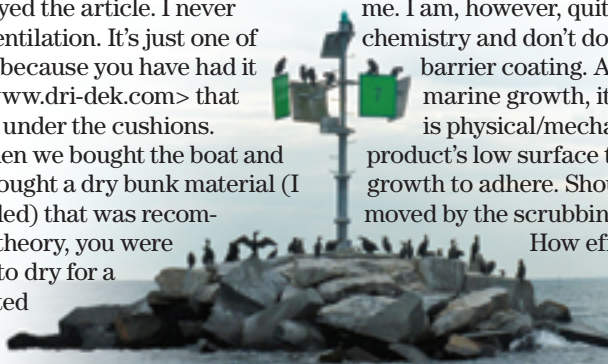
I read your article on bottom paints (March 2008 issue) and wondered if you have seen the relatively new paint, FPU Fluorinated Polyurethane from 21st Century Coatings <<http://www.21st-century-coatings-canada.com/>>? Fluorinated Polyurethane is also a barrier coat and is slick enough that marine growth is supposedly not so bad. My boat is in Lake Chelan (Washington state), and this paint looks to be optimal for my seasonal conditions (we haul the boat out for the winter).

I'm hoping that this company's system will allow me to sand and fair out my old boat hull — a 1975 Ericson with much rough ablative paint — then apply and seasonally touch up after this. The osmotic barrier characteristic makes this very appealing for the older hull. Have you heard of or seen this paint? Any comments? Thanks for the article.

**Chris Glasspool**  
Chelan, Washington

### Gregg Nestor responds

I always appreciate hearing from our readers, especially when they contribute something to the mix, like this fluorinated polyurethane barrier coating. This is a new one to me. I am, however, quite familiar with polyurethane chemistry and don't doubt that it will function well as a barrier coating. As far as its effect on minimizing marine growth, it's pretty clear that its functionality is physical/mechanical, rather than chemical. The product's low surface tension makes it difficult for marine growth to adhere. Should growth get a foothold, it is removed by the scrubbing action of the water along the hull. How effective/efficient this cleaning action



**Andrea Wheeler sent this photo. Send your high-res photo of an aid to navigation. We'll send you a *Good Old Boat* ball cap or T-shirt.**

will be is anyone's guess. A lot depends upon the species of growth, the condition of the hull surface, water temperature, nutrient level, and so on.

Is your Ericson suffering from the pox? If so, the material is worth investigating. Fortunately, our boat does not have any blistering. We sail our 1986 Pearson in Lake Erie and have had very good luck with the Teflon products: Interlux VC 17M and Pettit SR-21.

**Gregg Nestor**  
Middlefield, Ohio

### While we're on the subject...

Thanks to Gregg Nestor for writing an excellent article on choosing the right antifoulant. I do have a question, though. I use Interlux VC 17M in a northern freshwater environment. Gregg's article indicates that the "typical lifespan of a hard antifouling paint is approximately 12 months when in contact with water." Boats in the north are only in the water four to six months of the year. In this case, is it necessary to apply VC 17 each year or would every other year be just as effective? A biennial application, if appropriate, would mean more sailing time — more fun.

**Gregg Babish**  
Regina, Saskatchewan

### Back to Gregg

Your sailing clearly takes place farther up north than mine. While your season is about the same length as mine, your water temperature is most likely a bit cooler. With that said, you correctly quoted me as writing that the "typical lifespan of a hard antifouling paint is approximately 12 months when in contact with water." As such, you're correct in assuming that your sailing environment does not necessarily require an annual application of antifoulant paint.

In the past, I've used Interlux VC 17M and had gotten three years of service. To help it along, I started with two coats of paint. At haulout time in the fall, I carefully pressure-washed

the bottom and, in spring, I did a little touchup (mainly the lower leading edge and bottom of the keel). Last year I switched to Pettit SR-21. It's got a bit more copper. Maybe I can get to four years!

**Gregg Nestor**

### Standing headroom?

Just finished reading Bob Brintnall's article on the Catalina 30 (November 2007) and was once again disappointed. As a 6-foot-tall middle-aged man with a bad back who is considering small good old boats for liveaboard ability, I am often disappointed when I read boat reviews. Two points which are very important to me in a small boat are nearly always absent from boat reviews: please let me know if I can stand up inside the darned thing (at least to dress and fix meals) and if it has an interior shower.

Any Etap owners out there? I'd love to hear about headroom and shower info on these good old boats. Please write: Barry Wion, 3201 MF 929, Gatesville, TX 76528.

**Barry Wion**  
Gatesville, Texas

*Our fault, Barry. Your editors should be adding those important details every chance we get.*

### A proud father

This picture is of the start of the Harvest Moon Regatta from Galveston to Port Aransas, Texas, near Corpus Christi. This year they had 267 boats, everything from the hot, latest-design raceboat to the older mom-and-pop refurbished cruisers.

The tall ship in the back is the *Elissa*. She is an active sailing museum ship berthed in Galveston. She is the epitome of the good old boat as they hauled her as an extremely and extensively modified derelict out of somewhere across the Atlantic and completely rebuilt and refurbished her, putting her back into original sailing condition. An all-volunteer crew rebuilt the ship and an all-volunteer crew sails her.



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The sailboat in the foreground is skippered by my son, Travis. He is captain of the Texas A&M University, Galveston, boat this year.

**Thomas Wright**  
Kemah, Texas

### Another sailing father

Eric Hildinger is building an absolutely amazing backyard crow's nest for his son. We wish we had one in our neighborhood! To watch the progress, go to his blog site: <<http://imaginativeplay.wordpress.com>>.

**Editors**

### Gorgeous schooner planters

How about an article about Howard Blackburn? Every sailor should know his story but surprisingly few do. You certainly have the best sailing magazine in the last 50 years. (I'm 75.)

I am the builder of magnificent 2-, 3-, 4-, and 5-mast schooner planters. Fiberglass hulls with copper sails and bronze rigging. The 3-masters are 4 feet long. I have built more than 500 of these.

**Sturgis Turnbull**  
Bar Harbor, Maine

*We agree with Sturgis. This example, in the photo above, is magnificent. If you'd like to contact him, here are winter (772-664-6010) and summer (207-288-4324) phone numbers. Sturgis has learned that it's smart to spend the winters in Florida and summers in Maine.*

### Of big boats and their rules ...

I have really valued your wisdom in the January 2008 edition: Karen's Last Tack ("Idiots to the Left, Morons to the Right") and Jerry's "Big Boat Rule." I got to live both. I am doing the ICW, following years of lake sailing, for the first time. I have been traveling from New Bern, North Carolina, to extreme South Florida. I follow "the golden rule."

**Billy Bilbrey**  
Cruising on *Bullwinkle*, a 1982 Tartan 33

### More on big ships

I enjoyed the article on the "Big Ship Rule." However, it still pays for recreational mariners to know the Rules of the Road when it comes to confrontation with big ships. A couple of years ago my well-seasoned crew and I were



transporting my Lazy Jack schooner, *Sequoia*, from New Jersey to the marina at the Quantico Marine Base. The weather was clear, but Hurricane Bertha had just passed and the sea state on the Chesapeake was 8- to 10-foot seas. We had just cleared the south end of the C&D canal when a large container ship gave us 5 blasts (imminent danger) on her very loud horn. I was on watch and quickly scanned 360 degrees and saw nothing. I knew that the ship had a Chesapeake pilot onboard. I called the ship on Channel 16 (to make sure the USCG heard the conversation):

**Us:** Container ship pilot, you just gave us five blasts on your horn. Exactly what and where is the imminent danger?

**Pilot:** Uhhh (pause) the car carrier behind us wants to pass us.

**Us:** This is a narrow area and not wide enough to pass. Tell the car carrier to hold his position until we are clear of the channel and next time use the appropriate sound signals.

**Pilot:** Will do. (I suspect that by this time he knew he was talking to another captain.)

We cleared off to the right side the channel and radioed the container ship, "You may tell the car carrier that the chan-

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nel is clear if he wants to pass."

This saved a near-miss and a dangerous close-proximity situation. However, command was assumed only in stopping the passing situation. It would have been unwise to take command and to tell the car carrier to pass in the event that he ran aground or had some other misfortune. It is imperative for all mariners to know the Rules in that some of the big guys are just plain old-fashioned bullies who will put the safety of you, your crew, and vessel in jeopardy if given the opportunity.

Large ships are a lot faster than most sailing vessels and there is absolutely nothing wrong with asking (or telling) them to slow their speed on inland waters until you can maneuver out of their way. To ask them to deviate their course is next to impossible in narrow channels where they are "constrained by draft" and, in fact, have the right of way.

**Duane Lang**  
Port St. Lucie, Fla.

### And more big ships

Ugh, I can hardly believe you'd print Jerry Powlas' "Big Boat Rule," as it illustrates a lack of understanding of the Rules themselves. The most glaring error in the article is this statement: "The Colregs are not strictly enforced." If, by this, Jerry means there is no "boat cop" out writing citations, I suppose it's true, though there never was such

enforcement. But, in actual fact, the rules are precisely enforced in the courts.

The gist of Jerry's article is true: nobody cares about the Rules of the Road anymore. They were largely written long ago, when encountering another vessel was not nearly as sure as it is today. Imagine a busy harbor today with six or eight boats blowing their horns to make passing arrangements. What a mess it would be.

The Rules of the Road today are applied to vessels at a distance in order to avoid the issue of risk of collision altogether. But, in practice, vessels in close proximity never ever assume the intentions of the other vessel. We talk on the radio and determine exactly the intentions of the other vessel. We use Rules of the Road terms — one-whistle pass, etc. — but we don't strictly follow the pecking order. We talk and make arrangements that best suit everyone, with very little regard or discussion about who has the right of way.

The golden rule, as Jerry points out, trumps all rules everywhere: "don't hit anything, and don't let anything hit you." To that I would add, "ever." This also applies to small craft. If you call me from your sailboat and ask me to stop, turn around, and go back the other way, I'd do it in a heartbeat if it would help you and I could do it safely. But, in actual practice, almost no small craft ever calls us and, what's worse, they almost never answer when we call them.

My response to Jerry's big boat problem is simple: buy a radio, learn to use it, and talk to us. You'll be shocked



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at how accommodating we can be if we know what you're trying to accomplish. Nobody's out there to push someone around or muck about with risk of collision. Our careers and livelihoods are on the line.

Articles like "The Big Boat Rule" promote a misunderstanding of practical seamanship and foster an unproductive us-against-them attitude that does not alleviate the problem.

And, before you think I'm just terribly negative, thanks for a great magazine.

**Dennis Gray, Jr.  
Green Cove, Fla.**

*Dennis currently operates offshore supply boats in the Gulf of Mexico with a 500-ton Master Upon Oceans license. He got his first license in 1996 when he began running crew boats in the Gulf of Mexico. He ran a tramp freighter for a year. Now he fills in on a liveaboard dive charter boat in Freeport, Texas, and occasionally runs deliveries in his time off.*

### My boat and the Big Boat Rule

As a new subscriber to *Good Old Boat*, I found much that I can relate to and learn from. I am currently renovating a 1968 Wayfarer Islander 34. I found the boat in Florida and paid \$5,000 for her "as is." The deck needs redoing, winches need to be upgraded, and the whole exterior needs some glass work and a good painting. For the most part, the hull and deck are sound as is the mast and rigging. Her 50-hp VW

diesel engine runs well. The interior wood was entirely dry rotted. I spent the winter of 2005-06 gutting her out at my friend's place in Freeport, Florida.

I thought it would be easier to work on her out of the water, so I had her hauled to Mountain Home, Arkansas. She sits here at a cost of \$25 per month, quite a bit cheaper than doing it in Florida. I would like to get my hands on a set of station sections so I can lay out my new bulkheads. I plan to use Plasticore honeycomb for the mainstay of the new interior, as it is lightweight.

Keep up the good work. I am looking forward to my next issue. By the way, your article on "The Big Boat Rule" (January 2008) was very interesting. Anyone who would be foolish enough to argue with a large vessel probably shouldn't be out on the water. Skippers of small vessels should always use common sense and extreme caution when sailing in high traffic areas. Remember the Prudential Rule: "If you do not do all you can to prevent a collision, you are as much at fault as the vessel failing to yield the right of way."

**Bill McElrath,  
Mountain Home, Ark.**

Send questions and comments to *Good Old Boat*,  
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55311-2655, or by email to [jerry@goodoldboat.com](mailto:jerry@goodoldboat.com).



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# Seafarer 34

*After 35 years, this boat project still isn't complete*

by Don Launer

**I**N APRIL 1972, A YEAR AFTER HE WAS married, Ed Stanton, of Franklinville, New Jersey, ordered the bare hull of a Seafarer 34 to be delivered to him, right out of the mold. The hull was delivered in August of that year.

Ed was not exactly a seasoned sailor nor boatbuilder; he had never owned a boat before. He was not too familiar with carpentry and not at all familiar with fiberglass. Now, seated in the cockpit of his beautifully finished boat 35 years later, he looks back at the project and says, "If I could do it, then anybody could do it."

Ed and his wife, Pat, were born and raised in South Philadelphia and neither had much boating experience. In fact, the first time Pat was ever on a boat was when they visited the Seafarer plant to see the boat and explore the options.

Ed is a retired Philadelphia vocational school teacher, who taught welding, primarily to disadvantaged children. "I really loved my job," Ed recalls, "and I probably learned more from the kids than they did from me. After I started teaching I took a course in sailing, primarily for the college credits, and the following year I chartered a 36-foot sailboat down in the Chesapeake." He had been bitten by the sailing bug.

Ed's continuing education finally earned him a doctorate. "I didn't tell

anybody at work that I had my doctorate," Ed confesses, "I only got it to prove to myself that I could do it."

## Back to Amsterdam

The Seafarer line of sailboats traces its lineage to Amsterdam in the 1950s. These first Dutch-built boats consisted

of a 33-foot centerboarder, which came out in 1958; the 28-foot Ranger, which came out in 1959; the 24-foot Meridian in 1961; and the Swiftsure in 1965.

Originally, Seafarer Fiberglass Yachts, Inc., located in Huntington, Long Island, New York, was the U.S. distributor for the Meridian and Swift-

---

Ed and Pat Stanton's McCurdy and Rhodes-designed Seafarer 34 is a pretty sight in New Jersey waters, at right. Ed began work on *Serendipity* in August of 1972 after receiving the bare hull, above, with just the engine, ballast, centerboard, and rudder installed. In spite of the massive amount of work necessary to turn an unfinished hull into a sailboat, *Serendipity* was launched the following May. She wasn't ready for cruising just yet, but she was clearly a sailboat-in-waiting.





sure, but in 1965 the production of Seafarer boats moved from Holland to the Huntington plant.

In 1965, Bill Tripp designed a 31-footer for Seafarer, and later a 39-footer, but in the 1970s most of their designs came off the boards of McCurdy and Rhodes, including the Seafarer 34. (For background about McCurdy and Rhodes and Bill Tripp, see the January and November 2006 issues). Many medium-sized boat manufacturers closed down in the 1980s, including Seafarer, which went out of business in 1985.

The McCurdy and Rhodes-designed Seafarer 34 hull was manufactured in several configurations. The underwater profile could be either a fixed keel or a keel/centerboard (k/cb), and the rig could be either a sloop or a yawl. Ed selected the k/cb sloop rig for his project. The bare hull was delivered to him with the engine, a Volvo MD-2 diesel, on its bed; the 4,800-pound lead ballast glassed in place; the fiberglass centerboard installed; and the fiberglass rudder, with stainless-steel shaft, mounted.

From there, it was up to him to complete the interior accommodations — that included carpentry, plumbing, and wiring — as well as the mast, rigging, and navigational gear.

### Visited boat shows

“I went to every boat show that I could,” he recalls, “I took a tape measure and visited each boat in the show, sitting in their cabins, looking around ... seeing how they did things and measuring dimensions that could be transferred to my own bare hull.”

Although it was probably not necessary, Ed decided to add reinforcing ribs to the hull every 3 feet. He did this by gluing ¾-inch garden hose inside the hull, vertically, 3 feet apart, and then encapsulating it with three layers of 24-ounce woven roving, creating fiberglass block-beams.

In looking back at some of his projects, Ed recalls, “I made a lot of mistakes, but nothing that was life-threatening or would have prevented me from sailing my boat.” Along the way, Ed kept meticulous financial records of everything he did.

“It probably would have been cheaper if I’d purchased a finished boat,”

he reflects, “but it wouldn’t have been exactly what I wanted.” Finally, with two rough bunks installed, and a working head and galley stove, he moved his boat, christened *Serendipity*, down the Delaware River, across Delaware Bay, and up the New Jersey coast to Atlantic City, where he took a berth at the State Marina.

Some of the projects that Ed tackled once *Serendipity* was in

**Because *Serendipity* is primarily single-handed, she has all the necessary instruments within reach in the cockpit, at right. Ed’s version of the Seafarer 34, below, has some unusual underwater modifications. The skeg, propeller shaft exit fairing, and centerboard have been revised. And while she is basically the sloop-rigged keel/centerboard model, her forefoot is a bit more cut away and her rudder has been squared off.**

Atlantic City were to replace the Volvo, which was giving him a lot of trouble, with a Westerbeke. He also had to replace sections of the deck, due to water-intrusion in the balsa core. “Bedding compounds made 30 years ago were not as good as today’s,” he comments.



## Feature boat

### Specially designed

"*Serendipity's* interior and many of her exterior modifications were designed specifically for my family," Ed says. "When I look at other boats, I just don't see these special comforts that we have on ours."

Many years later, when the gelcoat was beginning to fade, Ed painted the topsides with dark blue Imron. Imron is DuPont's trade name for its automotive polyurethane finish. It's highly recommended for a boat's topsides, but not for below the waterline. Also, it should never be waxed. After many years, Ed's boat still looks as if it has just come out of the mold.

Along the way, Ed found time to go down to the Coast Guard Station in Baltimore and sit for his captain's license, which, naturally, he passed.

*Serendipity* is still based in Atlantic City, but she is now in Delta Basin, a small, protected waterway off the larger Clam Creek Basin, where the State Marina, operated by Trump Associates, is located. This puts her minutes away from Atlantic City's Absecon Inlet, the best inlet on the New Jersey coastline, and access to the Atlantic Ocean. These days, Pat loves to spend time with Ed on the boat — in the marina. When it comes time to sail, she prefers to spend the time on the Atlantic City Boardwalk or at the casinos.

### Very competitive

Ed has ocean-raced *Serendipity* informally and finds that she is a very competitive racer, even with what he calls "an inexperienced crew." And *Serendipity* has sailed south to the Chesapeake numerous times, with the longest trip being one to Norfolk, Virginia.

Would Ed tackle a boating project like this again?

"I would never consider selling this boat or building another one," Ed says. "After all, this one is not finished and never will be. In addition, I couldn't afford to build or buy another one." He pauses a moment and concludes, "And lastly, my wife would kill me if I tried." ▽

*Don Launer, a Good Old Boat contributing editor, has held a USCG captain's license for more than 20 years. He built his two-masted schooner, Delphinus, from a bare hull and sails her on Barnegat Bay in New Jersey.*

The interior of *Serendipity*— before and after — tells the tale of many hours lovingly invested. Regarding the accommodation plan, Ed went to boat shows with a tape measure in hand for inspiration.

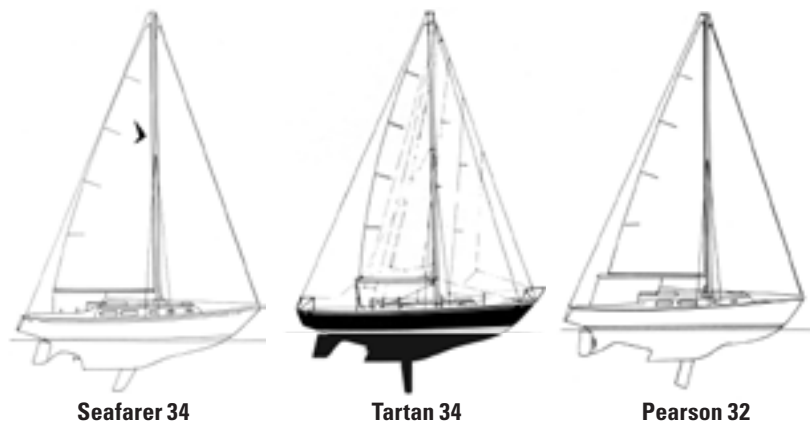




# Seafarer 34 and rivals

## Comparing three popular centerboard cruiser/racers

by Ted Brewer



THESE THREE YACHTS WERE DESIGNED AS CRUISER/RACERS UNDER the influence of the Cruising Club of America rule. The Olin Stephens-designed 38-foot 6-inch *Finisterre* began the trend to the keel/centerboard (k/cb) yawl in the late 1950s and '60s. This resulted in k/cb yawls dotting the waters in sizes from 24-foot Midget Ocean Racers to 60-foot transatlantic racers. After I left the military in 1957, I worked as a yacht broker with George Cuthbertson while he was designing the lovely 54-foot k/cb yawl, *Inishfree*. These early custom k/cb boats were of the full-keel type, reminiscent of *Finisterre*. This was echoed by early k/cb production boats, such as the Morgan 34, C&C 31, and Pearson 35.

As the fin underbody became popular in the later 1960s, fin-keel centerboard boats with separate rudders appeared, either with a spade rudder or, as on the boats in this comparison, a skeg-hung rudder. The reduced wetted surface of these shoal-fin k/cb hulls will show to advantage in light air, particularly off the wind, while the very-high-aspect-ratio centerboards will provide excellent lift with reduced drag when beating to windward. However, their shoal draft does raise the ballast 1½ to 2 feet over that of a modern fin hull, reducing stability, so the boats may feel tender to skippers accustomed to a deep-keel hull. The Tartan could have a tiny edge in stability, due to her 2-inch greater beam and a few hundred pounds more ballast, but it would be slight indeed and hardly noticeable to the average sailor.

These three are similar in beam, draft, and sail area, but differ in displacement and waterline length. The Seafarer, with the greatest displacement on the shortest waterline, is of the older and heavier school. The Tartan is of more moderate proportions, but still husky, with her 320 D/L ratio. The Pearson, with the lightest displacement and the longest waterline, leans toward the light displacement end of the scale.

### Serious contender

The Seafarer, with her greater sail area and shorter waterline, should prove a serious contender in gentle breezes. Under light-air conditions her added weight will not count against her, since low-speed resistance is primarily from wetted surface. The Tartan seems under-powered due to the skinny International Offshore Rule mainsail but should do well in moderate weather. The Pearson is the dark horse with her long waterline, more cutaway forefoot, and lighter displacement. She could show her mettle in a variety of conditions.

In comparing the sloop rigs, a race around the buoys would be extremely close. The result could depend more on

skipper, crew, sails, a clean bottom, and the weather.

On the other hand, a yawl-rigged Seafarer can add tremendous sail area by setting a mizzen staysail or mizzen spinnaker off the wind. This should let her slip away from the sloops on the reaches. I would prefer the optional yawl rig for cruising, as the skipper can simply drop the mainsail to get through a squall and still have a balanced rig. It's an advantage too often overlooked. I prefer the keel-stepped masts of the Seafarer and Tartan to the deck-stepped spar on the Pearson.

The capsize numbers don't mean a great deal here and cannot be compared to those of deeper-keel boats. Despite a favorable capsize number, the higher center of gravity of the k/cb hull means that she will not right as quickly if capsized. On the other hand, the shoal draft hull is less likely to be tripped and capsized if caught abeam by a steep or breaking sea. In any case, capsizing shouldn't be a major concern; many k/cb yachts have survived major storms at sea and many deep-keel yachts have been capsized and lost. That is the inevitable challenge of bluewater voyages.

My major concern with these yachts is the ease of repairing the centerboard or replacing the pendant when something goes wrong, as it inevitably will. Other than that problem, all of them will make fine coastal cruisers and, while not Cape Horners, they should prove quite capable of long and comfortable passages at sea given good condition, careful preparation, and intelligent handling. ⚓

*Ted Brewer is a contributing editor with Good Old Boat.*

	Seafarer 34	Tartan 34	Pearson 33
<b>LOA</b>	33' 9"	34' 5"	32' 11"
<b>LWL</b>	24' 1½"	25' 0"	25' 10"
<b>Beam</b>	10' 0"	10' 2"	10' 0"
<b>Draft</b>	3' 9"/6' 9"	3' 11"/8' 4"	4' 0"/7' 7"
<b>Displ.</b>	12,300 lb	11,200 lb	10,900 lb
<b>Ballast</b>	4,800 lb	5,000 lb	4,200 lb
<b>LOA/LWL</b>	1.39	1.38	1.27
<b>Beam/LWL</b>	0.392	0.407	0.387
<b>Displ./LWL</b>	391	320	282
<b>Bal./Displ.</b>	0.390	0.446	0.385
<b>Sail area</b>	529 sq ft/578 sq ft	483 sq ft	492 sq ft
<b>SA/Displ.</b>	15.88/17.35	15.43	16.0
<b>Capsize no.</b>	1.73	1.82	1.80
<b>Comfort ratio</b>	32.54	28.1	27.9
<b>Years built</b>	1972–?	1968–1978	1970–1974
<b>Designer</b>	McCurdy & Rhodes	Olin Stephens	Bill Shaw

Note: The Seafarer's sail area is given for both sloop and yawl rigs.

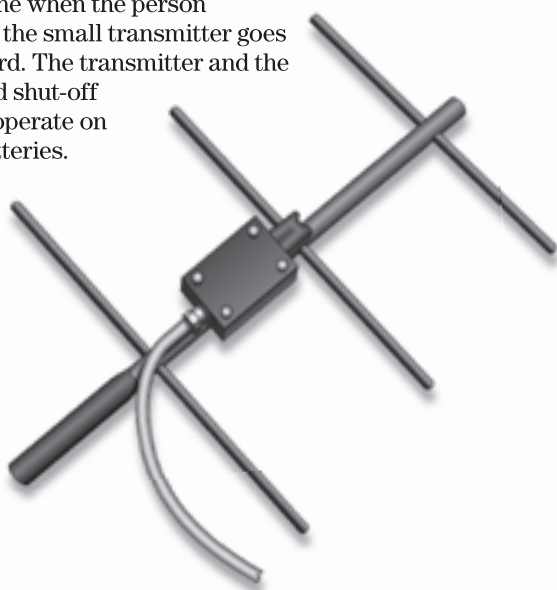
## New alerts help prevent loss of life

by Don Launer

**E**VERY YEAR THE ELECTRONICS ABOARD THE OFFSHORE sailboat become more exotic. Among the latest trends in marine safety are man-overboard (MOB) or crew-overboard (COB) electronic alerts. Many manufacturers are now marketing these systems with their own proprietary hardware and software. They are affordable and reliable, and their lifesaving capabilities need no justification. For millennia, sailors have been lost overboard but now these new MOB electronic devices can alert other members of the crew or the government's search-and-rescue responders and help prevent loss of life.

We've come a long way since the only man-overboard devices were a lanyard on the wrist of a small-boat operator (to activate the kill-switch on the motor) and a knotted line towed behind the boat. Although the line towed behind the boat has been touted for years, if the boat is traveling through the water at more than a knot or two, it is nearly impossible for a person in the water to get back to the boat. Even if that feat is accomplished, it is unlikely that he or she will be able to climb aboard.

A modern version of the safety lanyard used to kill the engine is an inexpensive device that automatically shuts off the engine when the person wearing the small transmitter goes overboard. The transmitter and the on-board shut-off system operate on AAA batteries.



On-board direction finders, whether automatic or manual (as the one pictured) can point toward an MOB who is wearing an EPIRB, PLB, or other device that sends out the 121.5 MHz emergency signal.

### Solo sailors

For the singlehander, a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) is still the best insurance (see "EPIRBs, PLBs, and SARTs 101" in the January 2008 issue). Most sailboats will round up into the wind when the helm is released. But if the boat is being steered by a windvane or autopilot; if the tiller or wheel is locked into position; or if the boat is under power, it will just continue on its merry way and the solo sailor who has been left behind must rely on the PLB to alert the government's search-and-rescue system.

### Boats with crews

For boats with more than one person aboard — particularly on boats used for offshore passages — an electronic

MOB alert system is a good investment. Through an onboard base station, either the water-activated signal of the MOB unit worn by a crewmember or the interruption of that signal can sound an alarm to alert others who may be sleeping or unaware for any reason.

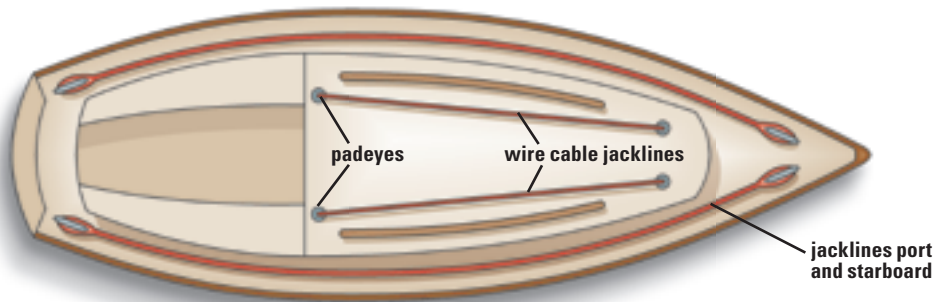
Some MOB devices can shut down the engine (if engine shutdown is accomplished with an ignition switch). This alert procedure is accomplished either when the transmitter worn by a crewmember is submerged and the signal to the base unit is interrupted or, in other systems, when submersion in the water activates the transmitter. Some MOB onboard displays feature a "track-back screen" that immediately appears on the MOB base unit to guide the boat back to MOB site.

each crewmember is wearing a MOB transmitter





## Layout and illustrations by Ted Tollefson



**Possible jackline positions.** Jacklines on sidedecks may be snugged closer into the cabin sides. These may be made of stainless-steel wire, Dacron line, webbing, or tubing.

Some systems use an automatic electronic or a manual direction finder to pinpoint the location of the MOB, who is wearing a small locator beacon, by using the international emergency frequency, 121.5 MHz. This signal can help pinpoint an MOB and can also be used by sailors on other vessels that join in the search.

Most GPS units and chart plotters have an MOB button which, when pressed, stores the position of the boat at the time the button is pressed and makes it possible to return to that spot.

This, of course, can only be done if the boat has a crew of more than one and if someone sees a person fall overboard and presses the button. But there are MOB units available in which the base station aboard the boat will show the MOB position on a compatible GPS or chart plotter through an NMEA connection, while also sounding an alarm and/or shutting down the engine. Many manufacturers provide MOB systems that can be fully integrated

into multi-function displays, giving a readout of who went overboard, where, and when.

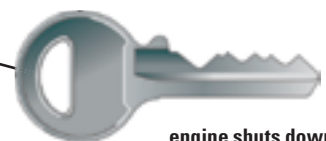
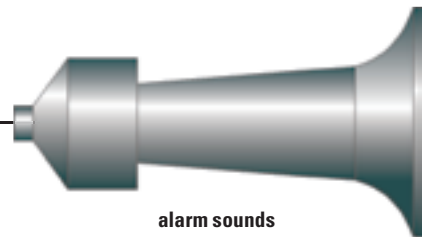
### Prevent falling overboard

Reducing the possibility of having to use an MOB device is an inexpensive requirement. It goes without saying that it is important to wear a safety harness, especially in the case of a singlehander. Many safety harnesses are built into life vests and foul weather gear, but the boat must have suitable fore-and-aft jacklines that can be clipped onto when deckwork must be done.

At night, crewmembers who go on deck should wear a strobe light to facilitate their rescue if they go overboard. Even in the daytime, a strobe light can be helpful, especially in marginal conditions. ⚓

*Don Launer's complete bio can be found on Page 14.*

signal (or lack of signal)  
goes to MOB receiver



**Schematic of a simple MOB system that provides for an alarm and engine shut-down.**

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*This excerpt is from the revised and expanded third edition of Lin and Larry Pardey's Storm Tactics Handbook. The book has 10 new chapters and has received an extensive update throughout.*

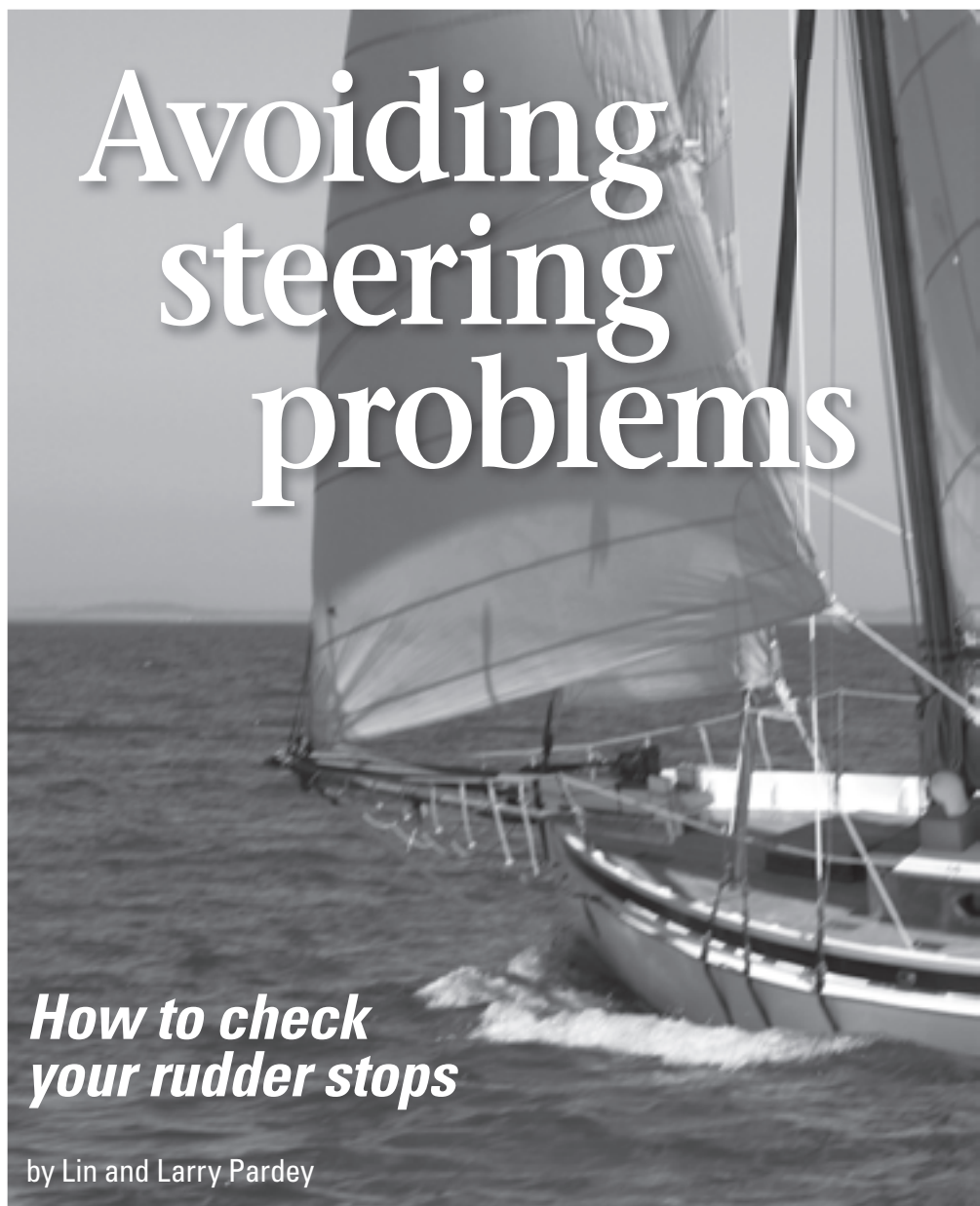
**A**LMOST ALL OF TODAY'S SAILORS HAVE grown up with automobiles. So it is no surprise that when the systems on their boat relate directly to those in a car, these same sailors expect equal reliability. Case in point? Steering.

When is the last time you heard of a car getting into trouble because its steering system failed? When is the last time you checked your car's steering box or linkage? With millions of cars being produced each year, lots of money is available to test any new steering-gear ideas before they are used on the road. On the other hand, there are probably only a few hundred steering systems built for sailboats each year, so it is little wonder that problems do occur, far more often than they should.

Fortunately, when they do happen, sailors will rarely be moving at more than 6 or 8 knots, so the results are unlikely to be fatal. In most situations, steering failure will probably lead to some embarrassment or scuffed paint. But in a storm situation, steering failure can be the first link in the chain of events that build up until the crewmembers feel their lives are in jeopardy.

Fortunately, steering systems on almost every sailboat are relatively easy to inspect and maintain. There are also simple steps you can take to ensure a high degree of dependability.

The simplest and easiest-to-maintain system for any boat is a tiller with a rudder hung on the transom or on the sternpost of a double-ender. Inspection is easy: check to see that the gudgeons and pintles are strongly attached, that there is no corrosion eating away at the metal of the fittings, and that there is a securing device to prevent the rudder from being lifted free of the gudgeons in a sloppy seaway. The tiller connection should be inspected on a regular basis and the tiller itself should be checked to be sure the wood is sound. For heavy weather, it is important to add rudder stops such as we use on *Taleisin*.



## *How to check your rudder stops*

by Lin and Larry Pardey


By limiting the travel of the rudder, these lines protect the gudgeons and pintles against sheer and shock loading. This loading happens when a boat is suddenly shoved astern by missing stays during a tack in heavy weather, or when the force of a wave crest carries the boat bodily astern if it is lying head-on to a sea anchor.

Rudder stops are just as important for boats with wheel steering and for those with spade-rudder configurations where the rudder shaft comes through the hull. Here they absorb shocks that could otherwise damage the steering quadrant or any of the components that make up the steering system. Also, should any component of the steering system break down, the rudder stops will keep the rudder from jamming hard over and stressing the rudderpost.

The rudder stops for wheel steering, and through-the-hull rudderstocks, have to be designed specifically for each individual boat and are usually belowdecks inside the hull. Since they are hidden from view and rarely come into play, some boats leave the factory without rudder stops. In other cases, people retrofit their tiller steering with a pedestal-and-wheel system. Since there is no simple, one-size-fits-all rudder-stop arrangement that can be sold with the retrofitting gear, the boat ends up unprotected.

The drawings reproduced on Page 22 show several rudder-stop arrangements. Will Keene, of Edison International, which has been making steering systems for three generations, presented some simple suggestions that can definitely improve steering depend-





The rudder stops on Lin and Larry Pardey's *Taleisin* have proved their importance several times during more than 85,000 miles of passagemaking.

ability, but he stressed that rudder stops are the starting point. The stops should allow the rudder to swing no more than 35 degrees either side of center. (Your rudder becomes ineffectual once it goes beyond 25 to 30 degrees.) Will recommends that high-density rubber be used at the strategic spot to increase shock absorption (act like a cushion.)

Once the rudder stops are in place, it is important to check the chain length on the main sprocket for the wheel. You do this by taking the compass off the top of

**“By limiting the travel of the rudder, these lines protect the gudgeons and pintles against sheer and shock loading.”**

the pedestal — so you can see the wheel sprocket — then turning the wheel until the rudder is hard over against the stops. The chain should extend at least two links beyond the sprocket teeth, both port and starboard. This guarantees that the wire steering cables cannot be drawn in and shredded by the teeth of the sprocket.

After checking the chain length, your next step is to make sure the steering cables are properly tensioned. The tension should be checked with the wheel amidships and with the wheel hard over against the stops — first to port and then to starboard. This will let you see whether there is too much slack on the lazy cable (the cable that is not under stress). A slack cable can fall free of its turning blocks.

Though the steering cables should be tensioned so they cannot be pulled free of the sheave grooves, it still is important to have sheave guards on each block. These work similarly to the cheeks on a block such as you use for jibsheets. Guards are

---

***Taleisin's* rudder stops are spliced up from 7/16-inch prestretched Dacron lines. They run from eye-nuts on the outer edge of the rudder to the boomkin-stay chainplates, which are securely fastened through the hull of the boat.**

CRAIG COMPTON




not standard equipment; since they cost extra, they may not have been installed on your boat.

All parts of your system should be easy to inspect, and this inspection should be done on a regular basis. Larry and I noticed the steering beginning to feel sluggish on a 50-foot center-cockpit ketch we were delivering. When we began tracing the cables for this system, we realized we could not access the turning block that was causing the trouble. It lay behind the cabinetry in the main saloon. After we isolated the problem to this one block, we finally cut a hole through the cabinet (which, fortunately, was hidden by the cushions of the settee) and found that the bolts holding the block in place had sheared, the block was no longer properly aligned, and the cable had slipped off.

Chay Blyth, who built specialized boats for the fleet he organized to race around the world against the prevailing winds, had an excellent way to make sure the components of the steering

abovedecks (usually in the cockpit). If the emergency tiller can be attached easily, it can work to save wear and tear on your whole steering system as you heave-to in storm conditions. Install the tiller and secure heavy-duty shock cord from the tiller to a sheet winch on each side of the cockpit to hold the tiller slightly to leeward. Allow the wheel to turn freely. The stresses will then be absorbed by the shock cords.

Whatever type of steering system you use, wheel or tiller, in storm conditions these shock cords are important. They work to dampen the rudder movement and are the first line of defense in

absorbing shock loading, which could damage your rudder, its connection to the rudder post, or the gudgeons and pintles. The rudder stops are your secondary line of defense. It is important to use bowlines to secure shock cord in these conditions, as most other knots will tend to slip or untie. 

*Lin and Larry Pardey are spending the Northern Hemisphere summers exploring Puget sound and the Gulf Islands on Taleisin. During the Southern Hemisphere summers they explore New Zealand waters on the 110-year-old sloop, Thelma.*

**“...it is imperative that all wheel-steering systems have an arrangement that allows you to install a separate emergency tiller abovedecks.”**

system could be easily inspected and maintained. Instead of having the cables and quadrants hidden away below-decks, he had them installed under easy-to-remove gratings in the cockpit.

Will Keene likes the idea of installing a tiller-like rudder stop above the quadrant. “If I had an autopilot system, I’d attach it to this rudder stop tiller. That way, if any part of the pedestal steering system failed, the cables, the gears, the chain, the autopilot would take over as an immediate, electrical emergency steering system,” Will explained.

Even with this backup, it is imperative that all wheel-steering systems have an arrangement that allows you to install a separate emergency tiller

#### Some ways to install rudder stops for a wheel steering system

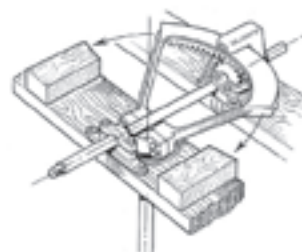


tiller-style rudder stop for wheel steering systems

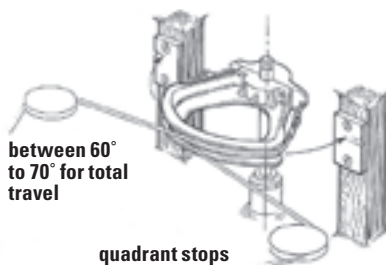


radial stop mounting

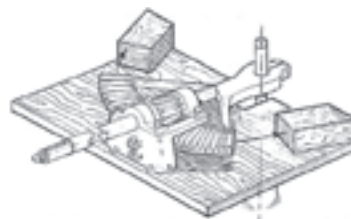
radial drive stop can mount aft or to either side of radial



rack-and-pinion stops

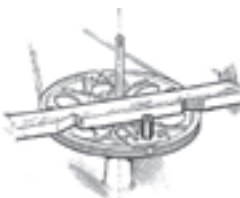
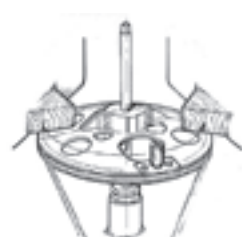
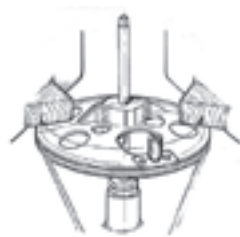


quadrant stops



rack-and-pinion stops

#### Radial stops

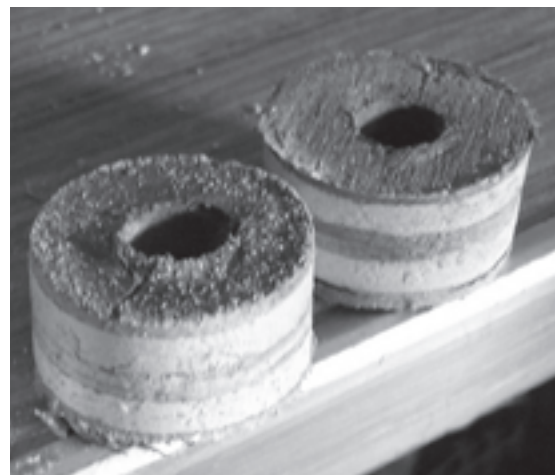




# Chainplate restoration

## *One sailor's solution*

by David Cowell



**These bushing cores brought relief. The wood in the bore of the holes had been worked by repetitive forces but was not wet or damaged.**

I WAS IN THE CABIN OF *MAS TIEMPO*, MY Islander 30, when I noticed something different in the symmetry of the shroud chainplates. These chainplates are attached to the main bulkhead with carriage bolts. The shine and robustness of their polished stainless steel sends a comforting message of strength. But I noticed that some of the bolt heads weren't flush with the chainplate. They were tipped.

This — and my recent experience with setting up the standing rigging — were sending an entirely different message: a red flag. When I set up the rigging, the shroud turnbuckles had needed almost full-length adjustment to take up tension. Yet on a hard reach, the lee shrouds seemed too slack. I had noted this but, as the boat had been out of the water for nine months without the mast, I thought I'd let it "settle in" before re-tightening the shrouds.

Slack shrouds can be an indication that a deck-stepped mast is settling. The mast base won't properly support the mast if the cabintop is weak or the compression post underneath is deteriorated. I had just replaced the mast base plate and hadn't noticed any signs of gelcoat cracking or cabintop distortion, and the plate hadn't leaked into the cabin. Instead, it appeared that the boat's chainplates were pulling out.

I bought *Mas Tiempo* out of salvage after owning an Islander 24 for a couple of years. The construction and strength of that smaller boat had impressed me, but it was a little too snug. When the 30-footer came up, I jumped at the chance to upsize. I spent winter and spring getting her ready for launching. I did a total hull repair and

added an epoxy barrier coat and antifouling paint. I overhauled the engine and installed a new shaft and folding prop. I replaced the wiring systems and re-rigged the running gear.

### **What happened?**

"But," I pondered, "what had happened to the chainplates?" Forces on the chainplate's mounting bolts had caused them to crush the wood around them. Then, because the full thickness of the wood was no longer available as a bearing surface, the round bolt hole elongated into an oval, and the bolt tipped. Bolt holes elongate when mast

or if something happens to the mast system, as it might in a knockdown. However, those things usually lead to a catastrophic failure, whereas my problem was indicative of age fatigue.

There are many ways to fix loose chainplates. One alternative is to repair the chainplate bolt holes. Another is to add chainplate extenders. A third is to replace the chainplate itself. These solutions require that the bulkhead wood be dry and in good condition. If that is not the case, another, more extreme, alternative is to replace the entire bulkhead.

Chainplate extenders bolt over the

**“There are many ways to fix loose chainplates. One alternative is to repair the chainplate bolt holes. Another is to add chainplate extenders. A third is to replace the chainplate itself.”**

loads are greater than expected, when the wood becomes punky due to rot, or weak through age, or when the nuts aren't kept tight and the bolts are able to gain leverage on the wood. On a boat that's 30-something, these things can happen.

The bulkhead wood will rot when the deck seal fails and water seeps into the cabin, soaking the wood around the plates. Marine surveyors are always alert for water stains and rust around the chainplates. The wood can also fail if the system is carrying greater loads than the designer calculated

old plates and extend down the bulkhead to increase the number of bolts in better wood. This has the effect of decreasing the load on the original bolts but doesn't really repair their weakness. Adding extenders requires adequate room below the old plates. Extenders look a bit "patched up," but they're cheap to buy, simple to install, and they do solve the problem.

### **Different locations**

The next rung up the repair ladder is to replace the chainplates with substitutes that use different bolt locations



Chainplate holes drilled for bushings, top; a washer with epoxy ready for insertion, center; and a washer and epoxy packing, bottom.

and perhaps extend farther down the bulkhead for additional load area. This is cosmetically more appealing, but more costly and more difficult. My original plates have four  $\frac{5}{16}$ -inch carriage bolts and are not quite 2 feet long.

If the wood isn't sound enough, the only option is to replace the entire bulkhead. This requires cutting away the old bulkhead with implements of destruction, fitting in new wood, which must then be tabbed to the hull, deck, and associated cabinets and joinery. It's messy, labor-intensive, and expensive. The bulkhead plywood must be marine-grade, the veneer will have to match the original, and there is a temptation to increase the bulkhead thickness as added insurance against future problems. This is a major undertaking requiring carpentry and fiberglass skills. The accessibility of the tabbing is a major consideration and other

and weren't very tight. In some places the washer had crushed the wood. This might have allowed enough play to let the bolts tip and upset the holes. I noted that the bolts had a carriage bolt-style head that mated to square-punched holes in the chainplates. This gives the round bolt head a smooth look and relieves the installer from having to wrench the head. Using oversized bolts would mean drilling out a square hole and losing that clean appearance.

I inspected the chainplates carefully, looking for corrosion in the deck-joint area, elongated clevis-pin holes, and cracks radiating from any of the holes. Any sign of failure of the chainplates themselves also should be investigated. Machine shops can magnaflux, inspect with dye penetrant, or X-ray metal parts for cracks. In my case, the plates were sound.

## “Whether I would have bought the boat with the failing chainplates is a good question ...but a moot one.”

nearby cabin woodwork may be damaged in the process of removing the bulkhead. Still, if your aim is to have a strong-as-new result, then bulkhead replacement and new chainplates are unavoidable.

When I was buying this boat I looked for water stains on the bulkhead and rust on the plates. I didn't find any, nor had the loose and tipped bolts appeared since the mast wasn't stepped and the chainplates weren't loaded. Whether I would have bought the boat with the failing chainplates is a good question ... but a moot one.

As I plan on sailing this boat aggressively and far, the problem had to be fixed properly. But I balked. Since I had been involved with so many other needed repairs I was reluctant to jump into bulkhead or chainplate replacement. I hadn't enjoyed sailing her enough!

### Inspected holes

I removed the plates and inspected the holes and wood around them. I noted that the nuts weren't locknuts

Inspection of the bulkhead holes showed no sign of rot. The wood in the bore of the holes was somewhat gray but not black. It had been worked by repetitive forces and had fatigued. What a relief! I wouldn't have to replace the bulkhead. I only had to repair the holes and reset the plates.

So how do you repair an oval hole in wood? You could drill it out to a larger hole and use a larger bolt. You could fill it with filler and re-drill it. You could drill it out to a larger diameter and install a bushing to get back to the original size. You could move it to another location. Each method works but has its own advantages and disadvantages.

### Not best-looking

Using larger bolts would have meant drilling out the plate and having a hex bolt head where the smooth round one was. I decided this was not esthetically pleasing. Drilling out the square hole in my plates would have created its own problems, and I couldn't punch larger square holes in the plate without special machinery.



## “What a relief! I wouldn’t have to replace the bulkhead. I only had to repair the holes and reset the plates.”

The idea of using a filler brought up the question of what material might be suitable for the expected loads and how to get it to adequately transfer these loads to the surrounding wood. Epoxy filler is typically used for reinforcing and filling holes in boats. The usual method is to completely fill an oversized hole and re-bore it to the required diameter, thus creating an epoxy bushing.

Epoxy has its drawbacks, though. The first is how to make the liquid epoxy completely fill the hole while in a liquid state. The stuff has a tendency to ooze, and any void left behind is likely to be at the top of the hole where the load will be. A void could possibly crack the bushing. The use of fillers makes epoxy more like putty that can be pressed into an oversized hole. But it’s hard to drill a hole in epoxy that is stronger than wood. The epoxy bushing could break loose and spin in the hole before the hole is drilled through.

A metal bushing would work. A metal bushing won’t crack or ooze out when pressed into wood. There are standard threaded wood inserts made of steel. These might have met the need but, as they are generally made of steel, they will rust. Stainless-steel bushings would have to be custom-made. A third choice was to use stainless-steel washers stacked to the right thickness. Such a stack would form a decent bushing if the hole could be drilled out to just the right size to accommodate the washers’ outside diameter.

### Washers and resin

My solution was to use stainless-steel washers and epoxy. The epoxy filled the void between the washers and the wood and bonded the washers and wood together. Once I had the concept, the technique was simple. I drilled out the deformed holes to a size just larger than the washers so they would be a close fit and concentric with the original hole.

I determined how many washers were needed by stacking them to the same thickness as the plugs I had cut out. Holding a bolt in place with a fender washer and some duct tape, I buttered a stainless-steel washer with epoxy and filler and put it into the hole. I continued to add buttered

washers to create a washer sandwich. In this state, the sandwich was thicker than the bulkhead. I placed another stainless fender washer over the end and tightened the whole with a nut, compressing the sandwich into the bulkhead. This pressure squished the epoxy out into the void around the washers, filling it. Since hydraulic pressure is equal all around, the epoxy flowed everywhere, including into the porous wood.

If you choose to use the chainplate and the original carriage bolt when making the bushing, they will be epoxied together and leave no way to subsequently remove the bolts, short of hammering them out (possibly destroying the bulkhead). But using a hex bolt and fender washers allowed the bolt to be removed by unthreading it. The epoxy forms perfect threads which can be drilled out for the original carriage bolt or used as a threaded insert. Using the chainplate means one has to load the sandwich from the back side whereas using a second fender washer and hex bolt means one can load it from either side.

### Back in position

After the epoxy has cured, the chainplate can be bolted in its original position. It then must be sealed at the deck joint. I used 3M 4200 for this, as it forms a flexible bond to the metal and the gelcoat of the deck. The shrouds can then be installed and tensioned as needed.

**Chainplate backing washers, at right; the finished repaired chainplates, far right.**

Is this system strong enough? The weak link in the chainplate shroud system is the aging wooden bulkhead and its metal-to-wood junction. Since the wood isn’t easily replaced or structurally reinforced, the best thing is to reduce the stress on it. The applied compression loads from the shrouds aren’t changed. Therefore to lower the wood-to-steel interface stress, it’s necessary to increase the bearing area. Increasing the bearing area from the original  $\frac{5}{16}$ -inch bolt to a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch washer means the wood will experience less than half the original stress at the interface. I tested the epoxy-washer sandwich with a piece of plywood to ensure the joint would be solid. The increased fender-washer cap will eliminate the washer compression of the wood.

I believe this system is stronger than the original and will last the remaining life of the bulkhead and the boat. ⚓

*David Cowell is a retired electrical engineer. He and his wife, Jamie, enjoy sailing in the Sacramento Delta and San Francisco Bay in their Islander 30, Mas Tiempo. As this issue went to press, Dave was indulging his passion with a cruise in Mexico.*



# Make your own links that fit



*Mate narrow Grade 43 chain with heavy-duty shackles*

by Rudy and Jill Sechez

**E**LEVEN YEARS AGO, AS WE WERE completing our first cruising boat in our backyard, our thoughts turned to the ground tackle that we would be using. We wanted to use  $\frac{5}{16}$ -inch high-test, Grade 43 (also called Schedule 40) chain, since it is lighter and cheaper than equal strength proof-coil chain. The major drawback with this Grade 43 chain is that its links are too narrow to accommodate shackles that are strong enough to match the chain's strength.

How incongruous, we thought, to use chain with a working load of 3,900 pounds, an anchor that will be able to hold the boat in extreme conditions, and then join the two together with an under-strength shackle. To match this chain's 3,900-pound working load, a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch shackle is needed, but this shackle's  $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch pin is too fat for the chain's  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch width. After taking four years to build this boat, we did not want to trust its safety to under-strength shackles.

We began looking for a solution to this dilemma. Frank Luke, the manufacturer of the 3-piece, fisherman anchors, gave us the solution. He suggested that we install oversized links in the ends of the chain. He said this would allow the use of large enough — thus strong enough — shackles. He noted that we could do this locally, as

any welder would be capable of making these links.

We implemented Frank's idea and these oversized links allowed our 36-foot, 28,000-pound wooden cutter to be safely anchored through three 120-knot hurricanes, two 80-knot hurricanes, and many storms.

## **Installed again**

We were so satisfied with the job these oversized links did for us that

To have oversized links fabricated, take the chain (and a matching strength shackle) to a welder and, using the largest diameter stainless-steel rod that will fit through an end link in the chain, have the welder form, then insert and weld shut oversized links in the ends of the chain. Make sure the oversized links are large enough to accommodate the shackle's pin. Even better, have the link made long enough to also accommodate one of the shackle's eyes; this

**“Frank Luke, the manufacturer of the 3-piece, fisherman anchors ... suggested that we install oversized links in the ends of the chain.”**

we installed them on the 34-foot, 28,000-pound troller that we built next. Like our previous sailboat, this boat has already held us safely at anchor through a 120-knot hurricane. Because we stayed aboard for these storms, we have had a firsthand look at the necessity of using gear hefty enough for the conditions. If these oversized links can handle conditions this severe, we are more than comfortable using them when lesser demands are placed on them. We're believers in the old Maine proverb that says: “Nothing too strong ever broke.”

will allow more flexibility when coupling the shackle to the chain and other components in the system.

For  $\frac{5}{16}$ -inch Grade 43 chain, using  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rod, a link with an inside diameter of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch by  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch is large enough for a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch shackle, while not being overly long or too wide.

Oversized links are surprisingly easy to make. If you wish to make them yourself, for  $\frac{5}{16}$ -inch chain, weld two  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch by 2-inch pieces of round rod on end to a piece of scrap metal,  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch apart. Bend the rod around this form while you are heating it. Bevel the ends



of the rod before welding them together to get a strong weld. If in doubt, make the links longer but never narrower.

### Plain steel too

In addition to stainless steel, galvanized rod or plain steel rod can also be used for oversized links and, if necessary, painted to control rust until the entire chain needs to go for re-galvanizing.

The first time we used galvanized rod to make oversized links, we found that the rod was slightly too fat to fit through the chain's link, due to the layer of galvanizing. A welder told us to stand the link on end and hit it with a sledge hammer once or twice, just enough to widen the link that one-hundredth of an inch needed for clearance. We have since used this technique many times and, even after several hurricanes, have not seen any detrimental effects on the chain from being widened in this manner.

These do-it-yourself oversized links usually do not turn out looking very pretty, but they work.

Special high-strength fittings are available that are sized to fit and match Grade 43 chain in strength. We have used them, but we find that they are limited in choice; are often indistinguishable from their weaker, look-alike cousins; are often expensive; are sel-

dom galvanized; and often will not mate with the other components in our ground tackle, particularly the anchors that we use in heavy weather, just when we need them the most.

For us, the slight cost (\$30 to \$40) to install oversized links is insignificant when compared to the liabilities that we associate with these special fittings. Therefore, we prefer the oversized links.

Occasionally, we receive a request to install oversized links in proof-coil chain. Galvanized shackles and the other galvanized fittings are designed to fit proof-coil chain and match its strength. As such, proof-coil chain would derive no additional benefit from installing oversized links. However, oversized links can be beneficial in any of the different sizes of Grade 43 chain; the only difference is the size of the rod that is used to make them.

### Keep them greased

Always grease the threads on shackles to keep from requiring a hacksaw or a couple of pipe wrenches to take them apart after the threads rust.

The first time we loaded our chain in our boat, we were chagrined to discover that we failed to consider the size of the deck pipes that would be needed to let the chain pass through the deck. As we had installed a pair of oversized links at the 100-foot mark in our chain, this was an important oversight.

If the oversized links are not made too fat, the large oval (2½-inch x 3¾-inch ID) and the large round (4-inch) deck pipes, it turns out, are adequate for 5/16-inch chain, its oversized links, and the accompanying ½-inch shackle. We do find the round deck pipe allows the oversized links and ½-inch shackle combination to pass with less interference than does the oval pipe.

This can be an important factor when anchoring or weighing anchor in less-than-calm conditions, but either type deck pipe is better than none. These large deck pipes are so beneficial that we do not hesitate, when necessary, to alter our boat or its equipment to install them. When adequately sized deck pipes are not available

off-the-shelf, they can be fabricated by a welder using stainless-steel, bronze, or aluminum pipe, tubing, and plate. Those with the desire can also make them out of fiberglass and resin. An internal diameter on these deck pipes that is too big will be less trouble than one that is too small.

Oversized links have worked for us, having allowed the use of galvanized shackles, swivels, and other fittings large enough that their strength matches the chain's strength. Additionally, these fittings are reasonably priced, readily available and large enough to be mixed and matched with the rest of the components in our ground tackle, allowing us to assemble the gear according to the varying conditions found when anchoring. ▽

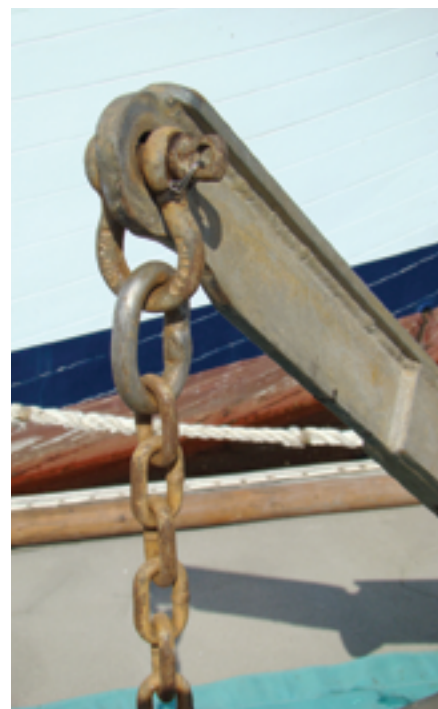
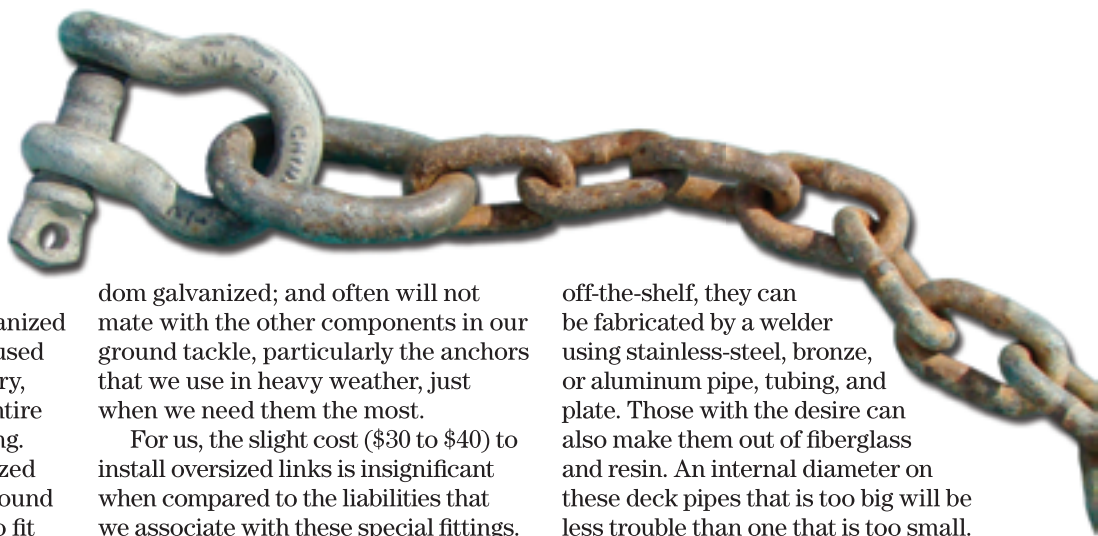
*Rudy and Jill Sechez have lived aboard and cruised for 10 years, beginning with a 36-foot wooden cutter they built, and currently with a 34-foot sail-assist troller yacht they designed and built. They finance their cruising by working when funds run low . . . mostly on boat-repair projects. They write for pleasure.*

## A word of caution

This is from the Safety and Health Fact Sheet No. 25 of the American Welding Society:

- Metal fume fever is the result of overexposure to zinc fumes from welding, cutting, or brazing on galvanized steel.
- Metal fume fever is a short-term illness with classic flu-like symptoms.
- There are no known long-term effects of this disease.

To avoid the illness, keep your head out of the fumes and do not breathe the fumes. Use enough proper ventilation and/or exhaust. If uncertain about the ventilation, use an approved respirator.



The first davit, just after removal from the laminating jig.

# Dinghy-stowage solution

## *Custom-made davits for less than \$200*

by Paul Ring

**A**DINGHY IS A DARNED NUISANCE! WELL, PERHAPS not when the beach beckons, your neighbors in the anchorage have the cock-tail pennant flying, or you need to run errands ashore. But *most* of the time a dinghy is a darned nuisance, only along for the ride until the next beach beckons or a trip to the grocery is needed.

During the times when it's a nuisance, coping options vary, depending on the size of the sailboat and the size and type of dinghy. Some stow it on deck (possible on larger boats), some tow

was at a boat show, I'd linger at the dinghy-davit booths and yearn. However, being a frugal good old boater, spending \$1,000 for even the lightest-duty davits gave me pause.

Finally, the solution came to me, one that resulted in a custom-made pair of davits for less than \$200.

Some years earlier, I had made a double-curved tiller for *Magnolia*, my previous boat. I did this by building a form against which I laminated alternating layers of ash and mahogany using epoxy resin. The result was a beautiful tiller with graceful curves. My experience with the tiller gave me an appreciation of the strength achieved by laminating layers of wood into a curved shape, like the laminated frames used to great advantage in wooden-boat construction.

### **Borrowed concepts**

Some of the engineering concepts for my davit design were borrowed from the stainless-steel davits I had seen at boat shows. One of these was the davit cantilever being made from two small-diameter tubes spaced apart vertically by stainless-steel webbing or short pieces of tubing. However, in place of the stainless tubes, my davits would be made of two curved wooden laminations held apart by wooden spacers.

The shape and size of my davits was dictated by the configuration of my stern rail and the size and weight of my dinghy, an 8-foot 6-inch Zodiac

**“...I'd linger at the dinghy-davit booths, and yearn. However, being a frugal good old boater, spending \$1,000 for even the lightest-duty davits gave me pause.”**

it (not good offshore), some inflate and deflate before and after each use (now that's a *real* nuisance), and some carry their dinghy in davits.

My Nonsuch doesn't have room on deck for an inflated dinghy. When beginning a cruise, I stow the dinghy deflated until its first use and then leave it inflated for the duration of the cruise (except for offshore crossings). This means towing it... with the resultant speed loss. The davit solution held great appeal for me. Whenever I



weighing 48 pounds. Applying intuitive engineering, I decided that each of the three layers of the laminations should be  $\frac{3}{16}$  inch thick by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch wide, giving each lamination a total thickness of  $\frac{9}{16}$  inch. I felt that layers thicker than  $\frac{3}{16}$  inch would be difficult to bend around the laminating form. Three layers would minimize the “spring back” which occurs when curved forms are removed from a laminating jig.

The length of the lower (vertical) arms was based on the location of attachment points on my stern rail and how high I wanted to carry the dinghy. I wanted the upper (horizontal) arms to be long enough to hang the dinghy so that it just touched my raised boarding ladder. That would allow me to eliminate swaying motion when underway by lashing it to the stern rail.

I judged that a 9-inch-radius bend would be about right. I wanted the upper arms to be horizontal so a solar panel might be attached to them someday. Based on the rake of my stern rail, that worked out to having the upper and lower arms at a 105-degree angle to each other. Based on my basic design, I built a laminating jig from a piece of scrap plywood and 2 x 4 lumber.

## Single board

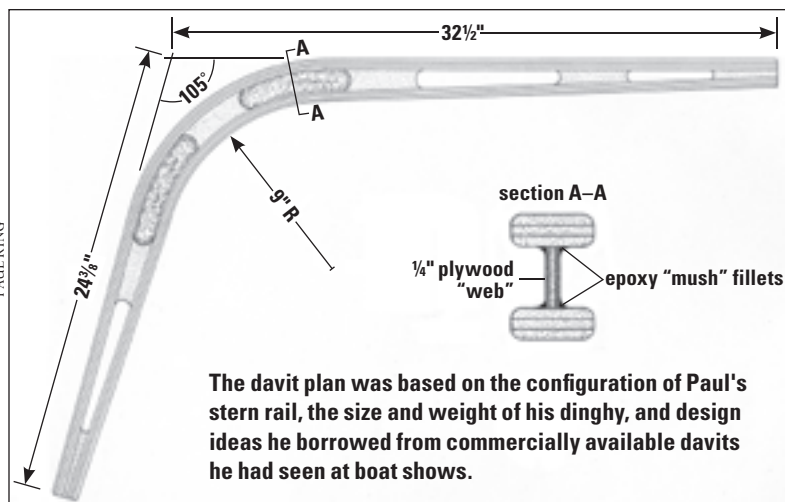
I chose ash for the lamination layers. This is the stuff baseball bats were made from before somebody thought aluminum was a good idea. It bends well and is very strong. I found a single board approximately  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch thick, 8 inches wide, and 7 feet long at our local Woodcraft Store. With my table saw, I cut four  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-wide boards from this and then cut each of these into three boards  $\frac{3}{16}$  inch thick by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch wide. As I used care and a sharp blade, these boards were suitable for laminating without any further dressing, such as running them through a thickness planer.

To prepare my laminating jig, I applied paste floor wax carefully and heavily to all surfaces that might come in contact with the epoxy I would be using for glue. Then I laid out within easy reach every C-clamp I own.

The first board cracked when I attempted to bend it around the laminating jig. My 9-inch radius was a little too tight for dry bending. Steam bending is the usual solution to such a problem. However, since I had almost bent the board completely to shape before it broke, I thought boiling water bending would work. I wrapped a towel around the first set of three boards, covering the area to be bent, and slowly poured two successive pans of boiling water on the towel. After letting the boards soak for about 20 minutes, I returned them to the laminating jig and found that they readily conformed. I clamped them in place and let them dry for a couple of days. When I removed them from the jig, they showed some



All the clamps in Paul's workshop were used to bend the first three layers of ash to the laminating jig. The jig was made from scrap plywood and 2 x 4s.



The davit plan was based on the configuration of Paul's stern rail, the size and weight of his dinghy, and design ideas he borrowed from commercially available davits he had seen at boat shows.

spring back, but easily reconformed to the jig. I was ready to begin gluing.

I carefully follow all instructions for using epoxy with unfailingly good results.

## Cheap foam brushes

Before beginning to apply the epoxy, I made up a supply of  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch foam brushes cut from yellow foam rollers. These are cheap and efficient, especially if cut in the width needed. Then I mixed a single-pump batch of epoxy. I applied a coat of this unthickened epoxy to all mating surfaces of the three-layer lamination I was doing. That done, I added colloidal silica to my remaining epoxy brew until it was just thick enough not to run. Using my foam brush once again, I spread this thickened mixture to one side of each pair of joining surfaces. A heavy coat isn't necessary, but care is neces-



More online ... For price and tool list go to [http://www.goodoldboat.com/reader\\_services/more\\_online/dinghydavits.php](http://www.goodoldboat.com/reader_services/more_online/dinghydavits.php).



This epoxy applicator is cheap and efficient. Paul cut out the brush end from a foam roller using a band saw. The handle came from a piece of scrap. The brush width can be specific to the job at hand.

## Dinghy transport



Paul wrapped a towel around the three boards to be used in the lamination and poured hot water over them. After soaking for about 20 minutes, they were pliable enough to conform to the laminating jig without cracking.



The spacer blocks between laminations are glued and clamped to the first lamination.

sary to ensure that the coverage is 100 percent. There must not be any gaps in the glue joint.

I stacked my layers and set them on edge on my laminating jig so the section that would be the vertical arm was against the corresponding part of the jig. After applying clamps to that section (not too tight), I began to force the laminations around

**“When laminating with epoxy as the glue, great clamping pressure is not needed; just enough to bring the mating surfaces snugly together.”**

the curve of the jig. Because they were pre-bent, this was not too difficult. I then added another clamp, just around the corner, at the beginning of the next straight section, but without bringing the lamination all the way to the jig.

Now I went back to the curved section and carefully added clamps, forcing the lamination layers to the curve of the jig. I looked carefully

for any gaps between the layers and to ensure that epoxy was squeezed out everywhere. When laminating with epoxy as the glue, great clamping pressure is not needed; just enough to bring the mating surfaces snugly together. Too much pressure will cause a dry joint that will be weak. After I was satisfied with my clamping, I used a Popsicle stick, shaped like a chisel on one end, to scrape up as much of the squeezed-out epoxy as I could. It is much easier to remove wet epoxy than to sand cured epoxy later.

### Leftover mahogany

The spacers between the three-layer laminations were made from mahogany left over from another project. (Throw nothing away!) I chose it because I had it but also because it machines easily and the color contrasts nicely with ash.

The spacers centered on the bend I made first. I drew the pattern on an index card using a compass (really a stick with two holes in it: one for a small nail around which to rotate and the other for a pencil point) adjusted to  $9\frac{9}{16}$  inch (the radius of the jig, plus the thickness of the inside lamination) for the inside curve. For the outside curve, I drilled another hole in the stick,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch out from the first. I made the spacers  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches long. The concave ends are for appearance only. After carefully cutting out two duplicate patterns, I glued them to the mahogany. This would make it easier to see my cutting line.

After cutting out the spacers on my band saw, I finished up with a sanding drum on my drill press for the inside curve and my disc sander for the outside curve in order to get a good fit between the spacers and the ash laminates. In place of a disc sander, a hand-sanding jig also works well, although it is more labor-intensive.

For the spacers in the straight sections, I taped index cards to my workbench top at the appropriate spacing and, using a straightedge, drew the taper on the cards. As with the curved spacers, I cut these patterns out and glued them to the mahogany stock for cutting and sanding. I pre-bent the outside laminate boards after giving them a boiling-water soak. A couple of days later, after they dried, I coated them with epoxy and clamped them to the spacers already glued to the inside laminate.

### Checked trueness

When the epoxy had cured, I removed the first davit assembly from the jig. I used my electric hand plane to dress up one side, checking trueness with a straightedge. Then I tapered the davits from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick at the curve, to  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick at the ends, by cutting only the unfinished side on my band saw and finishing up with my electric hand plane. I rounded the ends and, using my router, put a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch round-over on both the outside and inside edges.

When I tested this first davit for stiffness, it



flexed in the curved section more than I liked. Although it seemed strong enough, I was afraid the flexing could fatigue the glue joints over time. I decided to add plywood webbing in the open spaces between the center spacer and the first adjacent spacers in the straight sections, since that is where I observed the flexing. I traced the patterns directly on some scrap ¼-inch plywood, and cut the webbings out on my band saw, sanding to final shape until I had a friction fit in the space. Then with some five-minute epoxy, I spot glued each webbing in place.

When that cured, I thickened some epoxy with colloidal silica and forced this thickened epoxy into any gaps between the webbing and the space it was filling. Then I applied more thickened epoxy all around the inside corners on both sides. Using a tool fashioned like an oversized Popsicle stick, I formed fillets. This procedure is described and illustrated under the major heading, “Bonding with Fillets” in *The West System User Manual*. When the epoxy cured, the flexing problem was cured.

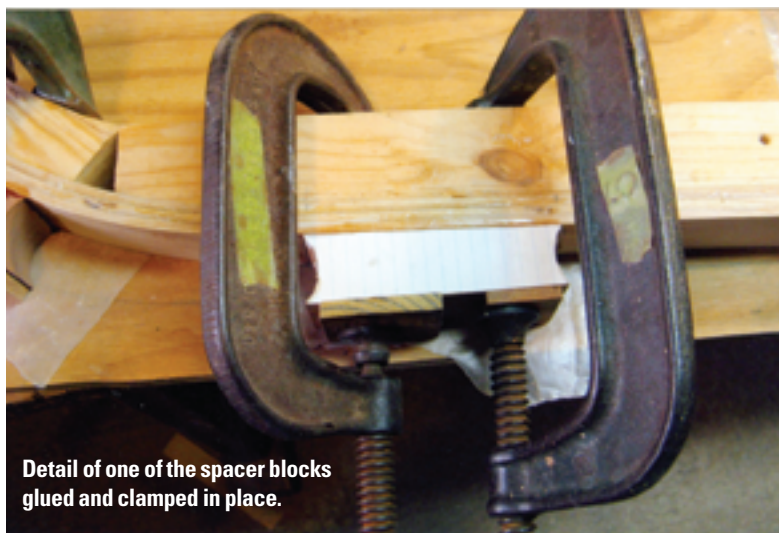
Satisfied with this first davit, I built another. Had I not been designing as I went along, I could have combined and streamlined some operations.

## Two-part tackle

To raise my small dinghy, I believed a two-part tackle would be adequate. I planned to dead-end a ¼-inch three-stranded nylon line at the far end of the davits and run it down through micro blocks attached to the dinghy lifting bridles, back up to the davits, through sheaves set into the ends of the davits, and back along the top of the davits to cleats mounted within convenient reach of the cockpit.

For the sheaves at the end of the davits, I bought an inexpensive double pulley at the hardware store. I removed the brass sheaves from the pulley by drilling out the axle pin and re-drilled each sheave to accept a 3/16-inch brass rod (cut from a long machine screw). I thought about simply cutting a mortise in the end of the davits to accept the sheaves, but I was concerned about not being able to completely waterproof the wooden davits in the area of the sheaves. I therefore decided to build sheave boxes out of sheet fiberglass. (Sheet fiberglass is easily made by coating a mirror or piece of window glass with paste floor wax and then laying up several thicknesses of fiberglass cloth using epoxy resin.)

From the sheet fiberglass, I made the box by gluing the bottom and sides together with five-minute epoxy. I drilled the axle hole on my drill press to ensure that it was square. I cut the axle about 1/8 inch longer than the width of the box, so it would receive additional support from the epoxy into which it would be set when mounting it into the mortise in the davit. When I set the



Detail of one of the spacer blocks glued and clamped in place.



Rail clamps, such as those used to mount horseshoe buoy brackets, work well for attaching the davits to the stern rail.

The davit is a complete assembly with rail clamps, a cleat for belaying the lifting line, and sheave, ready for mounting on the stern rail. The lifting line is running from its dead end at the hole in the end of the davit, down through a block with carabiner attached, up over the sheave, and finally back to the cleat. Note that the solid wood spacers are placed to provide solid backing for attached hardware such as the rail clamps, the cleat where the spreader bar attaches, and the sheave for the lifting line.

sheave and its axle in the box, I carefully applied epoxy all around the axle on both sides where it exits the box. I wanted to ensure that no epoxy could enter the box and glue the sheave when the box was set into the mortise.

## Centered and straight

I cut the mortises in the davit ends by drilling a series of overlapping holes with a brad-point bit and using a dowelling jig to keep things centered and straight. The holes were drilled only deep enough to accept the sheave box. I used a sharp chisel to square-up the mortise and a sharp knife

## Resources

### Woodcraft Store

Find a store in your area  
<<http://www.woodcraft.com>>

### The West System User Manual

Download a free manual  
<<http://www.westsystem.com>>

### Helm Products

Supplier of rail clamps and other products  
<<http://www.helmproducts.com/products.php>>

## Dinghy transport



The second laminate of three layers is clamped to the spacers.



The band saw cuts a taper in the davits from each end to the center. The taper was cut from one side only.

to cut the grooves in the sides to accept the axle. Using a pipe cleaner, I painted the inside of the mortise with epoxy and added enough thickened epoxy so all the space between the sheave box and the mortise would be filled when I pushed the sheave box in. I was careful not to let squeezed-out epoxy get into the sheave box where it would cure and glue the sheave in place. After the epoxy cured, I drilled a hole through the bottom of the

“My design needed a crossmember to further stabilize the davits... I used mahogany, but leftover ash would do just as well.”

sheave box, immediately in front of the sheave and the davit wood beneath it, with as large a bit as could be accepted without damaging the box. Then, in the center of the space between the sheave box and the end of the davit, I drilled a second hole to accept the bitter end of the dinghy tackle line. These holes were subsequently coated with epoxy to waterproof them.

The method for attaching the davits to the

stern of a boat will vary according to the configuration of the stern rail. My rail has, in addition to the top rail, an intermediate rail. This allowed me to mount the davits to the rails at an ideal distance apart. I wanted to be able to quickly and conveniently mount and dismount the davits in order to have them out of the way when not needed. I decided to use rail clamps, the type commonly used for attaching horseshoe-buoy brackets to stern rails. Luckily, I had four of these in my box of stuff “too good to be thrown away.” These are available from Helm Products, Inc.

### Mounted at an angle

My stern rail is curved to match the shape of the transom. This meant that the davits had to be mounted at an angle to the rail at the attachment point in order for the davits to extend aft parallel to one another. I measured this angle by laying a 1 x 2 across the top of the stern rail, resting it at the attachment points, and measuring the angle with a protractor. For my boat, this was 11 degrees. Because I intended to permanently mount the base half of the rail clamps on the davits, I had to bevel the base halves to this 11 degrees. The disc sander on my Shopsmith was perfect for this, but this job could be done with care on a table saw or band saw, or (perhaps tediously) by hand using a jig.

I used threaded rod to attach the rail-clamp bases. To align the mounting holes, I clamped the rail-clamp bases to the davits and used the holes in the clamps for drill guides. First, I drilled only the top hole in the upper clamp. I drilled it one size small and almost all the way through the davit. After unclamping the rail clamp, I turned the threaded rod into the hole, making it cut a thread as a tap would. When I had the top threaded rod screwed into each davit, I carried the davits to my boat for a fitting. By attaching the davits to the rail with only one threaded rod each, I was able to align the davits vertically and mark the outline of the rail clamps on the davits with a pencil. Similarly, I marked the position of the lower rail clamps. The assistance of an extra pair of hands made this easier. Then I returned to my shop to drill the remaining mounting holes for the upper and lower rail clamps.

### Attached with epoxy

After another trip to the boat for a test fit, I attached the base half of the rail clamps to the davits with epoxy. To do this, I doubled the diameter of each mounting hole, but only to half of the depth. Using a pipe cleaner, I coated the holes and the threaded rods with epoxy. Then I added colloidal silica to the remaining epoxy, which I injected into the holes with a plastic syringe. Because I had not drilled the bottom half of the holes oversize, I did not have any trouble with alignment when I



remounted the base half of the rail clamps. This procedure is discussed in *The West System User Manual* under the paragraph headed “Bonding Fasteners and Hardware.”

Different stern-rail configurations will require different approaches to mounting the davits. If there is only one rail, it may be necessary to lengthen the vertical arms of the davits until they reach the deck. Then an angle bracket or a stanchion base could be used to hold the lower end while rail clamps are used above. Another approach would be to have the davits attached to vertical supports on the stern rail using U-bolts.

My design needed a crossmember to further stabilize the davits. I made this 3 inches wide by  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch thick and as long as the distance is between the davits where they are mounted on the stern rail: in my case, 45 inches. I used mahogany, but leftover ash would do just as well. In each end of the board, I embedded two  $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch threaded rods, using epoxy, leaving enough of the rods sticking out to pass through one of the spacers in each davit and to allow for a flat washer and wing nut to fasten them. The holes in the davit spacers were drilled a little oversize for ease of assembly and were coated with epoxy for waterproofing.

### Convenient to reach

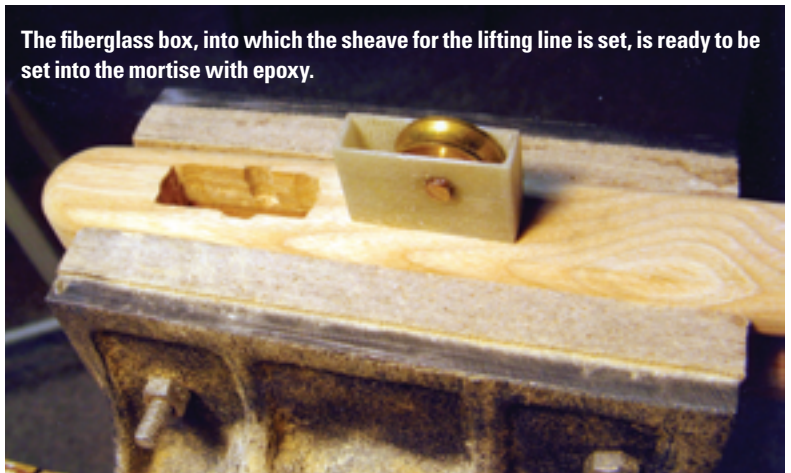
The final item was to mount a 2-inch nylon cleat on top of each davit where it is a convenient reach from the cockpit.

I applied two coats of epoxy to all wooden surfaces of the davits. This was followed by three coats of varnish. Even though I'll have them mounted on the boat only when I'm cruising, I wanted the UV protection of a good spar varnish. Painting was an option, but I thought the wood was much too pretty to cover up.

Sailors wishing to build similar wooden davits should keep in mind any weight differences between their dinghies and mine. I demonstrated the strength of my davits by hanging two cement blocks, weighing a total of 57 pounds, from just one of the davits. This suggested a total capacity for the pair of at least 114 pounds. However, this is dead weight and doesn't account for the additional strain caused by the boat moving through a seaway. If your dinghy is heavier than mine, consider increasing the strength of your davits by adding more layers in the laminations, making the davits wider — perhaps 2 inches rather than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch, increasing the separation between laminations by making the spacers wider, or similar plans.

I enjoyed this project. I like making things from wood and take satisfaction when they turn out well and are functional and attractive. This is a fairly long project but if it is approached step-by-step, it is not overly daunting and has the advantage of costing (in terms of dollars spent) far less than davits you can purchase. 🛶

The fiberglass box, into which the sheave for the lifting line is set, is ready to be set into the mortise with epoxy.



In this test fitting of the davits to the stern rail, the spreader bar, which greatly stabilizes the davits, can be seen.



The davits support Paul's 48-pound inflatable dinghy without a problem.



*Paul Ring is a contributing editor with Good Old Boat. He has sailed, repaired, modified, restored, and built boats for the past 42 years. Magnolia, his restored Cheoy Lee Offshore 27, graced the cover of Don Casey's book, This Old Boat. Paul currently sails his Nonsuch 260 with first mate, Barbara Brown, on Mobile Bay. He has written many how-to articles for sailing publications.*



1

# Carrying the dinghy

## One man's solution: Drag it backward

by Silver Donald Cameron



2

THE PERFECT DINGHY WOULD BE LIGHT, stable, unsinkable, indestructible, readily convertible to a life raft, and able to carry a large burden. That's the easy part. It would also fold away into a package the size of a shoebox for stowage. That's the hard part. Until someone creates The Incredible Shrinking Dinghy, we'll have to stow our dinghies some other way — and a dinghy out of the water is a bulky, balky, cross-grained nuisance.

The traditional method is to stow the dinghy upside down on the coachroof or foredeck, which is the way I stow the custom-built dinghy on *Silversark*, my cold-molded cutter (1). That works, but the dinghy interferes with the helmsman's view, and it's not easy to hoist the skiff right over the lifelines on a halcyon, and twirl it around in mid-air.

On *Magnus*, the Viksund MS-33 motorsailer that Marjorie and I bought for our trip from Nova Scotia to the Bahamas, there is no place on deck for a dinghy. The afterdeck and the coachroof are too short, and a dinghy on the foredeck would make the inside steering station useless. So when we added a swim platform, I tried carrying the dinghy across the stern, motorboat style (2). With an inflatable dinghy, that worked pretty well and had the added advantage that, in a crew-overboard situation, the dinghy could be deployed as a boarding raft simply by slashing the lashing that held it to the stern rail.

I replaced the inflatable with a Porta-Bote (*Good Old Boat* January 2005), expecting to use the same system (3). On a transom-sterned yacht the cross-transom system might work with a conventional dinghy, but *Magnus* has a canoe stern. On the third day out we

punched into a head sea on Chedabucto Bay and every time we rolled the protruding lower corner of the dinghy's transom scooped up gallons of water, punishing the Porta-Bote ferociously.

### Towed all the way

So we towed the dinghy for the next six months, all the way to Florida, except during the long offshore passage down the New Jersey coast. The Porta-Bote towed remarkably well, though we swamped her twice. For the New Jersey coast, my crew and I folded the dinghy and carried it on the starboard sidedeck, where it interfered with the view from the inside helm, and blocked us from going forward on that side of the boat.

I found myself dreaming of davits... not easy to arrange on a canoe-sterned boat, but I saw davits in use in a photograph of a sister ship to my Viksund. *Solvik* was purchased by Erling Viksund, the founder of the still-thriving Viksund Boat company in Norway. Having built 6,000 vessels, he had retired and was setting out to roam the North Atlantic like his Viking ancestors.

Meanwhile, I noticed two other imaginative solutions that might conceivably be applied to *Magnus*. In Oxford, Maryland, we saw a lovely ketch named *Spellbound* carrying her dinghy under the mizzen boom (4). The dinghy slid in from astern under a stern rail that had been beefed up to serve as a horse for the mizzen sheet. And in Cocoa, Florida, a husky motor cruiser had a nice variation on davits. Her davits were welded together and hinged as a unit. The whole structure dipped down to the water and clipped onto the dinghy. An electric winch then raised the whole apparatus to the mother ship's transom (5).



3



4





### On the foredeck

In Hollywood, Florida, we prepared to cross the Gulf Stream. I folded the Porta-Bote on the dock. A neighboring skipper suggested that it might be lashed flat on the foredeck, even if the curve of the bow did protrude a couple of inches beyond the lifelines. We tried it and, to my surprise, the lashed dinghy didn't interfere with visibility from the inside helm at all. That became the solution for open-water passages (6).

But what about shorter runs, when we didn't want the trouble of folding and unfolding the dinghy? In West End, Bahamas, I saw an arrangement on a big sloop from Texas that made me sit up and blink (7). The boat had a scoop stern with molded swim steps on the centerline. The skipper had discovered that the back ends of his inflatable's tubes would fit tidily inside the scoop, placing the outboard inside the swim steps. A single line looped under the dinghy supported the bow and held the boat snugly, bum-to-bum, against the

northward all the way from Florida to Chesapeake Bay, and the system worked perfectly. It was infinitely better than towing and had cost almost nothing.

We left *Magnus* in Maryland for a month, and then I returned with two robust lads of middle years to take her home to Nova Scotia. We planned to cover most of the distance in two long offshore hops: from Delaware Bay to Block Island and from Cape Cod to Halifax. I brought the inflatable as a backup for the life raft. We folded the Porta-Bote and lashed it on the foredeck and installed the inflatable bum-to-bum on the swim platform (9). The inflatable fit as though it had been made for that location. Once, it was knocked sideways when the lines slacked during the night. Otherwise, during 800 offshore miles to Halifax, neither dinghy moved.

Even for boats with other options, bum-to-bum stowage has great advantages. The dinghy is near the water and



**“Even for boats with other options, bum-to-bum stowage has great advantages. The dinghy is near the water and easy to launch and recover.”**

transom. In an emergency, a single slash of the knife would release the dinghy.

“How did this novel arrangement perform at sea?” I wondered


“Great,” said the skipper. “I’ve sailed hundreds of miles offshore with the dinghy like that and never shipped a teaspoon of water in it. It’s as stable as can be.”

Was there a way of making a bum-to-bum arrangement for *Magnus* and the Porta-Bote? I experimented. My version (8) wasn’t as simple and elegant — the outboard motor had to come off, the system required more lashings and, ultimately, I added a PVC pipe strut to prevent the dinghy from blowing upward and forward. The whole affair made a very unusual motorsailer look even more unusual.

### Worked perfectly

But it worked. Carrying the Porta-Bote bum-to-bum, Marjorie and I cruised

easy to launch and recover. It is completely out of the way and obstructs nothing, not even visibility. In an emergency, it can be instantly available. The cost is negligible. If a marina wants to charge extra for the overhang, you can haul the dinghy vertical and be back to your normal LOA.

The only downside is that the arrangement is unfamiliar and seems ungainly... but so did davits, stern arches, and dodgers when they first appeared. Bum-to-bum dinghy stowage is not for everyone, but for some boats, it is almost the only seamanlike resolution to a universal problem. 

*Silver Donald Cameron is the author of several books about ships and the sea, including the award-winning Wind, Whales and Whiskey, the story of a circumnavigation of Cape Breton Island, and Sailing Away from Winter about his cruise south on Magnus.*



# Creating Miranda

*Experiencing the value and beauty of simplicity*

by Irle White



**Miranda** began her life in Irle and Dori's backyard in Belmont, California, overlooking San Francisco Bay. A John Atkin schooner design based on the *Little Maid of Kent*, she was framed, above, in 2 x 2 oak. Irle added touches to her interior, such as laminated beams, below left, and a wood-burning stove, below right. The steering wheel was a gift from a friend and changed their plans from tiller to wheel steering. It sits in the bottom left photo awaiting installation.



**I**N THE EARLY 1960s I TOOK A JOB IN California. My wife, Dori, and I bought a house in Belmont, a small town in the hills overlooking San Francisco Bay. From our living room window we viewed hundreds of sailboats darting over sparkling waters. On Sunday afternoons we visited the waterfront, which was lined with marinas filled with sloops, yawls, ketches, and schooners.

Dori was an avid reader and an accomplished writer, but she had never read Joshua Slocum's *Sailing Alone Around the World*, the book that had so captivated me as a boy. I bought her a copy and she immediately understood my passion.

We met sailors who had sailed through the Golden Gate from islands in the South Seas, from the Orient, and from archipelagos on the opposite side of the globe. We heard tales of white sand beaches and coral shores lined with palm trees where summer is eternal. We read of storms and tempests and dismastings and shipwrecks. We met sailors who had experienced adventures like those in books I read when a boy. I had dreams of sailing off to some remote island paradise. Dori had similar ideas and we studied boat plans and read of adventures on the high seas. We decided to build a boat.

I knew nothing of boatbuilding, little about sailing, and less about navigation, but I have always believed that somewhere there is a book that will teach all one needs to know on any given subject. We spent weekends in boatyards and talked with cruising sailors and "live-aboarders." We made friends with backyard boatbuilders and peppered them with questions.

## Encouraging advice

I studied Howard Chapelle's *Boat Building*, a volume written in 1941 and devoted to the amateur boatbuilder. I



Getting a 30-foot schooner out of the backyard and down the hill is no easy task, at left. *Miranda* graces the Lo-Boy trailer as the descent to San Francisco begins, at right. Dori christened her *Miranda*, below left, and the remainder of the outfitting work began, below right.



was seduced by the very encouraging first sentence of his preface: "Any man having a fair amount of skill with carpenter's tools can build a boat..."

Our building space was as limited as our budget. We were familiar with the story of a man who built a boat in his basement and had to tear his house down to remove it. Many boatbuilders rent space in a boatyard, warehouse, or barn, but to avoid the extra expense we decided to choose a boat that would fit in our backyard. It would save money and the work would go faster if the project was close at hand.

My job as a college teacher was not a lucrative one, but Dori was having success as a writer. She financed our

boat by writing true-confession stories. They were easy for her to write and they paid well.

Our home in Belmont was on a hillside, so I first called a trucker and was assured he could haul our boat and get it to a boatyard. He specified, however, that because of our driveway configuration and slope, our boat could be no longer than 30 feet and weigh no more than 10 tons.

We searched for information about naval architects and came upon William Atkin. His boats are not only beautiful, but they had also proven to be seaworthy and easy to handle in all kinds of weather. His boats have made passages all over the world.

### Just the right size

Dori and I fell in love with plans for a small Atkin schooner he called *Little Maid of Kent*. She was the right size: 30 feet long, with a beam of 10 feet and a draft of 5. Her modest sail area of 438 square feet could be handed by one person if need be. She sported a jib on a saucy jutting bowsprit, a gaff-rigged foresail, and a mainsail that extended 5 feet over a taffrail with turned stanchions. She was a smart-looking little ship, and we set about to build her.

Our three-year project began in 1967, that "Summer of Love." The radio in our little boatyard eased our labors with lyrics from Scott McKinsie's "If you're going to San Francisco... summer time will be a love-in there." The mood in the Bay Area seemed auspicious, for ours was a labor of love.

I selected the finest oak, spruce, and fir I could find. I journeyed to Port Orford, Oregon, to select prime cedar for planking. I planed,

sawed, and fastened each plank with tender care. I caulked her with oakum and cotton and payed her seams with white lead. I made a pattern for her 3,000-pound ballast keel and had it cast in a foundry in Oakland.

Hatches and companionway doors were of birds-eye maple and walnut, the interior of mahogany and teak. Sunlight streaming through an etched-glass skylight and eight brass-rimmed portholes bounced off varnished cupboard doors and green tile surrounding a small wood-burning stove. We covered the bunk cushions with green velvet.

### Built for cruising

In our starboard galley we installed a gimbaled three-burner Primus stove with a small oven. On the port side







Once *Miranda* was rigged and ready, Irle and Dori spent time exploring the Sacramento River Delta region and practicing their sailing skills. A view of *Miranda's* deck, at left. In September 1970, the big day arrived and *Miranda* sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge and “turned left” toward the Baja. The threesome explored Mexico, crossed to Hawaii, and finally returned to San Francisco in the summer of 1972.

we built an ice chest. A sink with a hand pump provided fresh water from two 30-gallon tanks stowed under the bunks. Shelves and cupboards with heavy-duty latches and leeboards kept dishes and utensils secure. We were building a cruising boat and expected to encounter heavy seas.

We nestled a small hand-start diesel engine under the cockpit. We didn't expect to use it on long passages but felt an engine would be handy for getting in and out of port. Plans called for a tiller for steering, but when a friend presented us with a wheel made by his father in the 1920s, we promised to use it. The wheel took up less room than a tiller so we had a roomy cockpit that comfortably sat four on varnished oak benches covering two 20-gallon diesel tanks.

In August of 1969 I called the trucker. It was time to haul our boat down to a boatyard. Neighbors began to gather when they saw two large semis with Lo-Boy trailers loaded with counter-weights and a forklift parked on our narrow street. Without being notified, police, a fire truck, and three newspaper photographers appeared. One neighbor lady, who seldom left her house, decided to skip *As The World Turns* when she saw the excitement.

She showed up dressed in nightgown and robe with curlers in her hair. When she saw what was going on, she went back home and returned with a chair and a bottle of wine. She found shade under a tree and sat all afternoon quietly watching. A newspaper report said it was the most exciting event that happened in Belmont that summer.

### Removed tree

One of our trees had grown and was now overhanging our driveway. The trucking crew made short work of it with a chain saw. They scurried about and laid steel plate and pipe rollers under the boat's cradle.

To the strains of The Mommas and the Poppas singing “California Dreamin'” a diesel-powered winch mounted on a trailer slowly inched the 8-ton load up a 30-degree slope. The song seemed appropriate. For Dori and me, this was indeed “The Dawning of the Age of Aquarius.” By late afternoon, our boat was securely strapped to a Lo-Boy on the street. I held my breath most of that afternoon. When the boat was safely loaded, I treated myself a tumbler of Scotch.

The next morning, the truckers returned and led a parade of police cars and onlookers out of the hills of

Belmont, down through winding narrow streets to Pete's Harbor, where we stepped the masts and bowsprit. We stayed several months at Pete's and continued working on our boat.

Inspired by the turn-of-the-century voyages of Captain Slocum, we wanted this adventure to be as trouble-free and simple as possible. To that end, we decided against complicated electronics, troublesome winches, and expensive gear. We wanted old-fashioned rigging we could repair at sea. We rigged her with deadeyes and lanyards instead of turnbuckles, hung baggy-wrinkle instead of rubber chafing gear, and used kerosene-fueled running lights instead of battery power. We sought simplicity, self-reliance, and solitude.

### Invoked a blessing

We outfitted our schooner with dark red sails. She turned out to be a beautiful boat. At her launching, Dori christened her *Miranda*, after the daughter in *The Tempest*, in order to invoke the blessing of someone whose father had influence over the elements.

We were given a small dinghy and named it *Calaban* from the same play. It behaved according to character — it, too, possessed an evil spirit. It was



heavy and awkward to stow. *Calaban* refused to hold a straight course when rowed. When towed, she skewed from side to side, then came up rapidly and slammed into the transom and fell back with a jerk that was meant to break her free. On one occasion she turned sideways, filled with water and dove to the bottom. She finally sank,

“...the truckers returned and led a parade of police cars and onlookers out of the hills of Belmont, down through winding narrow streets to Pete’s Harbor...”

out of sheer spite as far as I could tell. There was no remorse on my part. We replaced her with an inflatable dinghy.

We spent all summer in boatyards and at anchor in Sausalito, ordering and installing equipment and learning to sail our boat. At the same time, Dori spent hours cranking out true confessions. We took navigation classes and learned how to find our position with a sextant. We read every book we could find related to cruising under sail and made many friends on boats preparing for similar adventures.

We took week-long cruises into the Sacramento River Delta region, practicing sail handling, navigation, and anchoring. The delta is prime cruising ground. It provided opportunity to signal draw, swing, and lift bridges and to anchor in sheltered coves filled with crawfish and lined with ripe berries ready for picking. We came to love our little ship and our life living aboard her.

### Need to singlehand

If we were to accomplish our dream of long passages to romantic islands, it was obvious that each of us must be able to sail *Miranda* alone. We heard of many cruises that were ruined because the man made all decisions while the woman was assigned galley duties. In an emergency, either one would be in trouble. Dori learned to hoist a sail and set an anchor and I perfected recipes I still enjoy. We both studied

seamanship and honed our navigation skills and were anxious to head for blue water.

In early September 1970, *Miranda* left the Gate and headed south. We explored Baja and mainland Mexico. We crossed to Hawaii and finally returned to San Francisco in the summer of 1972.

We were escorted out to sea by dozens of dolphins leaping in our bow wake and were greeted the same way when we made landfall. We witnessed the birth of a whale in Bahia Magdalena and had a whale stay alongside for two hours when we were a thou-

sand miles offshore. We ate flying fish picked from our scuppers and read by the light of phosphorescence at night.

*Miranda* behaved beautifully all the way. She took care of us in heavy seas and in shoal-filled waters. With her wheel lashed and her sails properly trimmed, *Miranda* held a steady course for days on end.

We have many stories of adventures at sea and in hidden Mexican coves, but some of the most memorable times were those days when we labored to create *Miranda* and watch her come to life. We came to appreciate Atkin’s seaworthy design and to understand the value and beauty in simple, uncomplicated, trouble-free equipment. ▴

*For many years, Irle White built riverboats at his home on the Kootenai River in northwest Montana. Since his retirement from Eastern Washington University in 1994, he has pursued his hobbies: woodworking, fishing, model-making, and writing.*

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# Island Packet 27

*A beamy, shoal-draft cruiser ideal for Florida and the Bahamas*

by Henry Cordova

ISLAND PACKET YACHTS MAY VERY WELL be the only boatbuilder owned and managed by a graduate naval architect who builds and sells his own designs. Since its founding in 1979, IPY and its CEO, Robert K. Johnson, have been in the business of producing blue-water sailboats. (For more, refer to the July 2005 issue or read a full interview with Bob Johnson at <[http://www.goodoldboat.com/reader\\_services/more\\_online/robert\\_johnson.php](http://www.goodoldboat.com/reader_services/more_online/robert_johnson.php)>.) Although the firm now specializes in high-end luxury yachts in the 40-foot range, it first made its name with a line of smaller cruisers, which quickly established its reputation for quality, sound construction, and seaworthiness. The first model was the IP 26, a development of the Bombay Yachts Express, a beamy, centerboard Cape Cod catboat-type hull with a barn door rudder and bowsprit. The 26's lines

were based on the Express, but Bob Johnson redesigned the interior, rig, and centerboard. The design concept can be traced even further back to the John Alden-designed catboats of the 1930s. The IP 26 Mk II was a further development of this idea, and one version of it was made with the trademark Island Packet Full Foil keel.

## History

The Island Packet 27 was introduced in 1984 as the replacement for the IP 26 Mk II; it was the fourth model sold by the company following the 26, 26 Mk II, and 31. Over the next eight years, 243 hulls were sold until the model was retired and replaced by the IP 29, making it one of the most long-lived boats in the Island Packet line. The IP 27 was, in effect, a "26 Mk III." The boat was marketed in two versions — a keel and keel/centerboard

**The Island Packet 27 is a handsome cutter. Its versatile rig and shoal draft make it an ideal cruiser for Florida and the Bahamas.**

shoal draft option — and it could be rigged as a sloop, although it is easily convertible to a cutter. Indeed, most IP 27s do carry two headsails. The boat is distinguished by twin backstays, a bowsprit with bobstay, and a long keel.

## Design

The IP 27 is a capable coastal cruiser. It has been successfully sailed offshore, although three dimensions recommend against that: it is not a big boat and its considerable beam, along with its shoal draft, increase the potential for inverse stability. Referring to the ISO (International Organization for Standards, more commonly followed in Europe than in the U.S.) standards specifying the conditions for which a given boat is suitable, Bob Johnson says the boat is "...right on the cusp between Category A [the most seaworthy] and B, and today only a few tweaks would be necessary to make it Category A." With a sail area/displacement ratio of 16.2, and a displacement/length ratio of 250, the boat can be characterized as a light-to-average cruiser on the dividing line between an offshore and coastal cruiser. Bob reports that one IP 27 fell off a wave on a passage to Bermuda and rolled over completely, tearing off the entire rig, but the boat recovered and survived, continuing to Bermuda under power.

A first look at the IP 27 reveals traditional lines and a salty overall appearance. The trademark IP look is evident throughout, from the café au lait hull color to the rounded-corner rectangular portlights along the length







of the cabin trunk. (The original IP 27s had plastic portlight frames until 1986, when they were replaced by aluminum. The following year they were again replaced, this time with stainless-steel frames.)

The boat is beamy with a roomy cockpit, high freeboard, and a traditional sheerline with a lot of spring. Below, the layout is practical and efficient with plenty of storage space and more than 6 feet of headroom.

It is not particularly fast or weathery, although its performance is more than adequate when one considers its other virtues. A relatively shallow draft in all its configurations makes it particularly convenient for gunkholing and bay work.

## Construction

As in most modern fiberglass boats, the deck-cabin-cockpit is molded as a single unit, utilizing a cored laminate construction of hand-laid fiberglass comprised of layers of mat and woven roving saturated with polyester resin on both sides of a core of glass microballoons and polyester resin. A fiberglass headliner is bonded to the underside of the deck. The bowsprit is molded integrally with both the hull and deck with alternating layers of plywood and fiberglass.

**Island Packet Yachts favor rack-and-pinion steering, a geared system that doesn't have the feedback of the more familiar cable-quadrant-pedestal type. Its big advantage is that it is very strong with far fewer parts. The bowsprit, facing page, is integral to the fiberglass deck and makes anchoring chores easier, though one must work around the forestay and inner forestay furling drums.**

The hull is a solid fiberglass laminate made up of alternating layers of hand-laid triaxial roving saturated with polyester resin. Inside, a molded fiberglass structural pan is bonded to the hull; it forms the bed for all interior surfaces and furnishings, including settees, bunks, and the engine bed. The pan is reinforced with a plywood and fiberglass grid. Bulkheads and furniture assemblies are installed so they bond directly to both the pan and interior hull surfaces with multiple layers of woven roving and mat.

The hull and deck assemblies are joined by stainless-steel bolts with locking nuts through a flange molded into the hull and a urethane adhesive sealant.

It is always a good idea to get a used boat hauled out and professionally surveyed prior to purchase. One thing to look for are cracks and leaks along the keel; the IP 27's ballast is carried internally — iron slugs embedded in concrete. In the event of a leak, salt water could cause hidden corrosion and potential problems. Fortunately, the gentle slope of the leading edge of the keel should tend to rise up over an obstruction and disperse the shock.

Another thing to check for is severe pitting corrosion in the metal water tanks. Pull a sample of the water at the bottom of the tank and, in addition, look into the tank with a flashlight to see if the metal is clean and smooth and if the water is free of sludge

caused by metal corrosion.

There is a metal strap that bridges the gap between the keel and rudder to protect the propeller from fouling on lines and from damage due to floating objects. It provides no support to the rudder, so the boat could sail just fine without it. If the strap were damaged in a collision or grounding, it could conceivably bend the rudder post and affect steering, but this seems unlikely.

## Rigging

Standard on Island Packet boats are headsails set on roller furlers, though hanked-on sails are available. The genoa tack is at the end of the bowsprit, and the self-tending staysail's tack is located at the forward end of the deck. A full bow pulpit allows crew to work safely while handling headsails or ground tackle. The mainsail halyard winch is mounted on the mast; all other halyards, sheets, and furling lines lead to the cockpit. A traveler is mounted on a track that runs athwartships forward of the companionway hatch so the mainsheet does not interfere with cockpit activities or a Bimini top.

Five winches are provided for sail handling. The mast is stepped at the forward end of the coachroof with a compression post below to provide support. Inside the mast is an internal guide that secures wiring, and a messenger line is provided to run additional wires or cables. Access to wire connections in the mast is through a remov-



## Boat review



The galley, at left, is compact, but has the essentials: sink, stovetop, icebox, and lockers. The 10-foot 6-inch beam makes for a spacious saloon, at right, and more cabin sole than found on most 27-footers. The bulkhead-mounted table folds down and out to seat four. The enclosed head, facing page, has a sink and provision for a handheld shower; there's a small hanging locker outboard. Bernie and Jayna Hamel of Apollo Beach, Florida, are the third owners of *Shamrock*, an Island Packet 27 and our test boat, below on facing page.

able inspection plate. The mast has a design rake of one mast width. Reefing the mainsail is by the jiffy or slab system and can be accomplished by one person while standing at the mast.

### Accommodations

Stepping through the companionway reveals a spacious saloon with a compact galley to port and the electrical/navigational panels to starboard. The galley boasts an icebox; two-burner, gimbaled LPG stove; and a sink with hot and cold water. Six-foot-plus berth/settees line each side of the cabin, and the starboard berth pulls out to convert to a double berth. There is 6-foot 1-inch headroom. A quarter berth on the starboard side extends under the cockpit seat; a portlight in the cockpit footwell provides welcome ventilation.

On the port side, aft of the galley, is a large storage locker accessible from the cockpit. Just forward of the starboard berth is a sturdy, bulkhead-mounted table that folds down and out to seat four.

When the head/shower door opens, it seals off the V-berth. In theory, the boat can sleep five (six, if two can squeeze into the cramped V-berth) but three or four is probably the practical limit, especially on a long cruise. The interior joinery is dark teak, well-built but a bit gloomy. A lighter color would improve visibility and a feeling of more space.

Adequate ventilation and illumination is provided by nine portlights and plenty of stowage is available in every stray corner.

The engine is behind the removable companionway ladder or can be



### Island Packet 27

**Designer:** Robert Johnson  
**LOA:** 30 feet 0 inches  
**LOD:** 26 feet 6 inches  
**LWL:** 24 feet 3 inches  
**Beam:** 10 feet 6 inches  
**Draft (keel):** 3 feet 8 inches  
**Draft (centerboard up):** 2 feet 8 inches  
**Draft (centerboard down):** 6 feet 0 inch  
**Displacement:** 8,000 pounds  
**Ballast:** 3,000 pounds  
**Sail area (cutter):** 405 square feet  
**Water:** 31 gallons  
**Fuel:** 19 gallons  
**Holding tank:** 12 gallons  
**Headroom:** 6 feet 1 inch  
**Mast above DWL:** 38 feet 6 inches  
**Engine:** 18-hp Yanmar diesel  
**Displ./LWL ratio:** 250  
**SA/Displ. ratio:** 16.2  
**PHRF:** 232

accessed from a hatch in the cockpit sole. The owners of our test boat report that changing the oil is not too difficult, but servicing the fuel filter requires a gentle touch and small hands.

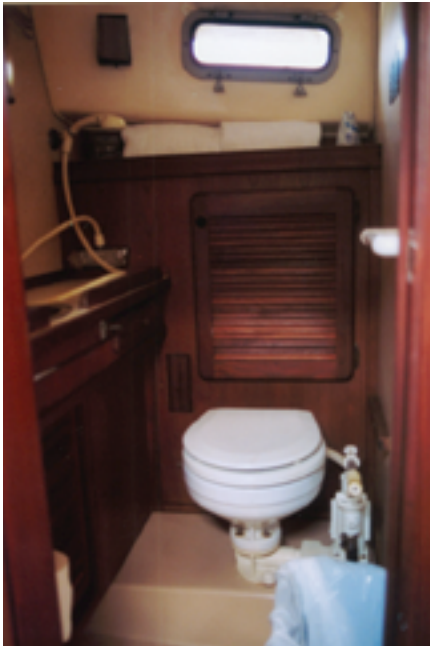
### Performance

Our test boat for this review was *Shamrock*, a full-keel version owned by Bernie and Jayna Hamel of Apollo Beach, Florida. *Shamrock* did not appear to be anywhere near 22 years old. The Hamels are the third owners; the excellent condition of the boat reflects a quality product as well as loving maintenance from all of its owners. The Hamels have owned *Shamrock* for two years and soon after acquiring her they replaced both furling rollers, did some minor repairs on a spreader, put on fresh bottom paint, and repacked the stuffing box.

The original sails were repaired, and new cushions and other minor interior furnishings were added to spruce up the saloon. The Yanmar 2GM20 diesel engine, also original, required a new exhaust manifold, and several sea-cocks and through-hull fittings were replaced. They also installed davits. They are planning to replace the mainsheet winch with a self-tailing model (the jib winches are already self-tailing) and to add an anchor windlass.

Our test sail was conducted on Tampa Bay under ideal conditions — a light chop and 15-knot winds — which easily moved the boat to 5½ knots over the ground. Calculated hull speed is 6.6 knots, and Bernie said they've reached well over 6 under sail and power. They keep the boat's bottom clean by fre-





quently engaging the services of a diver. Bernie reports that the engine is more than adequate to make headway against stiff winds and heavy seas.

Performance was as advertised, with a gentle, yet solid, feel even when crossing the wakes of powerboats. As expected, *Shamrock* was not a demon to windward but pointed adequately and sailed comfortably with the wind on the quarter and the beam. Bernie remarked that downwind sailing would be improved with a vang, which they plan to add.

The opinion of the Hamels is that the boat is best crewed by two, although it could be singlehanded by a confident and nimble seaman. Coming about was accomplished without undue problems, but they did confess to being caught in irons a few times until they understood the boat's idiosyncrasies. They also mentioned that the genoa can foul in the narrow slot between the forestay and inner forestay, so a second crewman is certainly an advantage. We conducted several tacks without incident.

These boats are not often raced; in fact, there's just one boat listed by the United States Sailing Association, and its PHRF handicap is 232 seconds per mile. That's about the same as an inboard Ericson 27 at 238 but slower

than an inboard O'Day 27 at 204.

The rack-and-pinion steering, standard on all Island Packets, was a delight, although I must confess a bit of clumsiness with it, as I am more familiar with a tiller and the more common pedestal-cable steering. I was impressed with the ease with which the boat steered, almost as if it had a power assist; in fact, to my taste it was too easy! My hosts pointed out that there is a mechanical adjustment allowing the resistance of the wheel to be modified to suit the helmsman's preference. On a beam reach the boat steering was perfectly neutral, with no trace of lee or weather helm. I removed my hands from the wheel for more than a minute and the boat tracked in a straight line, perfectly balanced. I did notice, as one would expect, that helm response was a bit sluggish at slow speeds, no doubt due to the long keel. Because of the neutral helm, there is a tendency for the helmsman to oversteer after tacking, but this can be anticipated with experience. The aft end of the steering wheel shaft is prepared for installation of an autopilot.

Response under power at slow speeds was a bit awkward, with a noticeable lag between applying rudder and a change in direction. There is also a pronounced torque bias to the prop, causing the stern to swing to starboard when going forward and to port in reverse. An afternoon of practice in a calm marina on a windless day should allow the helmsman to learn the boat's

quirks and compensate for them. This would be particularly important when backing down, because the IP 27 is a bit clumsy in reverse.

## Conclusion

Island Packet owners enjoy solid support from the manufacturer. The factory is happy to provide advice to owners, even owners of secondhand boats. A complete factory website and an owner-operated user's group with its own website gives IP sailors access to authoritative technical advice and connections to other IP sailors. Many social functions are organized and communication between all members of the IP family is encouraged.

Due to the IP 27's long production run, there are quite a few still on the water. Figures quoted in Island Packet's website claim typical recent prices for used boats between 78 and 91 percent of their original purchase price. In 1984, the factory base price was \$41,950; in 1992, \$65,950. Of course, prices for used boats vary enormously depending on the boat's condition, history, age, and the usual market parameters. We found several for sale on the Internet, including a 1986 for \$41,000, and a 1990 for \$46,000. ▴

*Henry Cordova is a geographer/cartographer who has been a sailor of the military persuasion (U.S. Navy Reserve on the USS Dewey) and of the recreational variety (a San Francisco Pelican and a MacGregor 22).*



## Resources

<<http://www.ipy.com>>  
<<http://www.iphomport.com>>

# A tender for cruisers

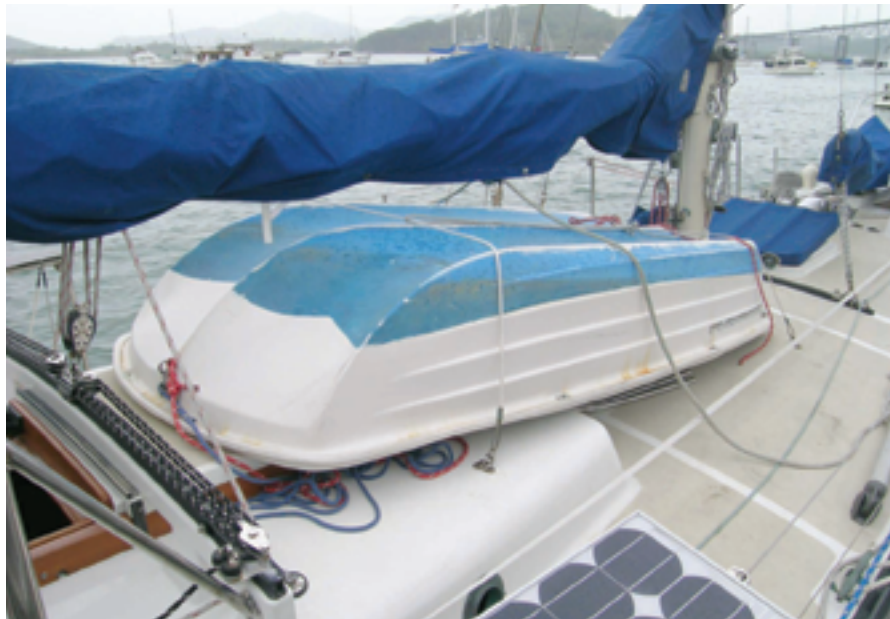
## *Singing the praises of a hard, non-inflatable dinghy*

by Bob Steadman

OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS I HAVE worn out two inflatable dinghies. As the kids grew, we put lots of happy miles on both of them. Later we were preparing for an extended cruise, we needed a new dinghy. I checked prices on inflatables; most were around \$2,000 to \$3,000. We decided to put dinghy acquisition on hold for a while.

Many cruising authors praise the virtues of the hard dinghy. Still, we were unconvinced. Then we experienced a bit of serendipity. Kaye had a Walker Bay 8 sailing dinghy so we tried that for a while. It was lightweight and easily stowed on deck. However, it was tippy and too small. A friend on our dock had admired our Walker Bay and had a hard dinghy he wanted to trade. The dinghy was a WaterTender 9.4 made by Johnson Outdoors. We made the trade. As we weren't going to depart for a year, we had plenty of time to see if it would meet our needs. Here are our conclusions.

West Marine sells the WaterTender 9.4. They are cheap; at \$500, they are about a fourth to a sixth the price of



a comparable inflatable. These boats are made of a very tough high-density polyethylene, rather than fiberglass. We drag our dinghy over rocks and coral without a second thought. I remember grazing a pier with one of my inflatables and having a mussel shell slice the bow tube. Because the cut was close to the rub strip, it had to be professionally repaired. We have no such worries with our hard dinghy. Polyethylene is impervious to sunlight as well; not needing an expensive and cumbersome suncover is another plus.

### Bottom growth

We wanted to be able to leave the boat in the water for extended periods of time and not have to worry about marine growth on the bottom. The previous owner had applied bottom paint without any primer to the hull, and we did the same. Once we rough up the plastic with 60-grit sandpaper, paint adheres reasonably well. Repeated dragging on sand and rocks will abrade the paint, of course, but it can be easily touched up.

After a tropical downpour, Kaye does our laundry in the dinghy. The front bilge is the wash cycle, and the

aft bilge provides the rinse.

The deck up forward deflects spray, making for a dry ride in a chop.

The WaterTender weighs 106 pounds. A comparable inflatable with an inflatable floor will be about 70 pounds, while an RIB of this size weighs in at 135 pounds. In Mexico, most cruisers with heavy inflatables fit transom-mounted wheels on their boats to drag them up on the beach. The wheels are heavy, expensive, hard to stow, and ugly. We have not felt the need for them, as our dinghy slides more easily on the sand than an inflatable does.

The WaterTender has a "tri-hull configuration," like a Boston Whaler. This gives the boat good stability. I weigh more than 200 pounds, but the boat is still stable when I am standing as far outboard as possible.

### Resources

#### WaterTender 9.4

<<http://www.jowatercraft.com>>

#### Scorpio 10

by Pelican International

<<http://www.pelican-intl.com>>







**The WaterTender 9.4 has a tri-hull configuration, facing page, and can be stowed below the boom. It can plane at 15 knots with just one person, at left, and serves as the family washing machine after a rainfall, at right.**



The hard dinghy is much more capacious since there are no tubes to take up space. A typical 9- or 10-foot inflatable has an interior beam of only 27 inches, while our hard dinghy has an interior beam of 50 inches. In one area the inflatable wins the comparison, however. Johnson Outdoor rates this dinghy's capacity at 480 pounds, and I think that is about right. A comparable inflatable will be rated at something like 800 pounds capacity.

### Not self-bailing

Another disadvantage of the WaterTender is that it is not self-bailing. Moreover, since the reserve flotation is in the seats, it cannot be modified to be self-bailing. This eliminates towing it in anything more than benign conditions. I am not a big fan of towing a dinghy in rough stuff anyway; it is better to haul it aboard and not have to worry about it.

A hard dinghy is more easily driven than a comparable inflatable. Our little 8-hp outboard will get us up on a plane with both of us aboard. My GPS says I am doing 15 knots when alone. For the same reasons, the hard boat is more easily rowed as well. We have proper oarlocks instead of the rubber ones found on some inflatables, and the boat glides easily under oars.

We have noticed rust weeping from under the rubbing strip. I guess the fasteners that attach the liner to the hull are corroding. It is unsightly, but so far we haven't detected any separation. Since we are the second owners, we have no idea how long the boat has been in use.

Polyethylene will not bond to epoxy or any other glue that I know of, but you can still modify it. I made an anchor locker. I got a round plastic hatch and cut a hole in the front seat. I found a big block of rigid foam inside. A sharp knife allowed me to cut the foam into pieces small enough to remove through the hole. I added

a cleat. Having access to the interior allowed me to get to nuts on the back and through-bolt the cleat. My newly created anchor locker holds 100 feet of  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch nylon rode and a folding anchor.


### Dinghy dining

One night we attended a potluck gathering on the beach with several other cruising couples. There wasn't any place to set up on the wide beach, so we put our little barbecue on the foredeck of our beached dinghy. Because it has three spacious seats, the others put their contributions in the dinghy, which became our buffet table.

In the tropics, the sun really beats you up on long dinghy trips. Before we left home, we had a canvas maker bend a couple of  $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch stainless tubes for us to make the bows for a Bimini for our dinghy. We took the bows to a welder and had  $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch rods welded to the ends of the tubes. These rods fit in the oarlocks. Our dinghy has two sets of oarlocks, but I have noticed that the newer WaterTenders only have one set. However, if you wanted to follow our example, Johnson Outdoor sells additional sets. Our Bimini top is a rectangle of Sunbrella, which is hemmed at both ends and has a zipper at one end. The tubes go in the hems.

The tubing of the Bimini also provided a site for a pole holder. I got some PVC tubing and attached it with a banding tool, although hose clamps would work just as well. Of course, there are many commercially available pole holders that attach to tubing.

Inflatables are wonderfully soft and easy on the hull of your boat. We were worried that the hard dinghy would chafe and make marks on our hull, but the soft plastic rub strip has not done so. However, it is noisy when it bumps against the hull so a couple of fenders solve that problem.

I have done some research and found a similar boat by Pelican International. The Scorpion 10 is 11 inches longer, 6 inches wider, and weighs the same as the WaterTender. Moreover, it has a self-bailing drain. The price is comparable; I would probably go with this boat if I were going to replace our present dinghy. The problem is, ours just won't wear out. 

*Bob Steadman and Kaye Nottbusch have been cruising from Los Angeles to the Caribbean over the past three years. Bob is a professional cinematographer and the two have produced a DVD, Cruising with Bettie. It is available from TheSailingChannel.com*

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ANYONE WHO SPENDS time looking at old sailboats soon figures out that boats with Clarke Ryder's name on them are held in high esteem. His company, the C. E. Ryder Corporation, employed as many as 100 people during its relatively brief life in Bristol, Rhode Island. The most memorable of the boats were the Southern Cross and Sea Sprite model lines, although he was subcontracted to build many others, such as the Eastward Ho and Sonar. The designers Clarke Ryder hired were a veritable who's who of American naval architects that included Thomas Gillmer, Bill Luders, and Carl Alberg.

John Vigor's wonderful book, *Twenty Small Sailboats To Take You Anywhere*, features the Southern Cross 31. And Ferenc Máté cannot say enough about the Southern Crosses in his book, *Best Boats To Build or Buy*.

### Entering the boat business

Clarke Ryder attended Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, on an NROTC (Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps) scholarship. Recently graduated and freshly married, Ensign Ryder found himself visiting Cuba on the aircraft carrier USS *Saratoga* to participate in the Cuban missile crisis. Later, while finishing his service in Philadelphia, he wrote to Drake Sparkman, the brokerage side of the prestigious New York design firm Sparkman

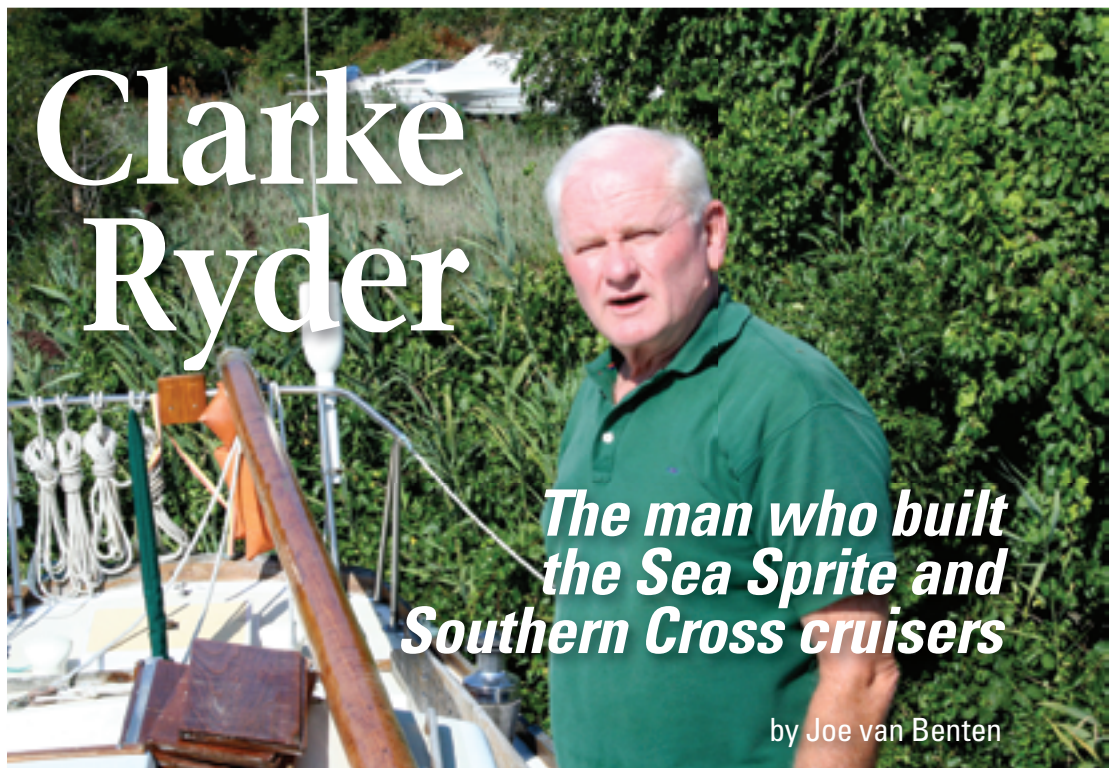
& Stephens, expressing his interest in boatbuilding. Drake wrote a nice letter back telling Clarke that he had two sons — one a priest and one in the liquor business — and both were doing better than he was. Undaunted, Clarke ran an ad in *Yachting* magazine expressing his desire to enter the boatbuilding industry. He was promptly hired as production foreman at Bristol Yachts, founded by Clint Pearson after he left Pearson Yachts in 1964.

The Bristol years were good ones for Clarke Ryder. Clint was serious about building with the new material called fiberglass and did mountains of testing. The boats were laid up in two molds. Then the hulls and decks were bolted together and the seams tabbed. Early on, there was a serious leaking problem with some 23-foot Sea Sprites. Beyond tracking down and fix-

ing the problem, Clint jack-hammered the factory floor and installed a tank to test the boats for leaks before they left the factory.

In 1969 Clint asked Clarke to partner with him in a company that would be a spinoff of Bristol Yachts, concentrating on industrial fiberglass parts. It was called the C. E. Ryder Corporation. Their first customer was Bristol Yachts. At one point, however, they weren't making money and Clarke had a huge receivable with Bristol. Clint suggested that Clarke buy a boat from Bristol as a method of helping Bristol finance the Ryder payroll. Instead, Clarke purchased Clint's half of the enterprise for \$7,200.

By 1974 the company had wandered back into building boats. Early projects included building the Eldredge-McInnis-designed Eastward Ho 24 and



# Clarke Ryder

*The man who built the Sea Sprite and Southern Cross cruisers*

by Joe van Bente

## Sea Sprite 23

**Designer:** Carl Alberg  
**LOA:** 22 feet 6 inches  
**LWL:** 16 feet 3 inches  
**Beam:** 7 feet 0 inches  
**Draft:** 3 feet 0 inches  
**Displacement:** 3,350 pounds  
**Ballast:** 1,475 pounds  
**Sail area:** 247 square feet  
**Displ./LWL ratio:** 349  
**Sail area/displ. ratio:** 17.7  
**PHRF:** 273

## Sea Sprite 27/28

**Designer:** Bill Luders  
**LOA:** 28 feet 0 inches  
**LWL:** 20 feet 0 inches  
**Beam:** 8 feet 10 inches  
**Draft:** 4 feet 3 inches  
**Displacement:** 7,600 pounds  
**Ballast:** 3,600 pounds  
**Sail area:** 340 square feet  
**Displ./LWL ratio:** 424  
**Sail area/displ. ratio:** 14.1  
**PHRF:** 246

## Sea Sprite 30

**Designer:** Bill Luders  
**LOA:** 30 feet 0 inches  
**LWL:** 22 feet 0 inches  
**Beam:** 9 feet 6 inches  
**Draft:** 4 feet 9 inches  
**Displacement:** 10,000 pounds  
**Ballast:** 4,100 pounds  
**Sail area:** 425 square feet  
**Displ./LWL ratio:** 419  
**Sail area/displ. ratio:** 14.7  
**PHRF:** 225

## Sea Sprite 34

**Designer:** Bill Luders  
**LOA:** 34 feet 0 inches  
**LWL:** 24 feet 0 inches  
**Beam:** 10 feet 3 inches  
**Draft:** 5 feet 0 inches  
**Displacement:** 12,800 pounds  
**Ballast:** 5,000 pounds  
**Sail area:** 524 square feet  
**Displ./LWL ratio:** 250  
**Sail area/displ. ratio:** 15.3  
**PHRF:** 192



**Clarke Ryder hired top-name naval architects to design his line of Sea Sprite and Southern Cross cruising sailboats. Good looks and quality construction explain their continuing popularity.**

31 for the Portsmouth Yacht Company, headed by Jack Bagley. These were great boats: salty and well received by the boating community. At the same time Clarke was molding hulls and other fiberglass parts for the Sea Sprite 23, which was being finished by the Wickford Shipyard. In 1975 Clarke bought the Sea Sprite business from Wickford and formed a new division, mostly a marketing entity.

Carl Alberg had designed the Sea Sprite. Clarke called him and asked what he would take for the design rights. Carl, unaccustomed to builders being concerned about royalties, asked for and was paid \$1,000. The Sea Sprite 23 became a success for the young company, and it didn't hurt that one was sailed across the Atlantic Ocean singlehanded by a young man named Robert Gainer, who figured in Ryder's advertising.

Three hundred 23s were built during its production run. This success inspired Clarke to develop bigger Sea Sprites. Carl Alberg had retired, so Clarke looked around and commissioned Bill Luders to design the Sea Sprite 27, 28, 30, and 34.

### The Southern Cross 31

The Southern Cross series was born as a marketing scheme to compete with the Westsail 32, an even heavier cruiser that was selling like hotcakes. A national magazine had run a feature on the Westsail and, as a result, it was taking the factory 18 months to fill orders. The Westsails were also being sold as bare hulls for owner completion. During the hippie, counter-culture days of the 1970s, the yen to "get away from it all" helped sell these solid seaworthy boats. Another popular bluewater cruiser at the time was

the Seawind ketch, designed by Tom Gillmer for the Allied Boat Company in Catskill, New York. The Seawind was introduced in 1969 and had a 12-year production run of 150 boats.

Looking for something similar, Clarke commissioned Tom Gillmer to design the Southern Cross 31. These days a Southern Cross 31 on the used sailboat market costs three or four times as much as the typical 30-foot

sailboat. The reason is pedigree. (A profile of Tom Gillmer appears in the July 2002 issue of *Good Old Boat*.) The Southern Crosses were inspired by Northern European workboats. The double-ended hull, full keel, outboard rudder, and cutter rig give it a "take-me-anywhere" look. The 31 weighs in at 13,600 pounds. A respectable Bristol 30 weighs 8,000 pounds. The 31 sports eight opening bronze portlights and



Designed by Thomas Gillmer, the Southern Cross 31 is a heavy double-ender capable of blue-water voyaging. *Scoundrel* is owned by Ed Mustra, who sails her in the waters off New Jersey. She was built in 1979.

ONNE VAN DER WAL

## Resources

<<http://www.southerncross-boats.org>>  
<<http://www.seasprites.com>>

two opening hatches. There is also a nifty vertical anchor locker built into the deck.

The Southern Crosses were built with Airex-cored hulls in which two layers of fiberglass sandwich a layer of foam. This made for a lighter hull and a boat that was less prone to condensation problems in the cabin. The foam also served as sound-deadening insulation between the waves and the cabin. The method was not used on the decks because of concern about the foam reacting to heat on deck and a lack of stiffness.

About half the Southern Cross 31s went out of the Bristol, Rhode Island, plant on what was called the owner-completion program in which buyers purchased a hull with all the exterior fittings, but finished out the interior themselves. Some of these were done beautifully and some were not.

Tom Gillmer then designed the Southern Cross 28, a boat that was tender and required additional ballast to sail well. One 28 recently completed a solo circumnavigation, skippered by grandmother Donna Lange. Eventually, the model line included the Southern Cross 35, 39, and 41. Of these, the 31 was the only boat with a full keel.

### Other projects

Clarke's reputation for quality and his collegial nature brought in lots of interesting prototype work for boats that became famous. Garry Hoyt brought the Halsey Herreshoff-designed Freedom 40 to Clarke before he made his name as a marketer and innovator. Clarke built the molds and the first hull. Bruce Kirby of Laser fame



*Scot Free, a Sea Sprite 23, gleefully graces our cover. She is owned by Herb and Kristin Browne. Herb is at the tiller with their son, Jim, working the sheets.*


ONNE VAN DER WAL

had Clarke build his 23-foot Sonar, and former employee Gary Lanigan brought the Ted Brewer-designed Quickstep 24.

The sailboat industry tanked in the 1980s. The entire industry turned out only 4,000 units a year. Clarke says the auxiliary sailboat market has never been a very big market and pretty soon everyone who wanted one had one. The product never wore out. There were plenty of cheaper boats on the used market. And there was a limit to the number of available moorings and affordable slips. Four thousand new boats a year was a lot for the no-growth mooring business.

The C. E. Ryder Corporation lasted a few years longer than Pearson Yachts, Cal, O'Day, and Columbia Yachts, all of which went out of business in the mid- to late 1980s. Making Black Watch powerboats and doing molding work for Boston Whaler helped. Ultimately though, the boatbuilding enterprise

was too capital-intensive to survive. Clarke closed up shop in 1990.

Today, Clarke is a successful yacht broker, specializing in boats he built. Last summer he singlehanded a Sea Sprite from Maine to Rhode Island. It is safe to say he has a couple trips to Bermuda left in him. In reflecting on the boatbuilding industry, he says the owner of a Hinckley would never consider owning an O'Day, but he and the other builders saw the brand differences as being much smaller and had more respect for products of lesser status than the public did. That is a pretty generous statement for a guy who worked at or near the top of the game. 

*Joe van Bente has operated a shop in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, building handmade furniture for the past 29 years <<http://www.vanbenten.com>>. Last year he purchased a 1977 Bristol 30, which he sails with his wife, Sarah, out of Pocasset on Buzzard's Bay.*

### Southern Cross 28

**Designer:** Bill Luders  
**LOA:** 28 feet 0 inches  
**LWL:** 20 feet 0 inches  
**Beam:** 8 feet 10 inches  
**Draft:** 4 feet 3 inches  
**Displacement:** 7,600 pounds  
**Ballast:** 3,600 pounds  
**Sail area:** 378 square feet  
**Displ./LWL ratio:** 424  
**Sail area/displ. ratio:** 15.7  
**PHRF:** 246

### Southern Cross 31

**Designer:** Thomas Gillmer  
**LOA:** 34 feet 6 inches  
**LOD:** 31 feet 0 inches  
**LWL:** 25 feet 0 inches  
**Beam:** 9 feet 6 inches  
**Draft:** 4 feet 7 inches  
**Displacement:** 13,600 pounds  
**Ballast:** 5,600 pounds  
**Sail area:** 447 square feet  
**Displ./LWL ratio:** 389  
**Sail area/displ. ratio:** 12.7  
**PHRF:** 252

### Southern Cross 35

**Designer:** Thomas Gillmer  
**LOA:** 35 feet 0 inches  
**LWL:** 28 feet 0 inches  
**Beam:** 11 feet 5 inches  
**Draft:** 4 feet 11 inches  
**Displacement:** 17,710 pounds  
**Ballast:** 5,750 pounds  
**Sail area (cutter):** 632 square feet  
**Displ./LWL ratio:** 360  
**Sail area/displ. ratio:** 14.9  
**PHRF:** 177

### Southern Cross 39

**Designer:** Thomas Gillmer  
**LOA:** 39 feet 0 inches  
**LWL:** 31 feet 0 inches  
**Beam:** 12 feet 1 inch  
**Draft:** 5 feet 6 inches  
**Displacement:** 21,000 pounds  
**Ballast:** 7,600 pounds  
**Sail area (cutter):** 835 square feet  
**Displ./LWL ratio:** 315  
**Sail area/displ. ratio:** 17.6  
**PHRF:** 144



# A good old electrical system

## Be cautious about adding new components

by Phillip Reid

A BOAT'S ELECTRICAL SYSTEM GETS ATTENTION pretty early in a restoration or refit. Most of us who are fixing up older sailboats figure we'll make some changes in the system, particularly since today's technology offers us choices that weren't available when our boats were built. Therein lies the potential problem: there's so much equipment out there and so many ways to set things up it can be overwhelming.

I haven't forgotten thumbing through the catalogs and books trying to figure out what to do and what not to do. In the end, I settled on a combination of old and new. I was able to make choices I could live with later because I got a clear picture of my wants and needs before buying a bunch of expensive boat stuff and installing it all.

No two systems will be exactly alike because the condition of each boat's equipment and the needs and desires of each owner will never be the same. But perhaps I can help you ground this stuff in reality by sorting through your options on paper.

First, get your priorities straight. Electricity is potentially dangerous. Even 12-volt DC current is capable of starting a very respectable fire or giving you a good shock. More insidiously, when improperly directed and contained, it's good at setting up stray-current corrosion that can do quick and catastrophic damage to metal components in contact with the water — most crucially, the metal through-hulls that keep the water out of your boat.

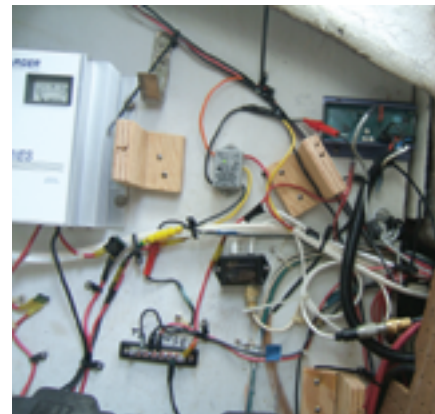
This isn't meant to scare you, but rather to discourage you from taking a casual attitude toward any boat's DC system; even the most basic system on the smallest trailersailer isn't a toy.

### Do your homework

Before you can evaluate, repair, or upgrade your boat's electrical system, do



In the port cockpit locker, at left, are two flooded-cell 105Ah deep-cycle batteries. Above the batteries is a pegboard panel covering the solar and alternator regulators. An enlarged hole in the panel makes it possible to observe the status of the solar regulator. Outboard of the panel is an AC shorepower charger. All three sources of charging — solar, alternator, and AC shorepower — are together with the shortest possible cable runs. With the panel removed, at right, you can see the alternator regulator in the upper right-hand corner and the solar panel regulator to the left and down.



your homework. Read a good book on the subject (there are plenty written for the novice), check out the relevant chapters in a recent edition of *Chapman's*, and talk to experienced owners. A working knowledge of household wiring is helpful in understanding the basic concepts, but what's acceptable for household wiring doesn't cut it on a boat.

That's not marine marketing talk. That's basic safety. Boats move, vibrate, flex, and expose their equipment to a perpetually damp and corrosive environment. Also, DC equipment must be inherently different from its AC counterparts. For example, DC wiring is heavier than AC wiring. Understanding marine batteries and their amp-hours, guidelines for wire size, type, connector types and how to install them, distribution panels, and the rest of the equipment is a necessary prerequisite to making the decisions I'm talking about. Once you have that basic knowledge and are ready to start translating it into

the reality of your boat, you'll find some real-world clarification helpful.

If, like me, you want to keep things simple, while nonetheless making your boat more comfortable than a tent, then what you read in the books and catalogs is likely to set off your Complicated Alarm. Different batteries for engine starting and house loads, different charging regimens, multi-stage chargers, regulators, big alternators, combiners, isolators, transformers, multiple switches — it all adds up to a lot of gear, a lot of wiring, and a lot of money. At the end of your stack of reading material, you may be left asking, "But what do I *really* need?"

Here's where the basic knowledge you've acquired and a clear-headed evaluation of your needs will see you through. Let's step through the process. My wife and I outfitted our 1977 Pearson 28 with the intention of keeping her permanently. (How long you intend to keep a boat is a major



One of two solar panels, at left — this one's a 55-watt Kyocera. The second panel, at right, is an old Arco 51-watt. Each was bought on eBay for less than \$300. Placement of larger solar panels on a small boat is a serious head-scratcher. There's no perfect solution, but they're worth it.

on it behind a 27-foot boat, but you'd be hard-pressed to charge them once they'd finally gone down.

You can replace a stock automotive-type alternator with a bigger marine one, put on a smart regulator, and charge those big boys with a vengeance. That's fine, so long as your engine can handle the load of that honkin' alternator. However, I'm leery of asking my engine to do things way beyond what it was designed to do. After talking to Atomic 4 experts, I replaced my stock alternator with the biggest one I was comfortable with and a smart, programmable regulator matched to that alternator by the manufacturer. Other Atomic 4 owners confirmed that this equipment made a big difference in how fast and how completely the batteries would get charged with no discernible negative effect on the engine.

factor in deciding how much work and money to put into her.)

## Batteries

Our boat came with no batteries. She had a built-in plywood battery box with room for two large batteries. There were slots for running hold-down straps. I consider this setup to be a necessity. Two batteries for a cruising boat is a practical minimum, and a secure berth for the heavy, acid-filled things is imperative when the weather gets rough. If you don't find a sturdy battery box with a hold-down clamp or strap in good condition, make one. But first, consider where it should go. Batteries are heavy enough to affect trim noticeably. If you get flooded-cell batteries, put them in those black plastic boxes with lids and strap those down. Boxes are not necessary with AGM or gel-cell batteries.

Speaking of battery types, I went with flooded-cell batteries because they were the cheapest and have a long service life when properly charged. With any battery, quality matters more than the type of battery. They are not created equal. I bought West Marine brand because I had read good reports of their quality and service life and they were reasonably priced. You should expect about five years' service from quality flooded-cell batteries if you charge them properly. In fact, they should still be working fine when you trade them in. They require periodic checking for water level, but if they're being properly charged, they should lose little, if any, water. (If they're being "cooked," though, you'll know because you have to add lots of water to them often.

What about deep-cycle, starting, and dual-purpose? This gets confus-

ing when you start reading that these types of batteries need different charging regimens. You find yourself reading about systems with two alternators with two regulators. If you're not interested in setting up an engineer's playground, this can get discouraging.

## Modest draw

If you have a small engine — especially a small gasoline engine like my Atomic 4 — your engine needs only modest cold cranking amps to start. Your boat engine is likely to be 10- to 30-hp, unlike the one in your car, which is

**“I went with flooded-cell batteries because they were the cheapest and have a long service life when properly charged.”**

probably 100- to 250-hp. A good deep-cycle battery is certainly more than adequate to start small boat engines. Since you can combine more than one battery by moving a switch, you're covered. My two deep-cycle batteries are exactly the same and I bought them at the same time. So they're getting the same charging regimen — tailored to their needs — from one alternator and regulator. And I'm getting all the advantages of true deep-cycle batteries. Most important are their reserves of amp-hours, which are the largest for a given size and weight of battery.

I first had to decide how many deep-cycle batteries to get and of what size. Both questions are answered, not by the amount of power you'd like to have, but by the amount of charging power you can reasonably expect to provide the batteries. You could tow a barge with 50 105-amp-hour batteries

## Practical limit

The size of that alternator — meaning its maximum rated output — is going to set a practical limit on the amount of battery power you should carry. The books you're reading will give you a rule of thumb on those numbers. It doesn't make much sense to burn half a tank of fuel to charge your batteries.

With my new 65-amp alternator bolted on, I was comfortable selecting two 105-amp-hour deep-cycle batteries. Abiding by the conventional wisdom for maximizing battery life by not draining them beyond 50 percent, that gave me enough reserve power to relax and run my lights, fans, stereo, and instruments.

In general, boats running only these accessories will be just fine with two adequately-sized batteries. This is especially true if you replace high-draw cabin lights, anchor lights, nav lights,



and fans with the new lower-draw versions, which can cut the power demand by a factor of 10. That's worth the money in my book. (Remember, this is a "keeper boat" for us.) Early in this process, I adopted a general policy of "wherever possible, reduce demand rather than increase supply," because adding to the electrical supply is expensive, fairly complex, and bulky no matter how you opt to do it.

As a general rule, two batteries are fine unless you add refrigeration. Then you will almost certainly need an additional house battery and the means to recharge it.

### Switches, combiners, etc.

Let's talk about battery switches, combiners, isolators, and alternator protection devices. If your older boat has a basic electrical system, it probably has a traditional round, red, battery-selector safety switch. These things are heavy-duty and easy to understand and use. They allow you to rearrange your DC electrical supply without interrupting service, and they make it easy to charge your batteries at the same time. Making all your reserve power available for cold-cranking the engine requires a turn of the switch.

They are not idiot-proof, however, which is why they've come under criticism from the boating press. If you turn them to OFF while the engine is running, you can fry the diodes in your alternator. If you leave the switch in the BOTH or ALL position too long, you can drain both your batteries and be unable to crank your engine. You can read about solutions to these potential problems that involve multiple switches, combiners, isolators, and devices to prevent diode-frying if the switch is turned to OFF with the engine running.

There's nothing wrong with any of that. The drawbacks are complexity — more cabling and connections and devices — which means more money, more labor for installation, and more parts to potentially fail and disable your electrical system.

Know yourself and your crew. I don't have small children. I am conscientious and careful by nature, and I trained myself to move the battery switch from the ALL position as soon as the engine is cut off. I kept my original battery switch after determining that it was still good by moving through the different

positions slowly while watching a cabin light. If it doesn't blink as you move the switch, the contacts are still good.

### Lucky escape

By mistake, my wife once turned the battery switch to OFF while the engine was running (she meant to put it on BOTH). I had a cow, but the alternator was fine. (Fortunately, it was the old alternator.) She definitely now knows not to do that, and she and I are the only ones who will ever touch the thing.

With this setup, a backup means of

starting the engine is in order. One option with small engines is a hand-crank — if there's room to use it in your engine room or cabin. Talk to experienced owners of your boat and engine. For me, given the clearances around the flywheel, that wasn't an option. So I waited until one went on sale and bought a jump-pack — a self-contained starting battery in a hard case with a pair of permanently attached jumper cables and an on-off switch. These cost \$100 or less, and are compact, portable, and rechargeable (mine is

## Useful tips

by Jerry Powlas

Here are a few standard guidelines for electrical system design and use.

- There is no electrical reason for a dedicated starting battery for diesels below about 40 horsepower. This guideline assumes all batteries are deep-cycle batteries.
- Limit your discharge to 50 percent of the battery's rated amp-hour capacity.
- It is normally impractical to recharge a battery above about 80 percent of full charge with the engine alternator unless the engine is running for some other reason. The rate of charge acceptance is simply too slow to justify the engine run time. Naturally, wind, solar, and AC shorepower chargers are not subject to this limitation.
- If the batteries are operated between 50 and 80 percent of full charge, the total rated capacity of your battery bank should be three to four times the normal battery drain expected between periods of recharge.
- The alternator's rated capacity should be 30 to 40 percent of the rated capacity of the batteries being charged. Less capacity than that will lengthen the recharge time significantly, but more capacity will not shorten it significantly.
- Sustained discharge rates (like powering an inverter) should not exceed 25 percent of the battery's rated capacity. For brief high-current events with an inverter, you can split the load three ways

by paralleling the batteries (set the switch to ALL) and running the engine above idle.

- The regulator set points of the charging systems must be adjusted to the battery type. Gel cells are particularly sensitive to maximum charging voltage. Wet cells and AGMs are less so. Wet cells are damaged by being left in a continual state of discharge. Top them off once a month. AGMs and gels are less sensitive. Wet cells may benefit from being equalized. AGMs and gels are damaged by equalization.
- The maximum charge rate (acceptance) of a wet cell battery in amps is approximately equal to the number of amp hours the battery is discharged (below full charge). The acceptance of a gel battery is similar, and the acceptance of an AGM is roughly double the rate of a wet cell for the same level of discharge. This means that AGMs can better exploit the high charge rates of high-capacity alternators and will generally recharge more rapidly even with the same alternator.
- Charging systems that sense voltage at the battery, instead of at the charging device, recharge much more rapidly because their regulators offset the voltage drop in the connecting cables. This is particularly important during the high current phase of recharging. Three-stage regulators recharge more rapidly and have a tendency to extend battery life.



**In the photo at left, pictured from left to right: a 12-volt DC receptacle with a charging base for a handheld VHF just below it; a GFCI AC receptacle, connected to an AC shorepower breaker panel just above it; and a main battery safety switch, the old-fashioned kind. If you can switch from one position to the next without any perceptible interruption in, say, the glow of a light fixture, the switch is still good. The Balmar 65-amp alternator on the Atomic 4, at right. Balmar sells this and the ARS-4 regulator as a kit specifically intended for the Atomic 4.**

supposed to be topped off quarterly). They have indicator lights to instantly tell you the state of charge. They have plenty of power for smaller engines.

### Household current

Shorepower is another term for an AC system. In the U.S., that's 110-volt household current. A basic shorepower setup includes an inlet (use the more expensive all-metal ones since the lids on the plastic ones break with normal abuse), a small breaker panel, a dual receptacle just like the ones in your house, and an AC-powered battery charger (this is useful, but not necessary). I like mine for two reasons. It's another fast means of charging my batteries if I need it and it gives me an easy way to run power tools at the dock for work projects.

But all is not so simple here either. Read the books and magazines and you start reading about stray-current corrosion, galvanic isolators, and isolation transformers — issues and devices that have to do with faulty shorepower systems in marinas and on other boats and their potential effects on your boat. These issues are real. I used to stay plugged in to shorepower. I started noticing my zincs disappearing quickly and my bronze underwater metal parts turning pinkish — evidence of corrosion caused by electricity.

I started looking into possible remedies. Galvanic isolators weren't all that expensive, but there seemed to be no consensus among experts as to their effectiveness. Isolation transformers were universally applauded, but they were close to \$1,000 and heavy. For

that kind of money and labor investment, I could abandon my reliance on shorepower and go solar, which is what I ultimately wanted anyway. I bought two used big monocrystalline solar panels on eBay, some wiring, connectors, diodes, and a regulator from the helpful folks at Jack Rabbit Marine, some cool stainless-steel rail/stanchion mounts from DRB Innovators, and hooked up 106 watts of solar power for a little under a grand.

### Not used much

It was a straightforward installation that works anywhere without my having to do anything. I'm glad I have shorepower for the options it gives me, but I don't use it much now. Solar is great, but solar panels are big and bulky and hard to mount. So on smaller boats, at least, you'll be strictly limited as to output. But my solar panels keep our batteries topped off, and during the day they can certainly keep up with our stereo and fans.

What's a basic shorepower setup? A 30-amp cord, 30-amp 3-breaker panel with main breaker and reverse polarity indicator, and a 3-stage battery charger with adequate wiring will do fine for smaller vessels. (More and more marinas are going to 50-amp hookups, so it might be wise to carry an adapter if you're going to visit a lot of marinas.) Our Charles 15-amp 3-stage charger has worked fine for seven years. A quality shorepower system like ours will cost less than a grand. If you're not going to spend time in marinas, it's not worth it. What's also not worth it is a sub-par 110-volt AC system; household

current is lethal. Do it right.

What about 4-stage chargers and equalizing flooded-cell batteries? Just trade your batteries in every five years for new ones of equal or better quality.

### Wiring principles

When it comes to wiring, I've operated on three principles: if it ain't broke, don't fix it; if it is broke, do fix it; and never skimp on wiring and wiring hardware. First, make a thorough evaluation of the boat's existing wiring. Obtain original schematics and compare them to what you find. (Get some advice if you have trouble understanding the schematic.) How good a job did the builder do? Is it neat? Good quality? Protected from chafe? If it's good, leave it and count your blessings.

Corroded terminals and wire ends should be replaced; they cause drastic voltage drop and resistance, which is a fire hazard. Heat-shrink connectors make good sense. Learn to install them properly. (You can also put heat-shrink tubing over conventional terminals.) Even a keep-it-simple sailor should have a top-quality pair of crimpers and strippers and know how to use them.

In an older boat with multiple previous owners, you may find second-rate wiring add-ons. Make sure every circuit is on an adequate breaker. If the boat needs a second panel, install one. Fortunately, boats built by reputable builders in the 1970s or later are likely to have good original wiring. You may end up ripping out amateurish add-ons, but that is easier than rewiring the entire boat.



## Fine wiring job

Pearson did a fine job wiring our boat. I've inspected it all and replaced corroded terminals — mostly grounding and bonding wire terminals in wet areas like the bilge — and I replaced the battery cabling when I found corrosion running up under the jacketing.

Other than that, I've left it alone. They didn't use heat-shrink or tinned copper wire then, so there's going to be some age-related corrosion at the terminals. Be especially alert when inspecting the wiring on and around the engine — look for heat and vibration damage such as cracks in the jacketing and loose connections.

The main negative ground — probably a black battery cable bolted to the engine block — must have a clean, tight connection or you will lose all electrical power someday, probably when you try to start the engine. This connection is especially prone to loosening by vibration, so pay special attention to it. I used thread locker on the bolt and haven't had any problems since.

## Distribution panels

As long as your distribution panel is free of corrosion and bad switches and it has an adequate number of circuits for the equipment you have or intend to install, keep it (along with spare fuses for all the circuits). I've replaced a couple of switches on our original panel and cleaned the connections on the back, but that's it.

One option I noticed recently is small add-on panels that control the nav lights, thus getting those circuits off the main panel and freeing them up for other things. That seems like a low-cost, common-sense option to me, and one I'll look into if I decide to add any more circuits to the boat.

## Meters

The consensus seems to be that full-function battery monitors like the Link 10 and 20 are the things to have for battery monitoring. For serious cruising, I will probably acquire one, but they are expensive. Right now, I get by with a small hardwired Datel digital voltmeter, accurate to within 1/100th of a volt. That level of accuracy is necessary for a voltmeter to be very useful. The meter was \$30 and easy to install.

Voltmeters and ammeters are only useful if you know how to read them,

**The 120-volt, 30-amp shorepower service and breaker panel and the original 12-volt DC distribution panel. The anchor-light switch is off the panel. Between the two panels is a Datel digital voltmeter. It cost only \$30 and has served well for five years.**

but it's worth acquiring that knowledge. (Your engine probably came with an ammeter.) With my simple system and modest demands, I'm perfectly happy with what my voltmeter tells me. I disconnected the ammeter when I got the bigger alternator, as the alternator's max output is higher than the ammeter's rating. Voltmeters are more informative than ammeters and, in one sense, obviate ammeters since they also tell you whether your alternator is putting out what it should.

## Inverters

If you don't have shorepower and don't intend to add it, you might consider putting in an inverter to run power tools and your laptop. Another option is the inverter/charger which doubles as an AC charger and inverter. That

**“But my solar panels keep our batteries topped off, and during the day they can certainly keep up with our stereo and fans.”**

might be a good way to go if you want shorepower and also want to be able to use power tools away from the dock. Since I already have an AC charger and shorepower, I just keep a pocket inverter on board for the laptop. It plugs into the DC receptacle in the galley. There's also a weatherproof receptacle in the cockpit for the spotlight and cockpit light.

## Routine use

Our routine is to leave the battery switch on 2, so one battery is on duty to power the automatic bilge pump, keep the cell phone charged, and provide power for the emergency high-water alarm. When we get to the boat, we put the battery switch on ALL as we prepare to cold-start the engine. The switch stays on ALL as long as the engine is on, so the charging current is flowing to both batteries. If we have anything running — usually the stereo — when we cut the engine, we put the



switch on 2. That way, only one battery is open to draw. When we're ready to start the engine again, the switch goes back to ALL. We have to go below to sniff the bilge anyway, so it's no trouble.

When overnighting, we never need both batteries for house use. I haven't ever done this, but if I ever got uncomfortable with how much we were drawing Battery 2 down, I could switch to Battery 1 for a short time, knowing it had ample reserve. In the worst-case scenario — a battery failure — I have the jump-pack. If that fails, I have sails and anchors.

The old components — two batteries, a traditional battery safety switch, and original wiring and panels in good condition — still serve many sailors well. They're nicely augmented by some new technology, without getting too complicated — beefier alternators for faster charging, smart regulators to make the most out of your engine running time, solar panels and the regulators that keep them from cooking your batteries, and straightforward shorepower setups for utilizing shorepower when available.


Together, it adds up to a durable and reliable approach, and the investment, while not insignificant for the would-be cruiser on a budget, should have a long-term payoff. ▴

*Phillip Reid, his wife, Andie, and certain other miscreants sail a 1977 Pearson 28, Miss Bohicket, out of Wilmington, North Carolina. They finished a five-year refit in the fall of 2005.*

# From Iraq with love

## Desert soldier buys Internet boat 7,000 miles away

by Gary Lindsay



Gary gazes over the compound where he was stationed in western Iraq, probably thinking about home and the pleasures of a good sail. Since writing this story, he returned to Alabama, where his wife, Sheryl, and *Serenade*, his new Bayfield 32, shown on facing page, were waiting. Their home waters are the Gulf Coast of Alabama and Northwest Florida.

IN THE MILITARY YOU RARELY DO ANYTHING without first conducting a risk assessment that consists of a matrix listing possible hazards and mitigating factors. Despite being stationed in western Iraq with the U.S. military, I embarked on one of my boldest adventures without one.

Spellbound by visions of sparkling waves and billowing sails, I threw caution to the wind and purchased a used 32-foot cruising sailboat sight unseen through the Internet. The purchase was further complicated by the fact that the boat was nearly 500 miles away from my home on the Alabama Gulf Coast, and I, even farther — some 7,000 miles — separated by lots of blue water and nine time zones.

I have been obsessed with sailing since I was 13 and first daysailed in a 16-foot Flying Fish. Girls rated only slightly higher on my list of obsessions. Heaven was the two together.

I had sold my previous boat, an older 25-foot Hunter sloop, a few months before deploying to western Iraq in July 2006. During deployment I sought refuge from the daily grind by perusing the online boat listing services whenever I was able ... dreaming about the next boat I was going to buy.

My wife, Sheryl, and I share the dream of many weekend sailors around the world: to purchase a sturdy sailing vessel capable of bluewater passages and to experience cruising to the horizon of our desires. Before I left the States, we had talked about waiting several years before we purchased our dream boat. Our children are in college and we both lead busy lives. But the dream buoyed me, and I thought, "It doesn't hurt to look."

So I set out on the Internet, during my downtime in Iraq, to find the best boat to fulfill our desires. As additional references I had packed along books by Lin and Larry Pardey and other sailors. The mail brought a bimonthly fix of *Good Old Boat* magazines to feed my thirst for sailing knowledge and escape.

### Nothing's perfect

What I found through an exhaustive analysis of boat listings, esteemed opinions of the world's greatest sailors, and my own preferences is this: there is no perfect boat. Some are better suited than others to cruising. Some are better built. But most boats can be turned into bluewater cruisers of a sort with enough effort and money. At this stage of our lives, Sheryl and I could

not afford something in the 36- to 42-foot range offered by one of the respected builders of proven cruisers. But with money I was saving, we could afford something smaller yet capable of open-water passages.

"To heck with delayed gratification," I thought. Life is short. It could end tomorrow, as I had too often been grimly reminded during wartime service in Iraq and Afghanistan. Part of my desire was purely selfish: I wanted a boat waiting for me when I got home. Other soldiers buy a Harley as their

reward when they return from deployment. I would buy a chariot of the seas.

Lin and Larry Pardey helped me decide. Their mantra is that a smaller boat is easier to handle, less expensive to buy and maintain, and can equal or surpass the seaworthiness of larger vessels. At the urging of these and other advocates of the "go smaller, go now" sailing set, I was ready to find our *Seraffyn*.

Sheryl and I had debated and pretty much arrived at shared conclusions about the type of boat we wanted. We favored more traditional looks and designs found on such hallmarks as the Cabo Ricos, Island Packets, and Cape Dorys. I preferred a shallow-draft, full-keel boat because of the thin waters of our home cruising grounds and future plans to visit the Bahamas and other shallow-water Caribbean haunts.

The cutter rig appealed to me partly because of its dashing looks and partly because it offered more sail combinations. We both thought having more than one head was a waste of space and potential maintenance trouble. On deck, we wanted bulwarks, wide sidedecks, a wheel, and seats you could sleep on in the cockpit. That's a lot to require of just one boat. And as a further challenge, the price had to be \$50,000 or less.



“I thought, ‘It doesn’t hurt to look.’ So I set out on the Internet, during my downtime in Iraq, to find the best boat to fulfill our desires.”

### Came to conclusions

After hours of browsing the Internet brokerage sites (Yachtworld.com is the best) and reading reviews and owners’ websites, I came to some conclusions. I initially liked the Pearson 365 because it has great accommodations and seemed well-built, but I was troubled by the V-drive from the engine to the propeller shaft and reported problems with tanks in the keel sumps. I loved the Shannon 28 with its classic charm and sterling reputation, but my wife thought it too small. I briefly toyed with the idea of a Gulf 32, a full-keel, pilothouse cutter still in production, but didn’t like the cockpit and the sliding hatch on the almost flush foredeck.

Finally, the lines of a Bayfield 32 caught my eye like the fetching smile of woman. The clipper bow and bold bowsprit spoke of oceans to conquer. Her cutter rig was versatile and a sight to behold under sail. A large foredeck, wide side decks, and an ample, well-drained, but not overly large, cockpit fit my criteria. The boat has a lot of brightwork, but despite the prospect of a lot of sanding and varnishing in our future, I liked the look. It even has a beautiful teak taffrail at the stern, which doubles as the base of the main-sheet traveler; a nice touch, I thought.

Bayfield, a Canadian manufacturer, had a reputation for sturdy, well-built boats. Ted Gozzard designed the 32 and other Bayfield boats before he went on to found Gozzard Yachts. The Bayfield company is no longer in business, having built its last boats in 1989 (see profile of Ted Gozzard, November 1999).

The Bayfield 32 appeared capable of offshore cruising and adequate as a liveaboard platform for a couple. And the price range was in our ballpark. As my interest in Bayfield 32s grew, I spent considerable time studying the offerings of this model on the Internet. I found two or three in Florida, not too far from home, that had been tricked out for extended cruising with every conceivable piece of equipment needed. But I wanted to outfit my own boat.

### Bare minimum

A modestly priced offering in Charleston caught my eye. It was a 1987 model with the bare minimum of equipment and electronics: a VHF, depth sounder, wind meter, and handheld GPS. But it

appeared to be well cared for and had an ivory hull with beautiful lines. It also had a 27-hp Yanmar, while most Bayfield 32s came equipped with a 15- or 20-hp motor. A photo of the boat under full sail imprinted itself upon my mind’s dream screen. She was named *Pleiades*, a constellation of stars I could see in Iraq’s night sky.

Through Peter Dodds, the broker at Charleston Yacht Sales, I found out more about the vessel. She had been stored on shore for nine months following the owners’ purchase of a new Island Packet. The seller was eager, if not downright anxious. I entertained thoughts of sailing her back to the Orange Beach/Pensacola area when I returned to the U.S. in late summer. As an alternative, I could have the boat hauled home by truck. Peter provided me with what turned out to be very accurate estimates of transport and preparation costs.

Ultimately, I made an offer that would allow me to spend the considerable sums it would take to transport the boat and still not exceed the boat’s retail value. The offer was accepted, so I discarded the idea of trying to deliver her to our home waters myself. I wasn’t yet familiar with the boat; I

didn’t have time to prepare; and the prospect of a 1,200-mile voyage during hurricane season was fairly daunting.

I researched yacht surveyors in the Charleston area and sought estimates. The quotes varied by as much as \$6 a boat foot. I looked at websites and studied the answers I received when I explained my situation. I had tapped my brother, Phil, who lives in Georgia to conduct the sea trial for me. I settled on David Hill of Carolina Yacht Services as my surveyor. His fees were reasonable, he expressed himself well during our email communications, and he was willing to work with my situation. He also had the proper certifications necessary for insurance and loan acceptance.

### Minor problems

David found the boat to be structurally sound with only a few minor problems that needed to be corrected. I finalized the deal, and we closed through the mail. I began making plans to get the boat home.

The broker’s estimate of \$3.50 a mile for transport was pretty darned close. One company submitted a bid almost \$500 less than the others. That made me wary. I checked out all the companies

**Continued on Page 78**





# Cruising with a camera

## Moviemaking for fun, family, and (perhaps) profit

by Greg and Jill Delezynski

**H**AVE YOU EVER WATCHED A MOVIE and commented, “I could have done better,” or “I would have done it this way?” Now it’s your turn. With today’s home video cameras and computers, you can make DVDs of your cruises to share your experiences with those who stayed at home and, possibly, to sell.

There must be more than a thousand ways to make your own movies. We found an easy and inexpensive way to get started that works for us. We have been recording our adventures and making DVDs since we started cruising in 2004. We use a Windows computer system, but the basics are the same for any computer. Allow us to add this warning: if you are not on good terms with your computer; if you are not a patient person when it comes

to dealing with your computer; or if you can’t tolerate a few failures during the early stages of a project, stop now! If you are comfortable with computers and want to proceed, remember this: do a “save file” and do it often.

The process of making a movie or DVD from your video can be broken down into three steps. First, get the video from your camera into the computer. Second, edit the video into a movie you want to watch. Third, put that movie onto a DVD disk or some other media so you can share it with others.

We decided when we were preparing to go cruising aboard *Guenivere*, our Nor’Sea 27, that we would not have room to collect a lot of souvenirs along the way. But we did have room for a couple of cameras. So we made the choice that photos and videos taken along the way would serve as our mementos of the places we visited. At the same time, we decided that digital was the way to go. Since we had a laptop on board for Internet access and backup navigation, why not use it to store and view the photos also?

We set off on our adventure and happily snapped hundreds of still photos and hours of video. Throughout our travels, friends and relatives asked us what cruising was like and what we were experiencing as we sailed. We sent photos home and posted as many as we could on our website, but we felt we weren’t conveying the full impact of how great it is out here. A still photo of dolphins frolicking in our bow wave did not impart the wonderment we felt.

### Managing the videos

We decided to look into video editing. We needed a way to manage all the videos and pictures we had already taken and those yet to come. And we needed to make use of the equipment we already had aboard and to refrain from adding too much more.

Once we arrived in La Paz, Mexico, we learned via the Internet that our workhorse computer — in addition to showing our still photos — could also be used to edit our videos. So we set about to teach ourselves how to edit videos and create movies.

We went to the Microsoft website and looked up the free Moviemaker software. If you have Windows XP with Service Pack 2, you may already have it on your computer. For us, it was a quick download and installation. Version 2 or higher is much better and easier to work with than Version 1. To see if your computer has what it takes to edit video, download a program called Belarc Advisor. Refer to the sidebar on Page 58 for information on this program.

By reading the requirements of Moviemaker, we discovered that we would need a computer that had a CPU with a speed better than 600 megahertz (MHz). Once we were sure our laptop was fast enough, we checked to see that it was running the Windows XP operating system and Service Pack 2. Then — as we were planning to send our videos home on a disk — we made sure that the CD/DVD drive in our laptop could write to disks as well as read them. We were in luck, our machine did all that and had some CPU speed to spare.

This is a sobering fact: it takes about 3.7 megabytes of hard-drive space per second of video. So make sure you have a *large* hard drive. If you do not have enough space on your internal hard drive, you can get an external hard drive. Most of the small ones

## Helpful hints

Here are a few hints to make your movie-making experience easier or faster.

- When editing, save your work often.
- Do not try to make a one-hour movie; make 12 five-minute movies that link together.
- Work the video first.
- Then adjust the sound.
- Do any narration last.

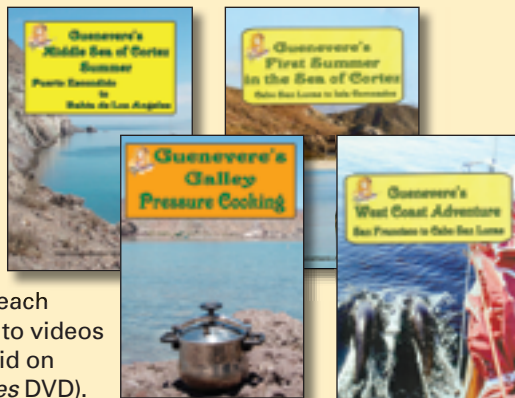
Each minute in one of our DVDs represents at least two hours’ work.



**Jill Delezynski narrates a section of one of the videos that she and her husband, Greg, have produced about their travels from San Francisco and beyond to the Baja on their Nor'Sea 27, *Guenevere*. Since the initial production was such a success, they have created three more and have further plans to make and sell DVDs as their global travels continue.**

## Special offer

For *Good Old Boat* readers, Greg and Jill are offering a special discount. Go to <http://www.svguenevere.com> to order any of their videos and use the discount code UK96DV6U. You will receive \$3.50 off the price of each video. This offer applies only to videos priced at \$10 or more (not valid on *Guenevere's Quiet Anchorages* DVD).



(up to 100 gigabytes) can be purchased for around \$100. A good idea is to find the type that uses a USB cable and is also powered by that USB cable.

### Firewire cable

We next found that a cable was required to get the video from the camcorder to the computer. We tried using a simple USB cable, but the sound was not transferred. We had video but no sound. We found that what is really needed is something called a Firewire, or "IEEE 1394," cable. But not just any Firewire cable will do. As it turns out, a Firewire cable can have at least two different types of end plugs.

Our camera has one type of Firewire connection, but our computer had no Firewire port. We solved this problem with a trip to the local computer store. They sold us what is called a PCMCIA card that fits in the oblong thin slot on the side of most laptops, including ours, and contains three Firewire ports. The cost was about \$30. Along with the PCMCIA card, the package also contained a free basic video-editing program. This gave us two programs to test and play with. As long as we were purchasing the card, we also bought the proper Firewire cable.

With card and cable in hand, we happily headed back to the boat and computer, thinking all was right with the world and that we only had an hour or so of work to do before the folks back home could share our joy. We still had much to learn.

Once we got back to the boat, the hardware setup was simple. We put the PCMCIA card in the laptop slot and turned on the laptop. Our computer recognized the card and did a quick installation. A disk with software and instructions was included in case the computer did not recognize the card.

Next, we plugged one end of the

Firewire cable into the PCMCIA card and the other into the camcorder. Then we turned on the camcorder to the "Play" or "VCR" setting. A window popped up on the screen asking us if we wanted to copy video to our computer using Moviemaker. Not sure of what we were doing, we clicked "No" and closed the window. We now know that if we had responded with a "Yes," the computer would have automatically launched the Moviemaker program all set to save the video to the computer.

with one of the basic editors and see how you like it. If it's not easy to use, you won't be out a lot of dollars. If you find one you like, they all seem to provide a credit if you decide to upgrade to a more comprehensive program.

And we initially thought this was going to be a fast process...

If you believe your video might sell on the open market, you are now in for yet another adventure. We decided to see if our DVD would sell by test marketing. We were fortunate enough

**“We would not have room to collect a lot of souvenirs along the way. But we did have room for a couple of cameras.”**

### Simple to use

Next we opened the Moviemaker program and found it was simple to use. On the left side of the screen are categories like the three steps we mentioned earlier: get the video, edit the video, and share the video. It also has a tips section that explains how everything plays together.

Once you have followed all the steps, if you are still with us — and if your computer is not out the window or in the trash — and furthermore if you have made a video that friends and family truly enjoy (they're not just being polite, are they?) it might be time to purchase one of the better video-editing programs. Most of the other programs range in price from less than \$50 to well over \$5,000, and they all work in about the same way. They all use the same basic three steps. The more you spend, the more control you'll have and the more complex the program will be.

There are a number of companies that have some very good video tools. Refer to the list in the sidebar. Start

to be in La Paz during a get-together called BayFest. The event offers games, seminars, and movies. That year the BayFest organizers wanted to show two movies. Our first production was chosen as one of the movies. In addition, we were allowed to sell copies on the day our movie was shown.

### Audience reactions

This was an opportunity we could not pass up. About 100 people would be watching our DVD. About 75 percent of the participants had not yet been up into the Sea of Cortez. We hoped that a few of these might want to purchase a copy in order to preview the area.


During the movie showing, we watched for audience reactions. We were glad we didn't hear any "Boos!" On the whole, it went very well and we got some good feedback from members of the audience.

Now for the surprise: we had hoped to sell a few copies to the new cruisers. As it turned out, we did sell a number of DVDs but not *one* to any

of the new people. Every sale was to someone who had already cruised the Sea of Cortez for at least one year and up to four years. Some who purchased a copy told us they wanted to send it home to show their family what cruising in this area is about. We considered

reviewed each with regard to cost and benefits and made our decision based on what we felt we needed. We made the best decision for ourselves but, if you decide to go this way, you'll need to make your own choice based on your needs.

someone else to make changes we did not like. We had to remember our starting position. We wanted to show our family and friends what it was like to cruise this area.

We hope we'll have saved you a couple of steps. Good luck. We'll be looking for your videos on the small screen. 

## “It takes about 3.7 megabytes of hard-drive space per second of video. So make sure you have a *large* hard drive.”


this to be good praise, since that was what we were trying to accomplish in the first place.

Now that we had actually sold a few DVDs, we wanted to reach a wider audience. We decided, however, that any method we chose must not interfere with our cruising. We did not want to interrupt our travels to run home to market them. Nor did we want to saddle our relatives with filling orders.

Back online once more, we looked up “publish on demand” and found a couple of sites that would do this. We

Soon afterward, we were contacted by a couple of wholesalers. This was very exciting. Who wouldn't be flattered and excited by the prospect of selling massive quantities of the videos in large markets? However, once we got a copy of the contracts from each wholesaler, we knew we couldn't go this route. They all wanted to revise the artwork on the case, the face of the DVD, and even the video itself. We felt it was better to sell a much smaller number of DVDs and maintain control of our products, rather than to allow

*Greg and Jill Delezynski spent their working careers dreaming of sailing off to warm waters. In 1996, after moving to the San Francisco Bay area, they moved aboard Guenevere, their Nor'Sea 27, and started preparations to the boat and themselves. They were profiled by Good Old Boat in the November 2002 issue. In 2004, they made the jump: they retired from the working world, sailed out under the Golden Gate Bridge, and turned left.*

 More online... For Greg and Jill's detailed step-by-step process, complete with screen shots for using simple video-editing software, go to <[http://www.goodoldboat.com/reader\\_services/more\\_online/moviemaking.php](http://www.goodoldboat.com/reader_services/more_online/moviemaking.php)>.

## Resources

### Equipment and materials:

- Newer IBM-type computer with Windows XP (or newer) operating system
- 600-megahertz (MHz) or higher processor speed (minimum required for Moviemaker)
- Firewire (IEEE 1394) port or a Firewire PCMCIA card (approximately \$30)
- Hard drive with enough space for the programs and the video you need to edit

**Note:** video from the camcorder at 30 frames per second of video images will require about 3.7 Megabytes per second of video.

- CD or DVD writer
- Microsoft Moviemaker Software Version 2 or better (free download)
- Digital camcorder
- Firewire cable with the proper ends to match the camera and computer

Run Belarc Advisor, a free download from <[http://www.belarc.com/free\\_download.html](http://www.belarc.com/free_download.html)>. This program will analyze your computer and give you all the information you need regarding speed and operating system.

Additional video-editing software can be purchased from many other companies, including:

**Adobe:** <<http://www.adobe.com/motion/>>; **Avid:** <<http://www.avid.com/>>; **Nero:** <<http://www.nero.com/enu/index.html>>  
**Pinnacle:** <<http://www.pinnaclesys.com/>>; **Sonic:** <<http://www.sonic.com/>>; **Ulead:** <<http://www.ulead.com/>>  
**Vegas:** <<http://www.sonymediasoftware.com/products/product.asp?pid=404>>

You can send your video for storage and to allow others to view them on these web video-hosting sites:

**YouTube:** <<http://www.youtube.com/>>; **Google videos:** <<http://video.yahoo.com/>>



**You have to be at least a little computer savvy to figure out how to make the components work together. Above from left, cables, the camera, and Greg Delezynski busy editing footage into a unified production.**



## Boats



**Alberg 30**  
1965 hull #72. Fully loaded classic cruiser in great cond. New gear includes Yanmar 3GM and drivetrain, shaft, prop, VHF, radar, windlass, wiring, battery, CD/radio, compass, AP, much more. Heavily built, will take you anywhere! In Key Largo, Fla. \$17,500. Info and pictures: <<http://ellenjohnandrubicon.blogspot.com/2006/05/rubi-high-and-dry.html>>.

**John Landrum**  
[Erlandrum@gmail.com](mailto:Erlandrum@gmail.com)  
305-849-0646



**Kaiser 26 Mk II**  
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**Morgan 382**  
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**Chris-Craft Capri 30**  
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**Nick Lore**  
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**Seafarer 34**  
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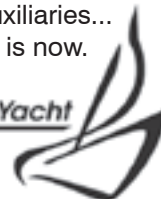
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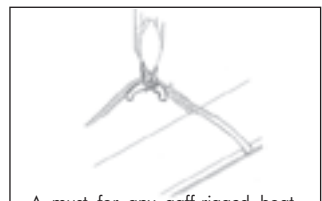
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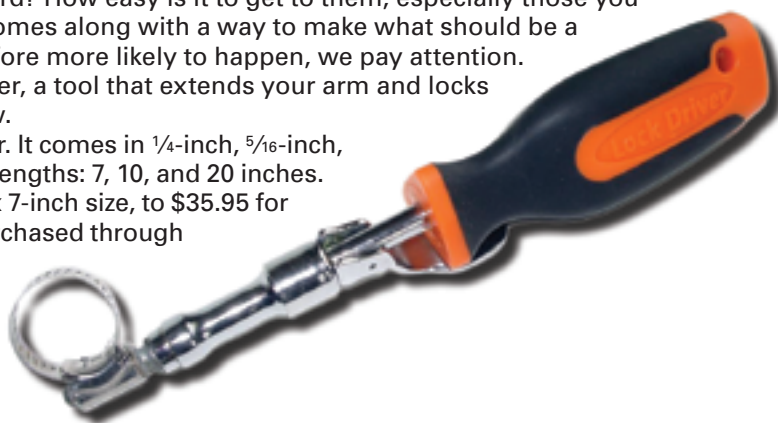


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You can see details about this new tool at <<http://www.smc-innovations.com/hardware/northAmerica/lockdriver.html>>. Call 866-450-0200 or email [Craig.Rae@smcltd.com](mailto:Craig.Rae@smcltd.com).



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# Riding the wind

## A cruiser goes racing and finds common joy

by Beth Leonard



JOHN BURHANI

Steve stepped aboard and raised the sails. I know that sound well, though it is one that always meant trouble on *Silk*. The flogging main and jib snapped and crackled in the 20-knot wind, and even Steve's yell was lost in the cacophony of sound. But Leigh understood and pushed me aboard. I stepped onto the tiny foredeck feeling the light boat shift and shimmy at my weight, hoping she wouldn't duck her nose and buck me right off. Then I was in the bathtub-sized cockpit, and Steve was telling me to stay low while we headed off on a starboard tack.

### Getting away

"Ready?" Steve yelled above wind and sail.

"Ready!" With a shove, Leigh came aboard while pushing *Zephyr's* nose toward the weeds that mark the shallows on the edge of the shore. The wind filled the sails, *Zephyr* dropped her shoulder, and we were cruising toward those weeds only a few boatlengths away. "Ready about," Steve cried. And to me: "Just duck under the boom as it comes across."

"Ready," Leigh called back. "Ready," I croaked. "Helm's a lee!" And *Zephyr* pivoted and pointed at the wide-open lake while Leigh and I porpoised under her boom and came up on the other side.

Now we were sailing. "Trim, trim, trim," called Steve, while Leigh fought to find hiking straps with her feet while reeling in the jibsheet. "Puff coming," called Leigh, and the wind hurtled into *Zephyr*, putting the lee rail well under water. "Bailers aren't open!" exclaimed Leigh. "Later, later," called Steve. We were into waves now, not *Silk* waves; if they were *Silk* waves they'd be 10 feet tall. *Zephyr's* nose buried into one, and she sounded, shaking the water from her in great arcs of foam. Another wave covered her bow, and I had an image of *Silk*, decks awash with green water, bow rising up to meet the next assault. Here, I was not sailing over the water, I was in it, and I was one with *Silk* and *Zephyr* both as the bow was buried once again.

I was aware of other boats around us, and then Steve was bearing off. "OK, clean her up!" he called. Leigh dropped to the bottom of the cockpit and coiled floating lines while reaching for the bailers. A puff hit us, and she immediately lunged toward the windward rail. "Got it, I got it," sang Steve. In a short minute, the cockpit was back to normal, and they were trimming in perfect synchrony as we raced at breakneck speed toward a motorboat. Steve brought her head to wind, lathered and shaking, while he read the course and wind information written on a postage stamp-sized board on the side of the motorboat. Then he bore off and she danced sideways before the wind caught her and whipped her again into her hard-pressed gallop.

AFTER THREE YEARS OF LIVING ABOARD AND CIRCUMNAVIGATING the world, Evans and I sold our Shannon 37, *Silk*. I cleaned out the last of the lockers and said goodbye to a vessel that had become both my protector and companion. After that, I felt dislocated. Rudderless. I missed the unique partnership Evans and I had shared aboard *Silk*, the camaraderie of the sailing community, and the challenge of the open ocean. Not long after that, while visiting my scow-racing sister in Madison, Wisconsin, her racing friends asked me why I sailed around the world, and I found I had no words to explain it, nothing that would make them understand.

While I was visiting my sister, Leigh, she and her partner, Steve, wanted to take me sailing, but this would be their kind of sailing, not mine. At Burrow's Park on Lake Mendota, I looked out at the wind-whipped lake and the orange racing buoys and wondered how this could possibly compare to an open ocean passage. I looked at the M-20 scow that we were about to race around those marks, and I found myself thinking that *Zephyr* had nothing in common with *Silk*, our ocean-going, centerboard ketch. Instead of a lead keel to keep the mast uppermost, this 20-foot catamaran-like dinghy had two leeboards and no reefing lines, yet there were numerous other lines that *Silk* did not have. Still, when Leigh tugged on my arm, I shook off my discontent and headed down to the dock where *Zephyr* waited, the wind rustling her hanked-on sails.



## Before the start

A gun went off, and Leigh called, “Got it!” while she fumbled with her watch. “Ready about,” called Steve. “And again!” “Once more!” Then, “We’ll just wait here for a minute.” I just had time to see an orange race mark to our port and the motorboat to starboard. There didn’t seem to be anyone but us in the immediate vicinity. Then Leigh started a countdown, “Ten, nine, eight...” and *Zephyr* leapt from under us, moving faster and surer than she had since we got out on the water. As we flew over the line, I heard only the wind in my ears and the rush of water at my feet. *Zephyr* was flat out, unburdened by extra weight in her cockpit, running like a steeplechaser, leaping from wave to wave.

“Trim, trim, trim,” called Steve. “I need her trimmed. I can’t hold her on course if she’s not trimmed.”

“Got it,” Leigh responded. “Wind ahead!” *Zephyr* staggered a bit, then we were all hiking out and she found her feet again. “And more!” My back was parallel to the water; the waves were awash with sparkling sunbeams. “Still more!” Leigh called. Foam was running in streaks from the white-whipped wavetops, and some far-away part of my mind clinically noted, “Force 5 to 6: time to reef.”

“Ease, ease, ease,” chanted Steve as we rode up on the gunwale, water foaming in a great arc as a wave washed over the leeward rail. He reached for the backstay adjustment and, as he pulled on it with a grunt, I watched the mainsail contort and wrinkles appear in its top third. *Zephyr* flattened out joyously, and we were absolutely flying — faster, surely, than we ever managed in *Silk* — as the water rushed by above and below me.

## Wind dropping

“A lull,” called Leigh, even before the boat flattened further and we rolled upright with it. Two beats, three, four — “Wind line in three seconds!” And our bodies fell back in unison, ankles straining against the wide strap in the cockpit, butts rolling over the edge of the gunwale as we levered our shoulders out over the water. This time *Zephyr* didn’t even hesitate, she just kept running at speed, the fresh wind a welcome partner and the flattened seas an easier track. “Ready about!”

“Ready!” “Ready!”

*Zephyr* spun about but seemed sluggish as she tried to forge into wind and sea on the other tack. “The board, I need more board!” Steve called urgently. “Sorry honey, I’ll go for it now,” Leigh responded, as she handed me the jibsheet. “OK, I got her — go, go, go!” Steve urged. To me he said, “You can flip her as easily as I can, so just hold it gently. I’ll steer to you.” Leigh dropped down to the lee rail, her hand on the line that controls the lee board, and I saw Steve easing the main as *Zephyr*’s delicate balance changed with the shift in weight. “Come on back up please, dear,” he said through gritted teeth. Then Leigh was reaching for the windward rail and pulling herself back up with one hand, her other hand controlling the jibsheet even before I released it. *Zephyr* flattened and resumed her mad rush with a delighted whoosh of churning water.

We tacked again and when we came up on the other side, there was the mark. “Once we round the mark, I’ll tell you where I want you.” I nodded, and for the first time really watched Steve. Traveler, tiller, sheet; ease, trim, ease, turn;

his eyes were on the mainsail even as his hands caressed *Zephyr*’s heart and soul. A quick glance at the mark. “Ready to ease...” “Easing!” Then we were skating around the mark at the same time that *Zephyr* was coming upright. Leigh dropped the sheet into the cam cleat and was already moving forward, pole in hand. “I want you back here with me,” Steve said calmly. I moved back behind the traveler into the aft part of the cockpit and perched on the gunwale, trying to stay out of the way of the sheets, lines, cleats, and tiller.

## Up spinnaker

“Ready?” Steve called. He was standing, the crosspiece of the tiller against the back of his legs, feet wide, eyes on the foredeck, hands handling guy and sheet. “Re...dy” barely reached us from the foredeck, blown off the bow of the boat by the wind now over our stern. Then Steve was hauling on a halyard and the spinnaker was uncoiling from its lair belowdecks, a great blue and white snake gyrating into the air, writhing and twisting in the wind. A belly appeared with a smack, and *Zephyr*’s bow was being pulled up, out of the water.

**“*Zephyr* flattened out joyously, and we were absolutely flying — faster, surely, than we ever managed in *Silk* — as the water rushed by above and below me.”**

Leigh was back in the cockpit. “Want me to handle the sheet?” “Take it.” Leigh grabbed it next to the block, pulling it from Steve’s hand and then she was trimming, easing, trimming, easing — her eyes glued to the luff of the great sail looming over our heads. Everything seemed quieter to me suddenly, but I could tell by their rapt attention that what came before was easy compared to this. The boat was humming, a resonance from the gunwale that I could feel as much as hear. She became skittery like a car on an icy road. Steve was driving with a finger, a touch, feeling her respond, waiting for her. Not a word was spoken for what seemed like a long time, but I didn’t ask questions. We were poised on the edge of control, kicking up a wide foaming wake in our stern, running with the waves bounding down the lake, racing through this leg twice as fast as the one that came before.

Suddenly I was on *Silk* again, rounding South Africa, running dead downwind in 45 knots with only the staysail up. The wind was a knife frosting each wave front with white streaks of foam. *Silk* in my mind and *Zephyr* under my body merged and sang to me as only a sailboat in the throes of a passionate encounter with the wind can. This is not sailing — this is flying.

## Hands full

“Time to jibe,” Steve called. With his third hand, Steve took the sheet from Leigh while she went up on the foredeck. The sheet became the guy just as Steve brought the wind across the stern of the boat. The spinnaker barely flinched,

## Cruising memories



then filled on the port side. *Zephyr* skated off to that side, and Steve's hips swayed, moving the tiller ever so gently in one direction while his hands rapidly eased, then trimmed, the

sheet. Somehow, Leigh was back in the cockpit and handling the sheet while I was still wondering how we stayed upright.

The bright orange mark began looming larger and larger. I could sense the urgency even before the activity started. "E-Scow ahead. Let's get it down now." As Leigh moved forward, Steve had time to say to me, "We'll slow her down as we round the mark or else the mast will just keep right on going and we'll all go swimming." He was managing the sheet and guy once again, with eyes only for the billowing spinnaker. Then Leigh was thrusting the spinnaker pole back into the cockpit and grabbing the guy to pull the foot of the sail to her. "Ready!" Magically the halyard was released, and Leigh was gathering tack and clew together, chasing the wild wind out of the unmanageable sail, stuffing it back into its den as the sail collapsed. Almost before it was away, Steve was calling, "Trim, trim, trim!" and *Zephyr* was coming up toward the wind, reaching with all of her heart, clos-

ing on the mark at a breakneck pace, driving through the water with spray cascading in white sheets from under her bow. She was just on the edge, but Steve had a wild grin on his face. "Screaming jib reach!" he cried, as the mark came to our bow.

Everything changed. "Slow her down, slow, slow..." Even as the sails were eased, she came up toward the wind, tossing her head and skittering as she reluctantly heeded his hands. "Now, now, now — and go!" They were both trimming, hands a blur by their ears, sheets flying, as *Zephyr* spun and headed up, gathering speed, facing wind and waves once again.

### Soaked through

The mark receded quickly behind us. The wind bit, cutting through sodden clothes. I felt Leigh shivering next to me as she called, "Wind line, five seconds." A wave hit and the bow submarined. "Can't see," called Leigh. "Got it," I heard from over my shoulder. "Wind's here," I called just as *Zephyr* rose restlessly under us. But we had the feel now, and together we held her, while busy hands trimmed and eased, trimmed and eased. We were driving into it, wind and water part of us, flowing over us, around us, through us. The bow was high and dry, and we were moving faster than on the first leg as she met each wave and seemed to float above it. We were halfway down the course before the second M-20 rounded the mark. "They just can't hold her down!" yelled Steve as the boat behind us heeled dangerously then rounded up.

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"Take the sheet," urged Leigh. I looked at her wide-eyed. "I'll help. Take it." I turned to Steve who simply nodded once.

My hand closed on the sheet and suddenly *Zephyr* was talking to me in an echo of *Silk's* voice. "Trim, trim, trim." "Ease..." I watched the telltales on the jib and listened to Leigh's voice and felt *Zephyr* in my hand like a well-trained horse. There was no separation between me and *Zephyr* and Steve. It took all three of us all of the time to keep striding wildly over these waves instead of being flipped under them. There was no forgiveness here as there was on *Silk* — no safety margin. There was only upright or over, flying or crashing, on the edge or beyond it.

We drove hard to the windward mark, eased again, spinnaker up. We skittered, skated back to the jibe mark, checked our speed, doused the spinnaker, and headed up once again. I lost track of the other scows, lost track of the motorboat, lost track of the feel of anything except *Zephyr* doing what she was born for, what she does best. We were riding a thoroughbred, attuned to the least change in stride or tension, linking arms as we moved in unison on the windward rail. We and *Zephyr* were one in that magic space between control and crash, running the edge with wild abandon.

## Finishing line


The windward mark loomed in front of us for the last time, and I felt the same mixture of exultation and disappointment I used to feel at landfall aboard *Silk*. Leigh and I por-

poised under the boom one last time, and I came up to see the motorboat just to starboard, the mark to port.

A voice boomed out, "Six-fifty-two, you are first! Congratulations!"

"Ease, ease, ease..." chanted Steve. The race might be over, but we were still riding a wild thing.

Back at Burrow's Park, we found that others had not managed to avoid going over the edge. The blue E-Scow that was ahead of us at the end of the first downwind leg was awash and being worked slowly into a dolly so she could be bailed out. An M-20 was being sailed dry after turtling around the second leeward mark. But there were no complaints. Like sailors after a landfall, everyone was aglow with that indefinable exhilaration that comes from touching the wellspring of our fear and our passion, the source of all excellence in human endeavors.

What drove me to sail around the world? Anyone who's sailed a boat like the M-20 on a screaming jib reach in 20 knots of wind already knows the answer. 

*Beth Leonard and her husband, Evans Starzinger, have sailed more than 100,000 nautical miles, most of those in the high latitudes on their current boat, Hawk. As this issue went to press, they were in Ushuaia, Argentina, on their way to the Falklands and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. Next they'll head north up the Atlantic toward Antigua. For more on their travels, visit their website: <<http://www.bethandevans.com>>.*



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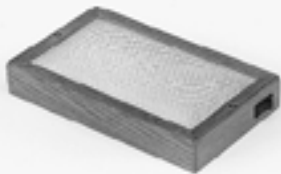
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# The sweet smell of cedar

## Cure “old boat smell” with aromatic wood

by Ralph Pears

**E**ACH OLD BOAT HAS A COMFORTING, MILDLY INTOXICATING, AND unique smell: an indescribable combination of wood, salt air, and perhaps a bit of seawater. It may also have a hint of mildew, old canvas, paint or varnish, fiberglass resin, diesel fuel, transmission oil... all combined to make a good old boat smell like, well, an old boat.

There may also be odors that are less pleasurable: a nagging fuel leak, musty shower smells, or head odors.

Aboard *Blessed*, our 1979 Cheoy Lee Clipper 36 ketch, we’ve battled odors that may be related to her having been sunk years ago by Hurricane Andrew. Although she’s been completely rebuilt and restored nearly to her original glory, *Blessie*, as we fondly refer to her, has continued to offer up an array of very faint odors.

My solution was simple, decorative, functional, inexpensive, and it repelled insects. I purchased and installed strips of aromatic cedar throughout *Blessie’s* interior. Aromatic cedar stripping is available from most lumberyards and home-supply stores and provides a fresh, but not overpowering, scent of cedar. It is relatively inexpensive and comes in 1/8-inch-thick strips measuring 4 inches by 4

feet. These strips are milled with ship-lapped edges allowing them to overlap slightly when installed side-by-side or end-to-end. I purchased packages, marketed as closet liner material, from a nearby home-supply store for about \$20. Each package contained enough stripping to cover approximately 15 square feet of surface area.

### Trim board

In the main saloon and forward cabin, I used cedar strips to create a 4-inch-wide trim board and applied it along the inside of the hull where it meets the underside of our decks. For these trim pieces, I ran the cedar strips through a table saw to remove the ship-lapped edge and produce a more finished appearance.

I applied the trim strips using a marine adhesive. I used wooden battens (that I could spring against the hull or cabinetry) to hold them in place while the adhesive set up — usually about 24 hours. Alternatively, you could affix strips to the hull or decking using very short stainless-steel or silicon bronze wood screws, provided you select a length that won’t go all the way through the hull or deck and if you don’t mind seeing the fasteners when the installation is completed.

**“Used sparingly, aromatic cedar can help keep the interior of any boat smelling fresh and clean.”**

While I was at it, I sheathed the entire interior of our hanging locker with aromatic cedar. Now the locker and its contents always smell fresh, since the locker has essentially been converted into a cedar chest. An added benefit is that aromatic cedar repels a variety of insects. I’ve never been particularly worried about moths aboard a boat, but we do seem to have fewer mosquitoes and flies aboard now.

I also installed trim strips inside many of our lockers and cabinets, especially those that tend to stay closed for long periods of time. The cedar strips don’t prevent mildew from growing in some of these poorly ventilated cabinets, but they do keep the cabinets fresh smelling.

### New cedar grating

In the head, I removed the original teak grating that covered the shower sump and drain and replaced it with a grating made from cedar strips that I cut on a table saw into 1-inch-wide strips and screwed to a grid of supporting wooden frames, also made out of cedar. The result is a head that smells fresh and clean.

On a boat that I owned many years ago, I used aromatic cedar to fabricate a number of handy storage devices, such as spice racks, towel hangers, bookshelves, and binocu-

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Ralph used aromatic cedar strips, available from most lumberyards and home-supply stores, to line the hull in the saloon, above, and to trim the V-berth, below. He also lined the insides of some lockers and cabinets of his Cheoy Lee Clipper 36. The strips are milled with ship-lapped edges to make it easy to overlap them side-to-side as well as to install them end-to-end. The material is inexpensive and offers a pleasant aroma of cedar, which is not overpowering.

lar holders. The cedar has an attractive color and grain that complements the warm colors associated with other woods commonly used in boat interiors, such as teak and mahogany.

The cedar is always at work, imparting a subtle, clean aroma to the interior of the boat. Used sparingly, aromatic cedar can help keep the interior of any boat smelling fresh and clean, without creating an overpowering artificial smell such as you might encounter if you lived inside a cedar chest. Over time, aromatic cedar will lose some of its odor-imparting quality. As the aromatic quality declines, a simple light scrubbing of the surface of the cedar with 60- or 80-grit sandpaper or a plastic scrubbing pad will expose the natural oils in the wood once again.

Aromatic cedar was a natural choice to keep our good old boat smelling like a clean good old boat. 🛶

*Ralph Pears began sailing in the early 1950s, at the age of 8, aboard Olympic-class Dragon boats. These were followed by an array of daysailers and cruising boats. He and his wife, Kathryn, cruise aboard Blessed, a 1979 Cheoy Lee Clipper 36 ketch, from Sebasco Estates, Maine.*

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# A better-gripping snubber

## *Braided tail improves hold on rode*

by Rudy and Jill Sechez

A SIMPLE RUNNING (OR ROLLING) HITCH, USED TO ATTACH A snubber to an anchor rode, may have difficulty in maintaining a good grip on the rode, but a braid formed at the end will improve the grip.

To form this braid, whip the end of the snubber approximately 20 inches from one end. Unlay the rope back to this whipping and separate the strands into three groups (three-stranded rope will automatically unlay into three strands). Braid these three groups of strands together. Place a whipping at the end to prevent the braided portion from unlaying. A double whipping will add more security from unlaying.

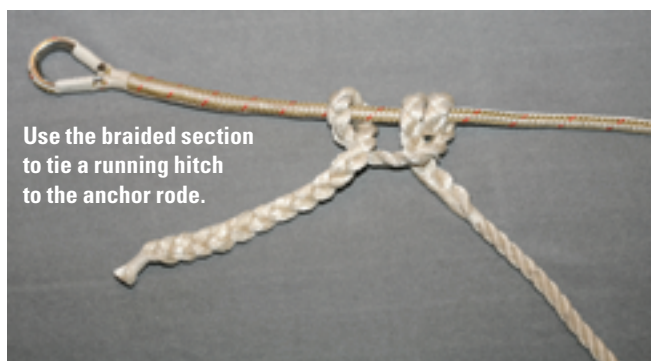
This braided portion will now take a hitch that readily grips the anchor rode.

*Rudy and Jill Sechez's complete bio is on Page 27.*

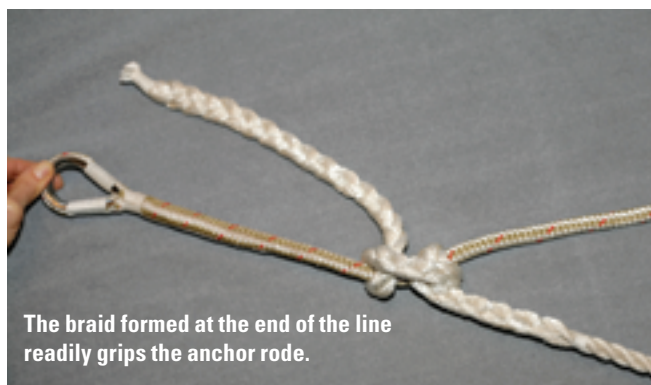
Unlay a 3-stranded line and braid the strands.



Use the braided section to tie a running hitch to the anchor rode.



The braid formed at the end of the line readily grips the anchor rode.



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# Super stopper knot

*This one really won't jam in a block*

by Rich Finzer

HAVING BEEN A RACING SAILOR FOR MANY YEARS, I KNOW FIRST-hand the extra pounding a boat takes while you're out there rounding the buoys. Over the years I've beefed up my lines, blocks, and other components to compensate for the additional stress and strain. Because a mechanical failure on the racecourse can quickly eliminate any hope of victory (which is why you race in the first place) I decided early on that I would let neither my gear nor a lack of preparation lose races for me. For one thing, I've always used a super stopper knot on all of my sheets: jib, main, and traveler.

I've seen this knot referred to as a double figure-eight or blood knot, although I'm not sure whether either of these names is correct. What I am sure of is this knot won't pass through a fairlead or become jammed in a block or traveler car. It has too much bulk. It's easy to tie, fairly easy to untie, and its sheer size makes it impressive. Best of all though, because so few sailors I've met utilize it, if you do, you get to show off a bit. Despite what our parents said, in moderation showing off a little is fun.

Lay the free end of your sheet in your palm. Pass three turns of line around your fingers (1). Take the end of the line and pass between your palm and the turns (2). Then slip your fingers out and work out the slack. When finished (3), you've got a big strong super stopper knot that won't jam. When it's no longer needed, just wiggle the line a bit to loosen the loops and pull the end back out. It's that simple. ⚓

*Rich Finzer earned his powerboat operator's license at age 11 and began sailing six years later. He cruises Lake Ontario aboard his Hunter 34, Pleiades. He supports his sailing addiction as a technical writer and is a frequent contributor to boating magazines.*



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# Fender hanger clips

## Make your own from leftover wire

by Joe Orinko

AFTER I COMPLETED SOME HOUSE RE-WIRING, I HAD SOME LEFT-OVER #6 bare copper wire. I hacksawed a half-dozen pieces, then bent them up using a bench vise and a piece of 1-inch pipe. A friend of mine included them in an order of some parts to be chrome-plated, and the result is shown in the photos. I'm sure they could be fashioned from thinner stainless or bare copper rod. A simple loop of wire provides for easy attachment.

I tested these with bowline knots to get the right length of line, then retied them with a buntline hitch (the bowline knots did work fine). The blue tape provides a little encouragement to the knot (see detail in the illustration at right).

Tied to the fender line, a simple twist will attach it to a lifeline. When a higher set is required, the line can be looped over the lifeline and the clip attached to the line splice at the fender head, in effect halving the line.

We have a couple of line-through fenders. For those, we tied a loop on either end of the fender. Clipping to the far loop allows the fender to be deployed horizontally. Vertically, the clip can be attached directly to the lifeline or over the lifeline to the upper loop (as previously described).

A real sailor will just tie his fenders where they're needed. For the rest of us, these clips are very quick and easy. And they never fail to garner comments from other boaters. ▽

*Joe Orinko has sailed the waters of Presque Isle Bay and Lake Erie for 26 years, 20 of them in his O'Day 23, and for six seasons on a Catalina 30. Both vessels were named Unicorn.*





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## From Iraq with love, Continued from Page 55

through the Better Business Bureau site and found the lowest bidder had at least two recent

complaints that were never resolved. So I chose a firm out of Pensacola and emailed them about our plans. They happened to have a hauler delivering a boat to Connecticut in just a few days that would be empty coming back. He could swing by and pick ours up two days after we completed the purchase. The cost would be nearly \$200 less since I would catch the truck on the "backhaul," and we quickly agreed on the deal.

On a Thursday, I hastily emailed Tim Recks, manager of Charleston Boatworks, where the *Pleiades* was being stored. The pickup was scheduled for the following Friday. Despite the short notice and an upcoming race week, Tim said he would have the boat ready for transport when the truck arrived.

I had also solicited bids from marinas in my home area for estimated costs to re-step the mast, re-rig the boat, and paint the bottom. I learned that de-rigging the boat, preparing it for travel, and then re-rigging her would cost as much or more than the transport itself. I could have mitigated those costs somewhat if I had been available to assist in this process, which can be labor-intensive.

I narrowed down my list of boatyards by turning to the Better Business Bureau once again. Troendle Marine, located at the Pensacola Shipyard Marine Complex, was listed as a BBB member with a good record. The marine complex is also listed as a Florida Clean Boatyard. Prompt and accurate replies to my email inquiries scored points with me.

Troendle Marine co-owner Barbara Troendle won my heart when she emailed me a little note with the quote. "Will you be here when your new baby arrives?" she asked. After a brief moment of panic, wondering whether my wife had kept something secret from me during our last phone conversation, I realized she was talking about my new old boat.

**Gary mans the wheel as he and Sheryl head out for an afternoon sail on a balmy February afternoon. The beads around his neck were acquired earlier in the day during a Mardi Gras parade.**

### Took photos

The transport of the *Pleiades* from Charleston to Pensacola was uneventful. Bill Troendle supervised the unloading and Barbara took photos to send to me. I was able to call from Iraq and catch Sheryl as she was climbing aboard the boat for the first time.

"It's beautiful!" she gushed on the cell phone. The layout down below pleased her. "You did well with this one." Sheryl has definite ideas about what she does and does not want belowdecks. An adequate galley and comfortable sleeping space are high on her list. She was satisfied and noted that the boat had been well kept.

Through a detailed work order supplied by Barbara, we agreed upon the work to be performed on the boat. Troendle would re-step the keel-stepped mast, tune the rigging, paint the bottom, and install a new mast boot to stop a persistent leak.

One of the most symbolically important tasks we decided to have them complete while the boat was in the yard was removal of the old name and installation of the new. Sheryl and I had chosen the name for our next boat awhile ago. We even bought wine glasses etched with the new name. These were waiting for a home.

Our new boat was to be known as *Serenade*, literally described as a song of love. To me, sailing is a musical experience.

The boat was ready for launching in a few days. There was just one problem we had not solved: getting the boat from the boatyard to our home marina a few miles away. My wife was not confident enough to handle the helm herself. Our salvation came in the form of fellow sailor Gene Reddick, a stranger who volunteered to pilot the boat to its new home when he heard of our predicament.

As I write this in Iraq, the boat is ready and waiting, Sheryl teases that I probably look forward more to seeing the boat than her when I get home. It's not true, but I do long for them both.

A warm wind blows off the desert and ruffles the fronds of the few coconut palms scattered around the dusty base I inhabit here. A helicopter clatters noisily overhead. I close my eyes and envision standing at the wheel a few months hence in the cockpit of *Serenade* with my wife and lover, breathing in the salty air and thrilling to the pure, sweet music of a righteous sail. A redemption sail for my soul. 🌊

*Gary Lindsay and his wife, Sheryl, have sailed together with (and without) children for most of their 23-year marriage. Gary is Master Sergeant with the Army National Guard and returned home last August. He and Sheryl hope to sail north on the ICW and down to the Bahamas and Caribbean in a few years.*







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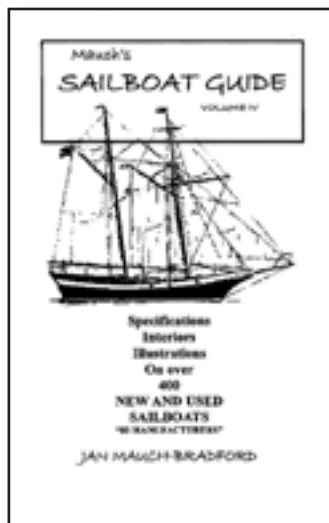
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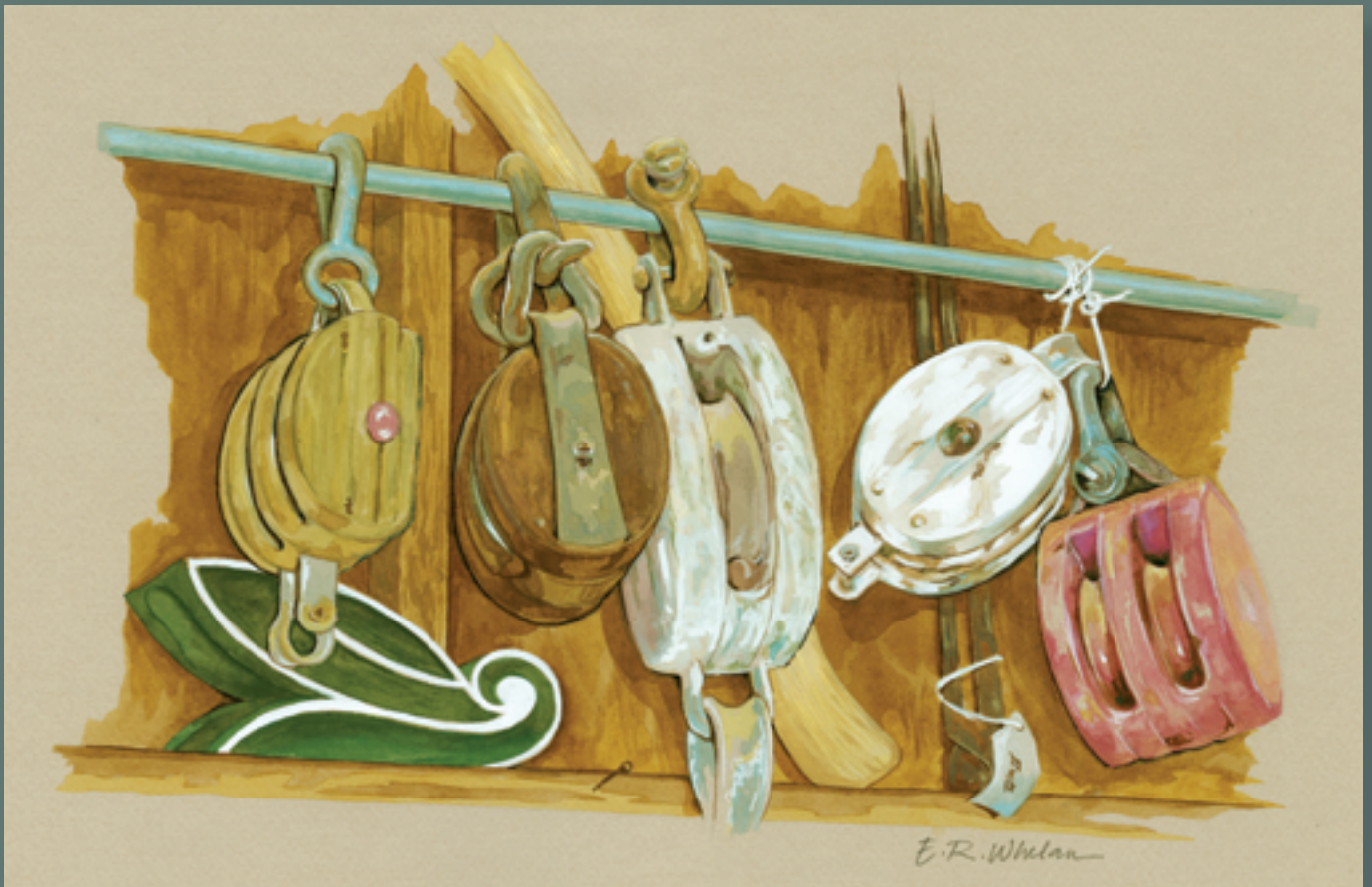
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# It might as well be spring

## *Time's a'wastin' — go sailing*

by Karen Larson

**M**AY IS BUSTIN' OUT ALL OVER! EVERY YEAR IT'S THE SAME AND every year it's a big surprise all over again. Spring has arrived. The sun spends more time in our hemisphere, so days are longer and warmer. We don't get up and go to bed in the dark. The kids are wearing shorts and riding bikes. (It's not *that* warm yet, but what do *they* know? These are the same kids who couldn't wear hats all winter for fear of messing up their hair.)

There isn't a leaf on a tree yet here in Minnesota. I've counted a few crocus blossoms, but the rest of the bulbs are just waking up and the floral trees are showing nothing more than mere buds. The grass is getting green, but there's nothing to mow yet. The birds are back, but they haven't hatched an egg.

**“...the boatyard beckons once more. We waded through the mud and climb up to our cocooned babies and throw tarps off into the melting snow piles on the north side of our boats.”**

Most importantly, the boatyard beckons once more. We waded through the mud and climb up to our cocooned babies and throw tarps off into the melting snow piles on the north side of our boats.

Yes indeed! The spirit's in the air everywhere!

It might as well be spring! The snowy season that just



passed was truly the winter of our discontent. It was colder and snowier than usual in the northern plains. The snow fell at the end of November and never had a chance to melt. By the first months of 2008, waiting for spring was more difficult than ever.

As much as I like fall for its beauty and the end it brings to the oppressive heat of summer, there's a melancholy about it that must be acknowledged: the days are shorter and winter will come once more.

Spring, on the other hand, is a flagrant celebration of life's renewal. Shouting “Oh joy!” with whatever means they have available, all living things seek simultaneously to reproduce.

It's a bacchanalian carnival of color and scents. While we are dazzled by spring's splendor, we respond somewhat less flamboyantly by launching our boat and spending stolen summer hours gloriously afloat.

If you have been working on your boat all winter, launch it now — ready or not — and go sailing.

Time's a'wastin'. May is bustin' out all over! ⚓



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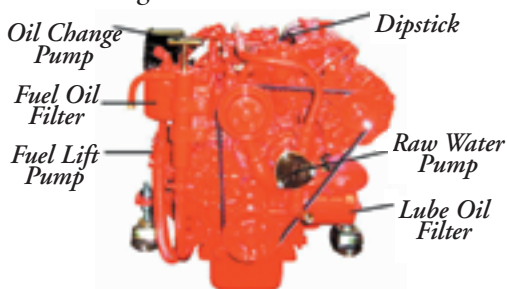
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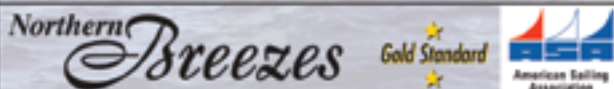
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# Grab your sketchbook

## Drawing has many charms and practical uses

by Richard Smith

**W**E KEEP A SHIP'S LOG ON BOARD *KUMA* THAT RECORDS OUR position, wind direction and speed, tides and currents, engine hours, and other information relating to the safe and efficient operation of the boat.

We've also noted uncharted rocks and sandbars that caught our keel. We've described good landfalls and narrow escapes, the retrieval of errant halyards and the time Beth hooked a spiny dogfish that we had for breakfast. ("B catches 28-inch shark. A beauty! She cleans it too — cuts into steaks and soaks overnight in vinegar to get rid of uric acid.") All of this makes for excellent reading in front of a winter fire.

Along with these entries there are myriad sketches that rekindle past summers as surely as our written remarks do. A sailor/doctor/friend once told me that medical students taking exams in surgery used to be required to draw their answers, diagrams and illustrations being considered better proof of knowledge than words.

**“Finding pleasure with a pencil or pen is equal to that which results from completing a good varnish job, and it lasts longer too.”**

### Moored or anchored

It's important to remember that whatever our love of sailing — of crossing oceans, racing, or running down a late-afternoon breeze to a familiar harbor — our boats will be moored to a dock, anchored, or in the yard for the vast majority of their lives. But with a little effort, a sketchbook can help us wile away some of the happiest hours afloat. Finding pleasure with a pencil or a pen is equal to that which results from completing a good varnish job, and it lasts longer too.

After we've dropped the hook and backed down, I like to put the kettle on and sit in the cockpit for an hour or two with an eye on a couple of verticals off our beam — a flagpole and a mast or a tall fir — to see if we're dug in. With a good cup of coffee in hand, I look around the anchorage at other boats. I think about their underwater shape and windage, how much scope they've got out, and whether it's all chain or mostly nylon. I wonder where they'll be at the change of tide and when the wind comes up hard.

With all this looking and musing, I sometimes find a boat that strikes my fancy. It might be old or new, big or small, dead common or eccentric, one that's just arrived or one that hasn't left its barnacled mooring buoy in years. I often draw such a boat. I might take a photograph too. But if it's a really good boat, I like to draw it. It seems to stick better that way.




Later on, rowing the dinghy about the harbor, I have a closer look and sometimes chat with the boat's skipper, who's apt to be surprised at how much I know about his boat. At the end of the day, I've often found an idea or two to build into *Kuma*.

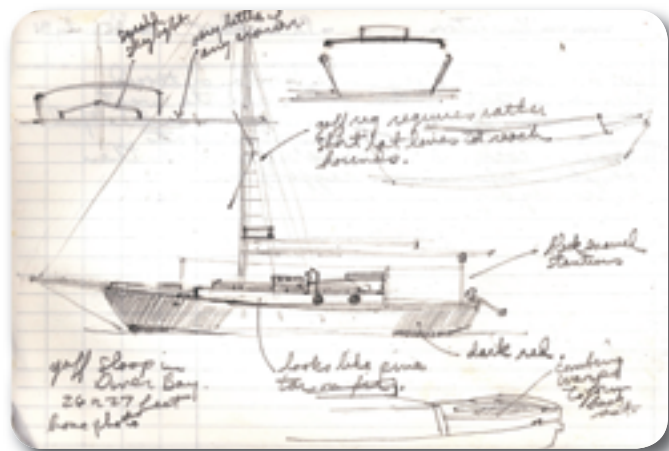
### Draws everything

My wife, Beth, is an artist <<http://elizabethsmithprints.com>> and draws everything in sight: the harbor and its trees; our dog, Scout, who's usually asleep; a cleat; other boats moving about the anchorage; and sometimes one of my more exciting adventures in the dinghy.

Drawing in this way is not about making a picture; it's the doing it that counts... rather like whistling a familiar tune without expecting that anyone will listen carefully.

Drawing, like anchoring, takes a certain will and practice but no particular talent. That may or may not come later. But like anchoring or tacking smartly, the more you do it, the better you'll get. Doing it over and over will reward out of all proportion to the effort.

Sketching out what you intend to do before you do it is just common sense, but drawing for pleasure causes you to slow down, to look more carefully and longer at whatever it is that catches your eye. It seems to fit rather naturally into the sailor's life of waiting for tides or for the weather to clear, for the wind to get up or to get down, or for the soup to boil. It's why sailors have made model ships and etched on the teeth of whales. It's a good way to pass the time. 





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