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Issue 76 January/February 2011



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# GOOD OLD BOAT

THE SAILING MAGAZINE FOR THE *REST* OF US!

## CONTENTS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2011

### For the love of sailboats

#### Review boat

##### 10 Rawson Pilothouse 30

*All-season sailing in the Pacific Northwest*

by Richard Smith

##### 18 Lancer 25

*A trailerable pocket cruiser with standing headroom*

by Gregg Nestor

#### Feature boat

##### 42 Tartan 34C — “C” as in “class act”

*An object of doubtless devotion, Sin Sal sparkles*

by Karen Larson

#### Boat comparison

##### 46 The Tartan 34C and its peers

*Standout boats from outstanding designers*

by Ted Brewer

### Spotlight on ...

#### Engine work

##### 34 A working vacation

*Maintenance seems less onerous in the right surroundings*

by Michael Boyte

##### 37 An affordable A4 rejuvenation

*A hands-on rebuild saved both beast and budget*

by Rob Mazza



### Speaking seriously

#### Cruising designs

##### 14 A designer's designer

*Phil Rhodes inspired a generation of yacht designers, including Bob Perry*

by Robert Perry

#### Maintenance tasks

##### 22 Getting a grip

*Old decks get new non-skid out of a can*

by Stephen Perry

More online ...

##### 28 Maintenance on the run

*Year-round sailing leads to year-round upkeep*

by Barry Hammerberg

#### Sailboats 101

##### 26 Displacement Hull Speed 101

*As fast as physics allows*

by Don Launer

#### Making your own

##### 47 Sewing their first sail

*Cautious amateurs start with a kit — for an asymmetrical spinnaker*

by Karen Larson

#### Dinghies and tenders

##### 56 Row, tow, and stow

*A little pram dinghy is a workhorse and a comfort*

by Richard Smith

##### 60 An uplifting conversion

*A hard dinghy becomes a rigid inflatable*

by Frank Lanier

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31



64



65



66

## What's more

### The view from here

#### 5 The things we do for love

*Seafaring women earn the right to lament*

by Karen Larson

### Mail buoy

#### 6 Grab the last issue, winter's aftertaste, and figureheads

### Cruising memories

#### 31 A tug for Sara B

*A schooner's crew won't be dock-bound by a defunct engine*

by Susan Peterson Gateley

### Sailing life

#### 52 Partners in sailing

*Joint ownership provided a path to the water*

by Steve Gibb

### Quick and easy

#### 64 Chart storage

*Flat, yes; horizontal, no*

by Connie McBride

#### 65 Anchor rode safety line

*In case the splice doesn't play nice ...*

by C. Henry Depew

### Simple solutions

#### 66 New covers for old instruments

*Cloth panels replace plastic snap-ons*

by Marlin Bree

#### 68 Good old classifieds

#### 75 Product launchings

*A couple of new ways to protect your boat and her lines from the stress of sudden loads*

### Reflections

#### 77 Stone Free

*Independence is the best gift for a youth*

by Connie McBride



### About the cover ...

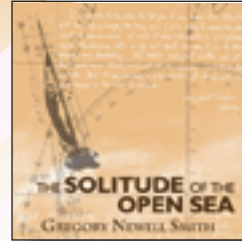
Terry Donnelly sails his good old 1978 San Juan 24, *Selkie*, from Quartermaster Harbor on Vashon Island. Pictured is his sailing partner Larry Huggins surveying a calm morning at Penrose Point in South Puget Sound. See more of Terry's work at <[www.donnelly-austin.com](http://www.donnelly-austin.com)>.

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Last Tack columns

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## The things we do for love

### Seafaring women earn the right to lament

by Karen Larson



Not all women believe they were meant to go to sea. I'm convinced, in fact, that the vast majority are sure that women are *not* meant to travel on boats of any kind. Historically, it hasn't been our role.

This past summer, we had the wonderful opportunity to encounter two tall ships at sea. As they loomed larger on the horizon, I understood for the first time the lives of those women who stayed behind watching from the widows' walks for the return of their seafaring men. Lives aboard in those days were hard in the best of times. Women were not generally welcome nor invited to come along. I imagine they preferred the shoreside vigil to the trials of life at sea.

These days, a few of us choose to cruise with the men in our lives. Life aboard isn't that hard . . . although there are moments. The food is better; the bunks are softer, and the work to manage a boat is less difficult because we have the mechanical assistance of tools

such as winches and windlasses. The boats are smaller and the masts are shorter and fewer in number.

Still, anchors must be retrieved from the bottom, and this can be a

filthy business. Our boat is not yet equipped with a windlass and it takes two of us to manage Jerry's newest solution to the problem of our aging backs: hauling up the anchor and chain with the help of a halyard. Anchor retrieval is always a muddy job. I dress for hauling the anchor in what I refer to as my "muddin' suit."

Once both anchors are on board, stowing them and the resulting mess is mine to deal with. I'm more particular about cleaning up the deck, and especially so since we just had it Awlgripped last year. We insisted on non-skid with an attitude so we'd be less likely to break a leg or fall overboard. Even though Jerry has dubbed it "40-grit non-skid," we like it for safety reasons. But aggressive non-skid is difficult to clean.

That's why I asked Jerry to shoot a few photos following a particularly arduous mud fight on the bow. The photo above documents one of those times when those of us who choose to go to sea with our mates stop to wonder at the things we do for love. ♫

“Aggressive non-skid is difficult to clean.”

# Grab the last issue, winter's

## Quick, grab the last issue . . .

Last fall, my wife and I plunged into boating with the purchase of a 1989 Freedom 30 from Dana Point, California. The following Christmas, he whom I believe to be our future son-in-law stuffed an issue of *Good Old Boat* into my stocking. After Julia and I read the gift issue from cover to cover, we agreed unanimously to subscribe and have savored each issue ever since.

This past weekend, we sailed to nearby Bowen Island off the coast of Vancouver, British Columbia, to stay for the night. When I went to start the engine to return home, the throttle lever snapped and flopped uselessly on the pedestal. Julia knew what that meant. I told her to sit tight, went below to retrieve the issue of *Good Old Boat* that had come in the mail the day before we set out for Bowen, and read her the first few paragraphs of the article on replacing the throttle cable. ("Threading a new throttle," November 2010.) Duplicate scenario. Julia thought I was making it up on the spot. Uh oh. What are you guys, clairvoyant? Spooky, anyways. And timely. Love it.

—Peter and Julia McLean, West Vancouver, British Columbia

## Good Old Boat Regatta 2010 a success

The 11th Good Old Boat Regatta was held Saturday and Sunday, October 9 and 10, on Chesapeake Bay off Annapolis. This annual event for boats "of a certain maturity" has come to be known as "the sailboat race for the rest of us." For the first time in years, the organizers were able to get a race completed on both days, thanks to wonderful warm weather and enough wind for two beautiful fall days of sailing on the bay.

The Good Old Boat Regatta is designed to be friendly to racing and non-racing skippers alike. If three or more boats of the same model enter, they can have their own class start and race as a one-design fleet. There are also handicap classes for fin- and full-keel designs.

This year's fleet included class starts for the Alberg 30, Cal 25, Cal 36, Pearson 30, Pearson Triton, Tartan 30, and Tartan 34C.



Full regatta results are posted at <[www.goodoldboat.com/resources\\_for\\_sailors/sponsored\\_regattas/2010\\_regatta\\_annapolis\\_report.php](http://www.goodoldboat.com/resources_for_sailors/sponsored_regattas/2010_regatta_annapolis_report.php)>.

Post-race award ceremonies/parties followed the races on both days and were held at Sailor's Wharf on Mill Creek off Whitehall Bay. As in years past, a music jam broke out at the Saturday evening session, led by Tartan sailors Tom Wells and Alfred and Bebe Poor. Good Old Boat Regatta founder Charlie Husar also joined in to lead a few numbers.

The Good Old Boat Regatta is organized by the Shearwater Sailing Club and is sponsored by *Good Old Boat* magazine. The event receives additional support from Herr Foods. Among the many volunteers who help make the event possible, Bob and Cindi Gibson of Sailor's Wharf provide a site for the race gatherings, as well as their motorboat *Crescent Moon* that served as the race committee boat on both days.

—Alfred Poor, Perkasie, Pa.

## Winter's aftertaste

Ben Stavis wrote an interesting and informative article ("Winterizing your boat," September 2010) on one way to protect the boat's systems over the winter. A less complex, and probably less expensive, method is a couple of liters of cheap (really cheap) vodka poured into the water tanks, head, etc. You just run the various pumps a bit to get the mix into all the piping. The nice part is that there is little aftertaste when the drinking-water system is next used. The vodka idea was discussed in some detail on the Catboat Association's email list, <[www.catboats.org](http://www.catboats.org)>. I am the list reader/editor.

—C. Henry Depew, Tallahassee, Fla.

*And no doubt the remedy has a warming effect on the first cruise in the spring?*

—Editors

## Het up over dock heights

Belatedly, I have been reading your blogs and I have to identify with your complaints about high docks. Here on southeast Prince Edward Island we have 6-foot tides as well as dock-height issues. Coming to dock requires a second person to get a rope around *something* just to hold us by the dock until some other lines can be run. Unfortunately, Wood Islands has not received a grant to develop floating docks so the abrasive steel walls are the only choice. They can destroy fenders, so old tires are the fender of choice. If you arrive at low tide, the place allocated for pleasure boats (the only good boat is a fishing boat) may put the dock 6 to 8 feet above the deck. If you want to tie up, you must line up with one of the chain ladders. On top of it all, you have to know the approximate tide level when setting your line lengths or the boat may be hanging by the lines when the tide drops!

—Tom Schultz, Belle River, Prince Edward Island



# aftertaste, and figureheads



## Swinging electronics

About 30 years ago, I designed a teak swing-out bracket for the electronics on my 1970 Morgan similar to the PVC one Clarence Jones describes in his article ("A swing-out bracket for your GPS," November 2010). I used a solid-brass door bolt latch that allowed me to set the bracket in various positions. Obviously, clearances and other measurements would vary from boat to boat. The door bolt worked perfectly to secure the bracket and I could set the bracket in three viewing positions: 1) facing into the cabin, 2) turned 135 degrees to face the port steering position in the cockpit at a 45-degree angle, and 3) turned 180 degrees to face into the cockpit.

—Gary Gerber, Bethesda, Md.

## Ah, sweet recovery

I just finished your blog postings from your 12-week-long summer cruise and was particularly interested in the comments about recovering from the cruise. Our cruise every year in the North Channel was only 4 weeks, not 12, but it was certainly long enough that we needed to unwind from it. Of course, there is the obvious issue of having the bed rock back and forth for the first few nights back on land and getting dizzy when you close your eyes in the shower. But we also seemed sensitive to loud noises and found we didn't like crowds of people around. We would look out the window at home at the house just a few yards away then find ourselves wondering if that house was anchored too close and might it not swing into us during a wind shift. And highway speeds are absolutely terrifying after weeks spent at just 6 knots! Glad too, that your most vivid memory is of loons and not a storm (or a rock!).

—Steve Christensen, Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

## Thickened epoxy

As one who is about to embark on a lot of deck re-bedding, I was interested in the sidebar "Holes in the deck" (November 2010). However, I believe Tim Nye should possibly have gone

with the original instructions he presented. I understand the un-thickened epoxy he used on his later fasteners will be more brittle.

—Gordon Winder, Madison, Wis.

## Epoxy tip and a Sabre owners' update

Two items: first, in the November 2010 issue, Tim Nye was looking for a way to inexpensively squirt epoxy when filling screw holes in cored decks. Just head to a discount store and pick up a couple of packages of ketchup/mustard squeeze bottles for \$1.37 a pair. I went through half a dozen packs when building a set of *WoodenBoat* Nutshell prams. They're cheap and hold more epoxy than you use in one sitting. The nozzle is the perfect size for the stuff and the wide screw-off top makes filling a charm. Fill, squirt, and then toss what's left over.

*continued on next page*



John Rozema sent this photo of Environment Canada's weather buoy on Lake Simcoe, part of Ontario's Trent-Severn Waterway. John sails *Rozinante*, a 1974 Bayfield 25.

Second, on your boat associations list on your website, the listing you have for Sabres is lame, having only 80 notes and no action in almost a year. Most Sabre owners hang out at <groups.yahoo.com/group/Sabresailboat>.

We have 500 registered owners and 27,000 messages. It's a great resource for Sabre owners — no spamming, no cuss words, no flaming. It also has the ability to email updates daily or individually. This is a free forum dedicated to helping out other Sabre owners.

—John Kalinowski, Brookline, N.H.

*Thanks for the idea for squirting epoxy into small places. We have also found that disposable bags meant for cake decorating (sold at craft stores) allow you to squirt epoxy into a tight spot.*

*We're particularly grateful when a sailor sends us an update for our online Owners' Association pages. We have the largest listing of sailboat owners' associations online, but it gets dated as URLs change and new sites are added. Please let us know if the associations we have listed for your type of boat need a change or addition: <www.goodoldboat.com/resources\_for\_sailors/owners\_associations.php>.*

—Editors

### Figuring on a figurehead

I am the proud "new" owner of a Mariner 36, which looks like a pirate ship. I would like to get a figurehead like the one in the article "Bowsprits, bumpkins, and belaying pins" (November 2001). Would you please be so kind as to direct me to the author/owner of the boat so I can ask for additional information?

—Regis Cooney, Lakewood, Ohio



### Don Launer replies

I constructed my boat from a bare hull, including the figurehead that I made from a large hunk of teak. I drew the outline of the leaping dolphin on the teak, used a bandsaw to cut out the outline, then used a power grinder (like a buffing tool, but with a sanding disk) to shape the dolphin.

Actually, from start to finish, the whole thing didn't take more than an hour or so. It's held in place with a stainless-steel lag bolt through the bow of the boat and a stainless-steel lag bolt through the bowsprit.

—Don Launer, Forked River, N.J.



### Outboard rudder AWOL?

Who stole the transom-hung rudder from the Maunds' Seidelmann 295? Gregg Nestor describes it in the last paragraph of the Design section of the article (in the November 2010 issue). The photograph accompanying the article does not show that feature although the schematic on page 24 does. How do they steer?

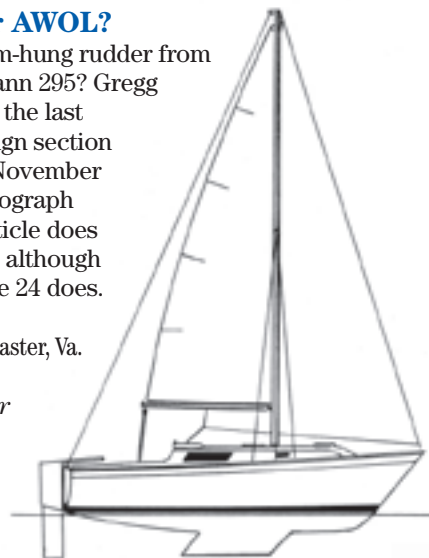
—Mitchell Bober, Lancaster, Va.

*Oops! The lack of a transom-hung rudder on the Maunds' boat is quite obvious ... now that you mention it. Actually, Gregg isn't responsible*

*for the mention in the text; we "helpfully" added that to correspond with the only drawing we could find of the Seidelmann 295.*

*The boat was originally built with an outboard rudder, as shown in the brochure (we found one on the Internet). If anyone can provide information on when Seidelmann made the change to a spade rudder on this boat, we'll run your responses in a future Mail Buoy. If you have a line drawing of the 295 that shows the spade rudder, we'd like to publish that also.*

—Editors



### Cool kid meets cooler elder

When I was young (about 16), I worked at Bay Haven Marina in Holland, Michigan. I was a dock boy, restroom cleaner, pool painter, boat washer, lawn mower, "hey boy," etc. One day, late in the day, a sailboat I had never seen before came to the gas dock. There was a really old couple on board (much younger than we are now). In my impertinent youth, I let my curiosity out. "Where are *you two* going on this sailboat?" The gentleman informed me that they were setting out to cruise the world. While he held the diesel nozzle to refuel, I asked the white-haired old lady, "What happens if he kicks off while you two are in the middle of the ocean?" She just smiled. She had heard that question (or ones like it) countless times before. She simply replied, "If he goes, I will soon follow." Talk about a head turner! I thought *I* was cool.



That was over 40 years ago and I haven't stopped thinking about it to this day.

Thanks for all your hard work. Many years ago, we were at the Chicago Boat Show at Navy Pier. There was a booth there with some folks our age (probably you two) touting a new type of sailboating magazine. Something about it hit a nerve. We subscribed on the spot. It took quite a while to receive our first issue but, when we did, we knew we had made the right choice. Nothing has changed over the years. In fact, it has only gotten better. Much better.

—Jim and Sandra Tenney, Rogersville, Ala.

### The great blank page experiment

It sounds like the Great Summer Hiatus Cruise Experiment was a resounding success. The magazine still arrived in my mailbox on time and there weren't even any blank pages inside! It seems to me that you've assembled a right fine crew.

—Alfred Poor, Perkasio, Pa.

*Thanks, Alfred. Filling the pages isn't the problem, it's what we might fill them with if Karen and Jerry decide to keep on cruising ...*

—“the mice”

Send questions and comments to *Good Old Boat*,  
7340 Niagara Lane North, Maple Grove, MN 55311-2655,  
or by email to [jerry@goodoldboat.com](mailto:jerry@goodoldboat.com).



Richard Fried sent us this photo taken of *Melita*, their Nonsuch 36, as she sailed past Owl's Head Lighthouse on Penobscot Bay in Maine. Send your sailboat photos to [jstearns@goodoldboat.com](mailto:jstearns@goodoldboat.com) and we'll post them on our website. If we publish yours here, we'll send you a good old T-shirt or cap.

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On a cold and windy day in early March, I climbed aboard the Rawson 30, *Alcyone* (Al-sy-uh-nee), and met her owner, Devon Blankenship. The sun was shining but the outside temperature was only in the middle 40s. It was blowing 15 knots. Ducking through the cabin door, I stepped down into the pilothouse. We took seats on either side of the dining table (that converts to a double berth) with steaming mugs of coffee. Within minutes, we felt the greenhouse effect and relaxed in surprisingly comfortable surroundings for a 30-foot sailboat.

### Design

Ron Rawson established his reputation building commercial boats: gillnetters, long liners, and other working craft that fish the West Coast waters from California to Alaska. When he decided to build pleasure boats, he sought out William Garden, one of the Pacific Northwest's leading naval architects, to design a boat that would bring the Rawson tradition of seaworthiness, strong construction, and reliability to cruising sailboats. The Rawson 30 is distinguished by bluff bows that keep it from diving into big head seas — and create more space in the forward cabin. It found a ready following among sailors who wanted a robust boat that sailed well in rough conditions and provided good accommodations.

In time, Ron asked Kingston, Washington, naval architect John Anderson to design a pilothouse version for the Pacific Northwest, where one can sail nearly year-round but often in damp, cool weather. This pilothouse does not look like an afterthought but is thoroughly integrated with the original design. The height and profile seem just right. Although the windows are large, they do not distract from the three portlights in the lower cabin sides. The visor over the windshield extends the line of the pilothouse coachroof, keeping it in proportion with the original design.

### On deck

By most standards, the cockpit is small, but it's adequate for two. The side benches and helmsman's seat are too short to stretch out on. Under them is a minimal amount of storage for items such as the propane tank. The small

20-inch diameter wheel allows for fairly easy movement through the cockpit. It and the pilothouse helm control the rudder through a hydraulic steering system. The mainsheet traveler is atop the after end of the pilothouse and the two-speed sheet winches and cleats are substantial and well located.

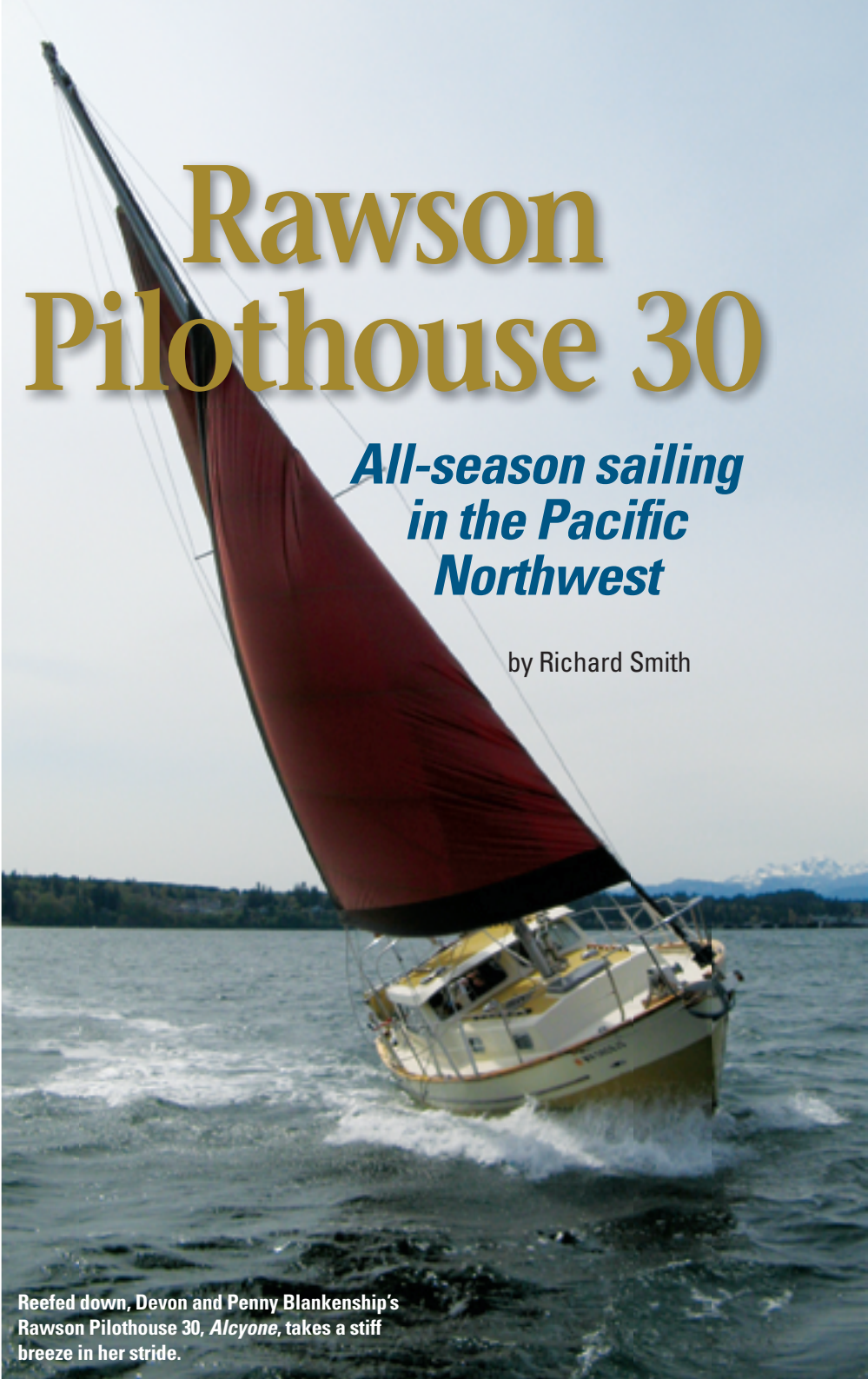
Earlier models of the Rawson 30 were built without a bowsprit, but the sailplan evolved to move the center of effort forward as a check against

weather helm. *Alcyone's* hefty bowsprit — a short and stocky spar complete with bobstay and whisker stays — supports the forestay and roller-furling gear and provides a substantial base for a large manual windlass and a Herreshoff mooring cleat. *Alcyone* carries a 35-pound Bruce anchor on a roller at the end of the bowsprit. Its rode of 50 feet of ½-inch chain and 200 feet of ½-inch nylon is led through a hinged deck pipe to the chain locker below.

# Rawson Pilothouse 30

**All-season sailing  
in the Pacific  
Northwest**

by Richard Smith



Reefed down, Devon and Penny Blankenship's Rawson Pilothouse 30, *Alcyone*, takes a stiff breeze in her stride.



Bulwarks that are 6 inches high at the bowsprit and gradually diminish to about 3 inches at the stern, together with the exceptionally wide beam forward, provide security for work on the foredeck. Though the 12-inch sidedecks are on the narrow side, handrails mounted on top of the pilothouse make movement fore and aft more secure. The chainplates are installed outboard at the rail.

Another pair of handrails, a low-profile acrylic hatch, a couple of solar vents, and the stove's chimney cap, are fitted on the coachroof over the galley and forward cabin. Devon usually tows his 9-foot dinghy but occasionally lifts it on deck with a spare halyard and stores it between the mast and bowsprit.

### Construction

Rawson built 288 30s, of which 36 were pilothouse models, between 1959 and 1985. They were offered with or without a bowsprit and rigged as sloops, ketches, and cutters. By 1969, seven Rawson 30s had been sailed from the West Coast to Hawaii, two had gone on to Tahiti, and one to Australia. Three completed circumnavigations. All of this attests to the boat's seakeeping qualities as well as its solid construction and sturdy equipment.

The hull is hand-laid solid fiberglass and the deck is of fiberglass and balsa sandwich construction for stiffness,



**The high freeboard of the Rawson 30 is evident, above. While the added windage hurts performance, it does make for more spacious accommodations. Few boats of this size boast a real pilothouse like this that's large enough to house a small dining table as well as a steering station, at left below. The pilothouse entrance is a door, in which a small portlight and a butterfly vent are fitted to aid ventilation, at right below.**

compression strength, and lightness. I didn't detect any flexing. The vertical hull and deck flanges, bedded and through-bolted, trimmed with teak on both sides, and topped with a teak caprail, form the stout bulwark. A non-skid pattern is molded into the sidedecks and lower coachroof.

The Rawson is ballasted with 5,000 pounds of concrete mixed with "boiler punchings" encapsulated within the keel. Around Seattle, there's a saying that you can drop a Rawson from the top of the Space Needle and sail it away.

The long keel also helps the boat sit upright in the yard, or on its bottom if





The inside helm station is compact but it's a pleasant place from which to steer when the weather is inclement, at left. Down in the main cabin, the galley, at right, is small but adequate for a 30-foot boat and gets plenty of light from the pilothouse windows.

an accidental grounding should occur. You could careen it against a seawall to change zincs, scrape barnacles from the propeller and shaft, inspect through-hulls, or sand and paint the bottom.

## Down below

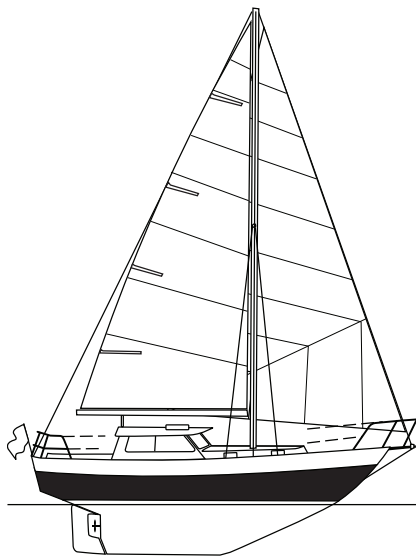
In the forward starboard corner of the pilothouse, behind a sloping windshield complete with wipers, a compact arrangement of compass, GPS, VHF, radar, depth sounder, and engine-monitoring instruments make up the nav station around the single helm seat. A small table and storage spaces are located between the helmsman's seat and the cockpit bulkhead, handy to the wheel and also to the dining table.

A large circular opening window in the bulkhead looks out into the cockpit and additional ventilation is provided by a portlight and a butterfly vent in the pilothouse door. The overhead is covered with a foam-padded vinyl liner and the cabin sole is teak-and-holly plywood.

Down a couple of steps in the galley, a deep icebox is situated between a two-burner propane stovetop and a deep sink. Devon has installed a microwave and a 1,000-watt inverter. Windows and portlights are tempered glass. *Alcyone* has pressurized cold and hot water with the heater located under the cockpit sole. There are a few shelves and little more. This is a small galley for a 30-footer.

Opposite to port is a High Seas diesel heating stove just forward of a snug 6½-foot bench that extends under the pilothouse to form a sort of quarter berth.

There's a little over 6 feet of headroom in the pilothouse and the galley area and you can walk all the way to the forward cabin without ducking, which is unusual on a 30-footer. The Rawson carries its beam well forward and high up, taking full advantage of its high



## Rawson PH 30

**Designer:** William Garden  
**Builder:** Ron Rawson, Inc.  
**LOA:** 30 feet 6 inches  
**LWL:** 22 feet 0 inches  
**Beam:** 9 feet 0 inches  
**Draft:** 5 feet 0 inches  
**Displacement:** 12,000 pounds  
**Ballast:** 5,000 pounds  
**Sail area:** 424 square feet  
**Disp./LWL ratio:** 503  
**Sail area/Disp. ratio:** 12.9

freeboard. There's no scrunching down and backing into the V-berths; Devon and his wife, Penny, sleep with their heads forward. The berths are 6 feet 6 inches long with plenty of shoulder room for two. The head is small but contains a sink, shower, and storage.

The accommodations of the Rawson 30 are interestingly laid out with spaces of differing sizes and at different levels: the cockpit is small, the pilothouse large; the galley and head are small, the forward cabin unexpectedly large. The engine room is generous in the extreme. While each space has its particular quality and purpose, they are all interconnected to become a unified whole, and the overall effect is one of openness both within the boat and, through the pilothouse windows, with the outside.

## The rig

The Rawson PH 30 is a masthead sloop with a 225-square-foot mainsail. *Alcyone* has a 150 percent genoa on a Furlex roller. The single-spreader aluminum mast is deck-stepped with the compression post unobtrusively integrated into the bulkhead between the galley and the head. Standing rigging is conventional, with two lowers and one upper shroud, headstay, and backstay.

The main and foresail halyards are cleated at the mast. The Cunningham and vang lines are led aft to the cockpit.

## The engine

Devon and Penny have owned *Alcyone* since 2003. She was a liveaboard before that and in sorry shape. As part of a stem-to-stern refit, Devon replaced



the old Volvo MD11 raw-water-cooled engine with a new four-cylinder, 33-hp, freshwater-cooled Vetus diesel fitted with a 14 x 13 three-bladed fixed propeller. He's very pleased with the conversion, most of which he did himself.

Engine access is excellent, if a bit unusual: first you remove the table, then lift a floor hatch in the after end of the pilothouse sole. This exposes most of the engine. That done, you can slide a floor hatch aft to get at the flywheel, automatic fire extinguisher, bilge pump, fuel filters, and various ventilation hoses. The engine room has very good access for routine servicing and maintaining sundry mechanical and electrical equipment. A hatch in the cockpit sole provides access to the stuffing box.

## Performance

*Alcyone*, having a full keel with the propeller aperture taken entirely out of the rudder, backed with predictable imprecision. The right-handed prop wanted to back us to the left, rather than to the right where we would have liked, but once Devon had some steerage way, he put her in neutral and she went where he wanted her to.

It was a blustery day on Puget Sound with winds 15 to 20 knots, gusting to 25 around the headlands. We took a reef in the main and rolled the genoa in about halfway as we began to work to windward on a close reach. Under the conditions, it took a little while to settle down but, once both sails were full and drawing, we quickly approached hull speed. With a whopping displacement/length ratio of 503 and a small rig, she is not fast. The clinometer would lurch over to 30 degrees and stay there for a spell. The added weight and windage of the pilothouse no doubt contributes to her tenderness. She'd lean over in a hurry but then harden up as we got the rail down. *Alcyone* is well balanced on the wind or reaching. We didn't take any water over the bow or rail.

On the way home, I tried out the pilothouse steering station. Rolling and pitching, as we were, I was pressed down to leeward against the wheel and the pilothouse side, but the relative quiet and warmth were welcome.

## Conclusion

There's a lot to be said for a pilothouse on a good sailboat, particularly in areas where the sailing season can be



The engine and other systems are under the pilothouse sole and quite accessible.

extended. The higher cockpit bulkhead offers considerable shelter even without a dodger and, if the weather deteriorates, the helmsman and crew can move inside and keep going. Considering the amount of time a cruising sailboat spends in the marina or on moorings, to say nothing of cruising in cold and inclement weather during the spring and fall, the advantage is clear. Devon often singlehands *Alcyone*, racing and cruising about the islands.



Its high freeboard and relatively narrow beam combine to make the Rawson 30 initially tender. That freeboard and the pilothouse help keep things dry in the cockpit.

True, the Rawson PH 30 isn't as nimble or swift as a racer/cruiser. She's a cruiser with a capital C. That said, Devon enjoys racing his boat regularly, taking full advantage of his considerable handicap; *Alcyone* has a PHRF rating of 333. It's hard to find a boat with comparable performance. Even the hefty 20-foot Flicka rates around 300 or less.

Anyone interested in the Rawson PH 30 should take a look at the very similar Gulf 32. Owners' comments and lively discussions comparing the two William Garden designs can be found on the Internet.

Used boat prices are apt to vary greatly, depending on the boat's condition and even its location. Inexpensive examples in need of extensive refits are available but a well-found Rawson PH 30, such as *Alcyone*, can run as much as \$25,000 to \$30,000 or more. Rawsons seem to come up for sale rarely. *Δ*

*Richard Smith is a contributing editor with Good Old Boat. In addition to sailing and writing about boats, he's an architect, and he designs and builds very small houses. He and his wife, Beth, live in a house with a 16-foot beam and an LOA just a few feet shorter than their Ericson Cruising 31, Kuma, which they sail on the reaches of Puget Sound.*

# A designer's designer

***Phil Rhodes inspired a generation of yacht designers, including Bob Perry***

by Robert Perry

It was about 50 years ago. I was probably 15 years old. I had started sailing and I was studying mechanical drawing in school. I worked in a meat market after school and I would walk home from work and pass a drugstore that had a good supply of magazines by the front door. One afternoon, I picked up a copy of *Popular Boating* and there on the cover was a photo of the Chesapeake 32. Inside the magazine was a feature story on the Chesapeake 32. I was struck by the beauty of this little cruising boat. To my young eye, the boat just seemed to exude perfection of proportion. It was a fairly simple design but it was powerful enough to convince me that I wanted to design sailing yachts for a living. In this article, we are going to take a look back at the work of Phil Rhodes. His designs range from 12-foot Penguin dinghies to ocean racers, to mega-yacht motorsailers, large power yachts, and commercial vessels. I have tried to pick out a selection of his designs that I think show the Rhodes "eye" at its best.

## An impressive life's work

Philip L. Rhodes was born in 1895 in Ohio and did not come from a yachting background. He spent some of his early years living by the Ohio River, where he was first exposed to the large paddle-wheelers and other vessels that worked the river. Phil soon started sketching and carving boats. While in high school, he designed and built a single-step hydroplane called *Dusty*. By the time he graduated from high school, he had had two articles published in *Motor Boating* magazine.

While attending Denison University in Ohio, Phil made the decision to become a naval architect and, in 1916, transferred to MIT. After working for several other designers, Phil opened his own office in New York City in either 1924 or '25. It was a small "hole in the wall" office with just enough room for Phil and one assistant. At one time, that assistant was a young Olin Stephens.

When the Depression hit, work was slim, and Phil began working

with the large firm of Cox & Stevens, concentrating on large commercial vessels but keeping his hand in with yachts working at home. He quickly rose to an administrative position. Phil was considered an excellent draftsman, and that was back in the day when you drew with a drafting pen with ink on cloth. It was a demanding art.

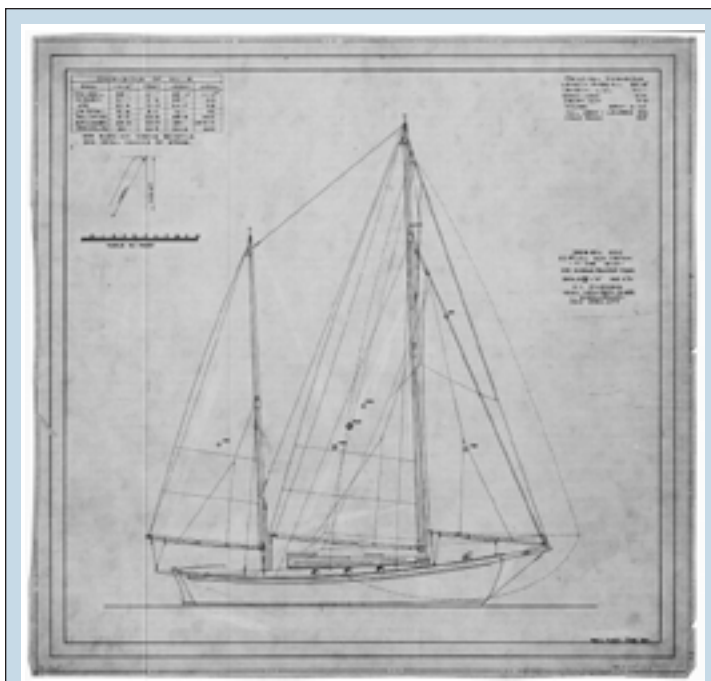
In 1947, Cox & Stevens was dissolved and the firm's name was changed to Philip L. Rhodes, Naval Architects and Marine Engineers. Rhodes designs were being built all over the world and the Rhodes office was one of the first to explore the use of fiberglass in series- or "production-" built boats. The Rhodes Bounty II was the first large sailboat built of fiberglass. I learned to sail in a 12-foot Rhodes Penguin dinghy.

Phil Rhodes, a tall, handsome, kind-looking man was usually photographed smoking a pipe. He died in 1974 at the age of 79. The list of designers who got their start in the Rhodes office is long and includes Bill Tripp, Al Mason, Francis Kinney, Winthrop Warner, James McCurdy, Olin Stephens, Bob Wallstrom, and Charles Wittholz.

## Tide Rip/Dog Star

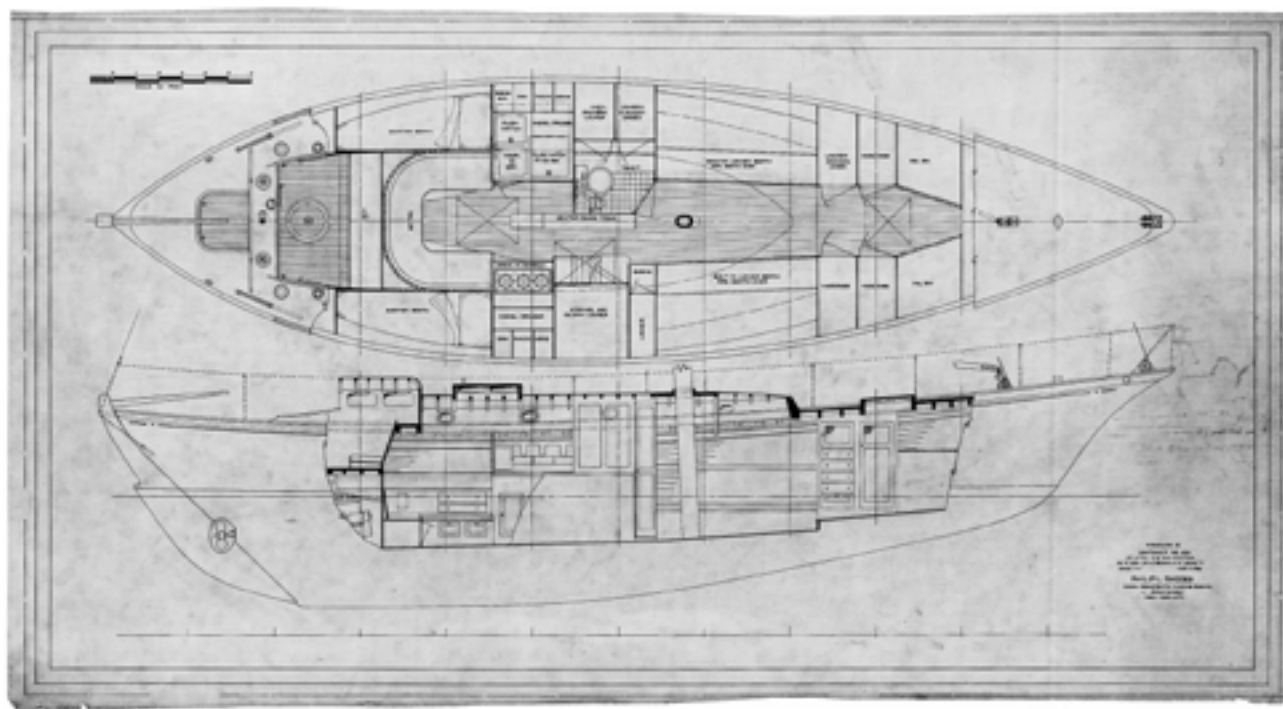
Phil liked double-enders and designed several of them, starting in 1926 with *Caribe*. My favorite Rhodes double-ender is *Dog Star*, also known as *Tide Rip*. I could be wrong, but I think one modestly successful Taiwan double-ender was based on this parent set of lines. A GRP version of *Dog Star*, called the Traveler 32, was built in the U.S. The Traveler 32 has a much more dramatically cut-away forefoot than did the original *Dog Star*.

I just love *Dog Star*. It's only 30 feet 8 inches LOD, with 10 feet 2 inches beam and 5 feet of draft, but it is as shapely as can be and very salty looking. The waterlines are almost symmetrical fore and aft. In studying the tall, ketch-rig sail, plan you can begin to see the magic of the Rhodes sheerline. In Phil's era, designers were not afraid to bend that batten and put some strong spring in their sheers. Phil was extremely good at it and I think his sheers convey a proud strength.



Sail plan for *Tide Rip*. This boat was also known as *Dog Star*.





*Kirawan II* has a most interesting layout, as the accommodation plan and inboard profile shows, above. With that hard dodger aft, you would assume there was belowdecks access from the cockpit, but no. The companionway is well forward, well off-center, and on top of the cabin trunk. You could never sell this to a client today. Below, there is a big U-shaped dinette aft flanked by quarter berths. The centerboard trunk interrupts the galley that spreads across the boat. A huge wet locker is to starboard and the head is adjacent to port. There are settee berths and pilot berths in the main saloon. It's a quirky layout designed for men who raced yachts in the 1930s.

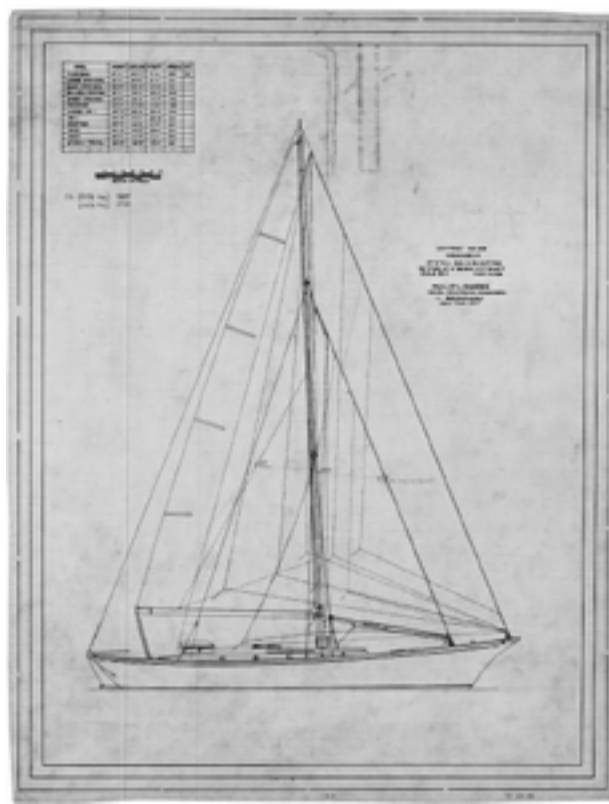
I don't know what the displacement of *Dog Star* is but I would estimate a D/L of around 330. Note on the sail plan how the main backstay is dead-ended on the mizzenmast about 5 feet above the gooseneck. You don't see that detail anymore. The working jib is club-footed. Also note how low the main and mizzen booms are. Back in those days, you learned to duck when you tacked. A designer could not get away with that today. "What do you mean, I have to duck?" I have never sailed this design but I would bet you a beer that the helm balance was impeccable.

*Dog Star's* layout below was very simple. The galley is forward, as was the style in the old days, just aft of the V-berth. The mainmast is well forward up in the eye of the V-berth. There is a wood-burning stove. Adjacent to the galley is an enclosed head. Large and comfy-looking settee berths are aft.

I think you can see in *Dog Star* some of the origins of the love of double-enders that was so strong among so many cruising sailors through the 1990s. I know this design influenced my own work.

### ***Kirawan II (Hother)***

I have a hard time picking my favorite Rhodes design, but *Kirawan II*, designed for Robert Baruch, is always very near the top. For one it's a double-ender and for two it has an outboard rudder and tiller steering. The LOA is 46 feet 3 inches and the draft is only 4 feet 9 inches, but a large centerboard at least doubled that draft. I do know that



Sail plan for *Kirawan II*.

this hull was tank-tested in 1938. They tested a deep-keel version against a centerboard version and found them equally effective. The centerboard was bronze plate over a cast bronze frame with 1,000 pounds of internal lead. Imagine the expense of that today.

The bow of *Kirawan II* is unusual. You could call it a “modified clipper” bow. Originally, Phil drew the boat with a more conventional, short overhang bow and a bowsprit. But he did not like the look and tried this concave bow profile while giving the forward sections plenty of flare and buoyancy to keep it from burying. It worked.

*Kirawan II* was raced extensively and then bought by Jakob Isbrandtsen who changed the name to *Hother*. In 1955, *Hother* was bought by Paul Hoffman and that’s when she really started to clean up on the race course, winning 29 out of 33 races in their first season. This boat certainly was a very distinctive looking CCA racer with her outboard rudder and unusual stem profile.

I think the bow shape is a bit odd, but it just works so well with the rest of the proportions that I can’t criticize it. Note again the strong sweep to the sheer and the way it’s echoed by the cove stripe and thin bootstripe.

The modern cutter rig has proportions similar to my own Valiant 40. Note the mini boomkin aft to keep the backstay clear of the outboard rudder. You can easily see how Phil used the concave bow profile to pull the stem forward to get the center of pressure of the headsail forward. However, as originally drawn, *Kirawan II* had too much weather helm and, under Hoffman’s ownership, Phil modified the rudder shape, adding area low on the rudder blade and shortening the boom to give the mainsail a 3:1 aspect ratio. This was the race-winning combination and a harbinger of modern mainsail proportions. To my eye, the mast should have been about 28 inches forward; that would have eased the helm pressure.

## Bounty II

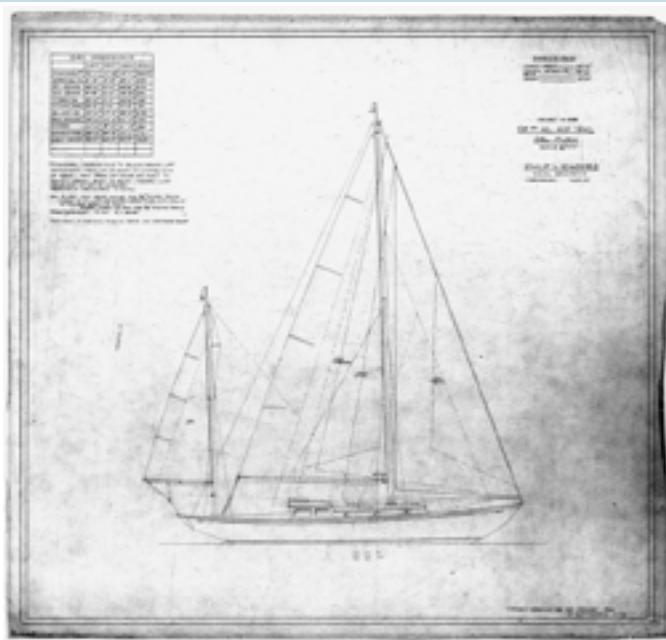
Bounty II, not to be confused with the earlier Rhodes Bounty, may not be one of my favorite Rhodes boats, but in the context of *Good Old Boat* it is probably the most important Rhodes design. Phil’s son Bodie drew the lines for Bounty II, which has a 28-foot DWL and is a direct reduction of the beautiful sloop *Altair*, which was 29 feet on the waterline. It is unusual to just mathematically reduce hull lines but, in this case, the reduction was small so it worked well.

What makes Bounty II so important to the *Good Old Boat* reader is that this is one of the very first large GRP sailing yachts. After WWII, it was getting hard to find skilled wooden boatbuilders and materials. The builder for Bounty II was the Coleman Boat and Plastics Company, later changed to AeroMarine Plastics Corp., in Sausalito, California. Coleman was building the original wooden Bounty before the war, with production-line techniques, but the war brought that project to an end.

In 1956, Coleman decided to produce another “stock” boat and, with Rhodes having some experience in much smaller GRP boats, it was decided the new

Bounty II would be GRP. Ironically, engineering data for GRP construction was pretty scarce at the time, so Rhodes collaborated with Bill Garden in Seattle on the engineering of the Bounty II’s construction.

By today’s standards, with its solid glass decks and a massively thick hull laminate, the Bounty II was an icebreaker. We know now that the scantlings were basically guesswork, resulting in an over-built heavy boat. But they did endure, and you can still find Bounty IIs in almost any marina in the U.S.



Sail plan for the Bounty II



Sail plan for the Chesapeake 32



As you would expect, the sheer is perfection, dipping down around station 8 and kicking up with a strong spring to a very shapely transom. The sections are wineglass-type with thick garboards, which allowed the engine to be placed low in the bilge of the boat. The long overhangs conformed to the CCA rule. The cabin trunk features a raised portion aft.

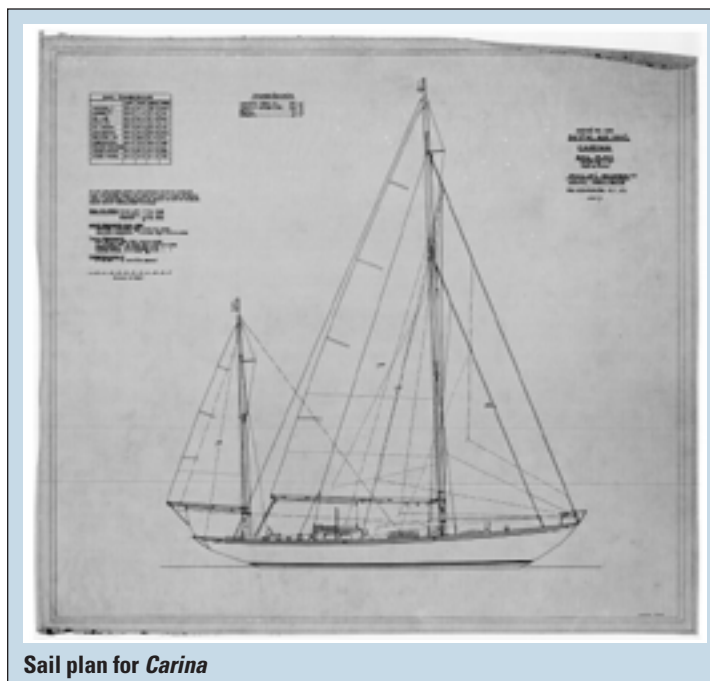
As a kid, I was not too keen on the look of the Bounty II. All the glamour of the beautiful wood trim and detailing that had made the older Rhodes boats stick out was gone. With no wooden cap rail and no “eyebrow” on the cabin trunk it was all too “jello-moldish” to my eye. But I now realize that this was all part of the early experience in transitioning to GRP construction. Heck, the first boats built to this design came with GRP masts. They were extremely heavy and made the boats quite tender and were soon replaced by aluminum masts. Remember, this was 1956.

In the early 1960s, AeroMarine Plastics Corp. was bought out by Pearson Yachts in Rhode Island. Pearson retained the tooling for the Bounty II class and built it as the Rhodes 41, with some small design changes. The freeboard was raised slightly, the engine was lifted out of the bilge, and the single window in the raised house was replaced by two windows. In 1968, Pearson stopped production of the Rhodes 41 after building nearly 50 boats. Bounty II represents the beginning of production boatbuilding as we know it today.

### Chesapeake 32

This is the little Rhodes design that got my heart pumping when I was 15. It was designed for the George Walton Company of Annapolis in 1959. It's a 32-footer with a short DWL of 22 feet 1 inch. The beam of 8 feet 9 inches gives it a length-to-beam ratio of 3.65, indicating what today would be a narrow boat. Draft is just shy of 5 feet. The boats were originally built in Denmark by Danboats, Inc., and the first eight boats were a little “soft” in the shell laminate. Later boats were reinforced with longitudinal stringers. After hull number 25, the builder was Sandersen's Plastic Boats in Copenhagen and build quality was improved.

I find the proportions of the Chesapeake 32 very appealing. Freeboard is low and I suspect “headroom” is less than 5 feet 11 inches. The “jello mold” look has been avoided by using a wooden cockpit coaming and a teak eyebrow trim on the cabin trunk. You can't see the underwater profile here, but by this time, Phil was pulling the leading edge of the keel well aft and the keel was starting to almost look like a fin. Yet the rudder stayed attached to the aft end of the keel. The 32 had a reputation for hobbyhorsing, so additional ballast was




Sail plan for *Carina*

added amidships and reportedly helped the situation. The narrow beam of the 32 resulted in a smallish layout.

But there were V-berths, an enclosed head, settee berths in the main cabin, and a minimal galley and chart table shoved well aft. Today, you could find roomier 26-footers, but certainly not prettier.

### *Carina*

I hardly know what to say about *Carina*, designed in 1955. I think the drawings speak for themselves. To my eye, this is Phil's most beautiful design. It's perfection in yacht design, beautiful, and

an ocean-racing rocket of its day. The long overhangs, the sweeping sheerline, the trim little cabin trunk, and the flush deck forward all combine to make this pure eye candy. There is just not an ugly line on this boat. Note the subtle spoon profile to the stem and the hint of hollow in the counter aft. I even think the yawl rig adds an air of interest to the look. *Carina* was built by H. Heidtman of Hamburg, Germany, in four months, probably a record. *Carina* went on to earn an impressive race record in the U.S. and in Europe. She won the Transatlantic Race that started 12 days after she was delivered to the U.S. *Carina* also won the Fastnet Race, the Bermuda Race, three awards at Cowes Week, then won another Transatlantic Race and another Fastnet. You can't ask much more of a boat. They don't make them like this anymore. 

*Robert Perry is a Good Old Boat contributing editor. His own career in yacht design began toward the end of that of Phil Rhodes and he has carried on the tradition of drawing boats that remain good even as they get older.*

### About the drawings on these pages

The illustrations that accompany this article are reproductions of the original ink-on-cloth drawings made by Philip Rhodes and represent his skill and artistry. These drawings, and hundreds like them, are in the Philip Rhodes collection held by Mystic Seaport.

The Daniel S. Gregory Ships Plans Library at Mystic Seaport preserves, and makes accessible, the documentary history of American naval architecture from the 19th and 20th centuries. The library actively collects plans from all areas of the U.S. In this specialized archive of approximately 100,000 naval architectural drawings, yacht plans and small-boat plans sit side by side with drawings of fishing dragnets and lighthouses.

For information and to research and order plans, visit <http://library.mysticseaport.org> or call 860-572-5367.

# Lancer 25

*A trailerable pocket cruiser  
with standing headroom*

by Gregg Nestor

*Bump-A-Noggin, owned by Rodney and Kathleen Scott, steps out, showing off the Lancer 25's pert lines.*

**R**ichard Valdes founded Columbia Yachts in 1958. Under his presidency, the company became the world's largest manufacturer of fiberglass sailboats with sales approaching \$300 million by the early 1970s. Following his departure from Columbia in 1974, he established the Lancer Yacht Corporation in Irvine, California. The company soon had manufacturing facilities on both coasts, in Fountain Valley, California, and Largo, Florida.

Lancer's 14-model product line ranged from 25 to 65 feet and included motorsailers as well as sailboats. The motorsailers were designed by Herb David and were unique in that they were available with single or twin diesel engines. They performed tolerably well under sail but really stood out under power — their high-horsepower engines produced speeds in excess of 15 knots.

While the design team from C&C Yachts was contracted to draw the

lines for the bulk of Lancer's sailboats, W. Shad Turner — a young naval architect noted for his custom and production racing designs, including six Santana models for the W.D. Schock Corporation — was commissioned to design the company's trailerable sailboats, including the Lancer 25.

In 1983, Lancer Yacht Corporation was purchased by a company called Bally. Production of sailboats and motorsailers continued for three more years until 1986 when the company ceased operations.

## Design

Shad Turner drew the Lancer 25 with a fine entry, low freeboard, a fairly flat sheer, and a pinched stern favored by the International Offshore Rule (IOR) that was popular at the time. Under the water, he gave it a long, shallow-draft fixed keel with a spade rudder.

The design feature that most distinguishes this 25-foot trailersailer is standing headroom. By recessing the

inside of the keel and locating the ballast along its bottom, Shad created a keel sump 6 feet long and 16 inches deep. What would ordinarily be 54 inches of sitting headroom without the sump became 70 inches of standing headroom.

Introduced in 1975, the Lancer 25 remained in production until 1984. In that time, at least three variations or upgrades were made, most involving equipment or cabin layout.

## Construction

The Lancer 25 is stoutly built. Its hull is constructed of hand-laid solid fiberglass and the cabintop, deck, cockpit, and transom are fiberglass reinforced with a plywood core. The hull-to-deck joint appears to be an inward flange and lid joint that has been fastened together with screws on 6-inch centers, glassed over on the inside, capped with a slotted toerail, and covered with a vinyl rubrail. All the deck hardware is through-bolted and mounted with proper backing plates.





The wide companionway makes for easy egress, but you have to get by the mainsheet tackle first, at left. The cockpit coamings are sufficiently high to provide decent back support. The gas tank for the outboard motor is in the lazarette aft of the tiller, at right.

Drawing only 2 feet 4 inches, the Lancer 25's keel is often described as a shoal-draft fin. However, with a root chord of nearly 14 feet and a tip chord of 8 feet, a more appropriate description would be a cut-away full keel or a long cruising fin. It is molded as an integral part of the hull and has 1,200 pounds of lead ballast bonded to its lowest point.

Interior construction consists of a fiberglass pan that's bonded to the hull, a series of padded fabric hull panels, and a foam-backed vinyl headliner. These components successfully cover any raw fiberglass and make for easy access to deck-hardware fasteners, wiring, and other fittings. They also impart a degree of insulation and noise suppression. The single bulkhead is teak-veneered plywood and all doors and miscellaneous trim pieces are solid teak.

### Deck features

The Lancer 25's most notable above-the-water feature is the long, low, cambered coachroof that slopes steeply toward the bow and disappears into the foredeck. A pair of long, low, tapered portlights on each side of the cabin emphasize this streamlining effect. Combined with the boat's sharp entry, these design elements give an impression of speed even when the boat's at rest. Unfortunately, this styling results in a loss of interior volume and foredeck area.

The deck and coachroof are relatively obstruction-free. Forward, there's a pair of chocks, a deck pipe, a single mooring cleat, and a cowl vent. There is no anchor locker. On the coachroof there's a translucent fiberglass forward hatch, a proper sea hood over the companionway sliding hatch, and a molded-in coaming that allows for the easy installation of a dodger or the optional "special windshield." All horizontal surfaces are finished with a fairly aggressive non-skid pattern. Stainless-steel bow and stern pulpits, plus a single lifeline on 24-inch stanchions, provide some security, but there are no

handrails or handholds. Going forward safely in anything but the most benign seas would be very difficult.

The cockpit is reasonably sized and features 66-inch-long seats with seat-backs averaging 13 inches high. The foot well is narrow enough to offer good bracing and the high coamings provide comfortable back support. The lazarette affords stowage for the outboard motor's 6-gallon fuel tank. Originally, it gave access to the outboard motor, which was transom-mounted on the boat's centerline. On our review boat, *Bump-A-Noggin*, owned by Rodney and Kathleen Scott, the original cutout



Making up for the absence of genoa tracks, slotted toerails provide multiple options for leading the jibsheets, at right. The unusual color scheme shows off the vee transom.



*Bump-A-Noggin* has a bright interior thanks to reupholstered settee cushions. The compression post for the mast is dead center, at left. Forward, the head compartment has vanities port and starboard, with the sink in the starboard one, and a portable toilet is normally between them, at right.

transom had been glassed over and the outboard motor mounted to port on an adjustable bracket.

To starboard is a transom-mounted folding swim ladder. A pair of 1¾-inch drains keeps the cockpit dry. However, there's no bridge deck and, together with the generously large companionway opening, these drains may not be sufficient to keep water out of the cabin in rough weather. While under sail in large seas, it would be prudent to keep at least the lower hatchboard in place.

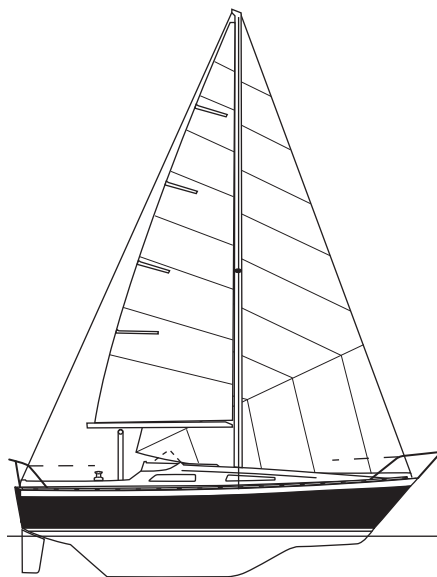
## Belowdecks

The Lancer 25 cabin is divided into two compartments, with the forward one being further divided into roughly two areas. In the forepeak, there's a space to store the anchor rode plus a large sail locker.

Immediately aft of the forepeak is the head compartment. It has port and starboard vanities with space between them for a portable toilet or an optional marine head. A stainless-steel sink with manual cold water is fitted in the starboard vanity.

A V-berth conversion also was available as an option, giving this 25-foot trailerable boat a six-berth layout! The forward hatch and cowl vent provide light and ventilation. Unfortunately, the cowl vent lacks a Dorade box to help keep water out and has the potential to make things awfully wet below. When conditions warrant, it should be plugged. The teak-faced bulkhead and solid teak doors give privacy and separate this forward compartment from the main cabin.

The saloon is traditional with port and starboard opposing settees. As berths, the 6-foot 4-inch settees are



## Lancer 25

**Designer:** Shad Turner  
**LOA:** 24 feet 8 inches  
**LWL:** 20 feet 1 inch  
**Beam:** 8 feet 0 inches  
**Draft:** 2 feet 4 inches  
**Displacement:** 3,400 pounds  
**Ballast:** 1,200 pounds  
**Sail area:** 248 square feet  
**Disp./LWL ratio:** 187  
**Sail area/displ. ratio:** 17.6  
**Ballast/displ. ratio:** 0.35  
**Headroom:** 5 feet 10 inches  
**Mast height:** 32 feet (above DWL)  
**Water:** 15 gallons

long enough but are a bit too narrow. A "super bunk" option was available that converts the settees into a full-width berth.

At the boat's widest beam, and separating the settees from their respective quarter berths, are port and starboard galley units. Originally, the port unit featured a two-burner alcohol cooktop, stowage, and counter space, while a stainless-steel sink with manual cold water and a top-loading icebox were housed in the starboard unit. *Bump-A-Noggin's* alcohol stove has been replaced with a microwave and the under-counter stowage now houses a 110-volt refrigerator. Surprisingly, Lancer did not provide a table as standard equipment; a teak folding table that mounts to the compression post was available as an option.

Four fixed tinted portlights illuminate the saloon while the companionway hatch contributes fresh air. The sole is low-maintenance fiberglass and, thanks to the hollow keel sump, headroom is 5 feet 10 inches. There are no handholds at counter level, shoulder level, or overhead.

Aft and beneath each of the cockpit seats is a quarter berth. Measuring 6 feet 4 inches long and 30 inches wide, these are roomier than the saloon settees. Above the foot of each quarter berth is a clamshell vent opening to the cockpit. Battery stowage is beneath the starboard quarter berth.

Between the quarter berths and aft of the companionway ladder is a large open stowage area perfect for stowing bulky items such as fenders, boathooks,





The quarter berths under the cockpit seats, above, are a little wider than the settees in the saloon. By recessing the cabin sole into the keel, Lancer gave this low-profile boat nearly 6 feet of standing headroom, at right. Behind the ladder is a large space for stowing bulky items. The bottom step hinges up to reveal the bilge pump.

and life jackets. Beneath this area is a molded-in 15-gallon water tank, with its fill pipe inside the boat. The bottom companionway step is hinged and allows access to the electric bilge pump.

In addition to the lazarette, forepeak, and galley, the Lancer 25 has eight separate stowage lockers. The two bins beneath the quarter berths are molded into the liner pan and could be used as auxiliary ice chests.

### The rig

True to its vintage, this masthead sloop was rigged for a favorable rating under the IOR, which, among other things, encouraged large headsails and small mainsails. Standing rigging consists of a forestay, a single pair of spreaders, cap and lower shrouds, and a single backstay. The chainplates are outboard and glassed to the hull. They also appear to be mechanically fastened to the hull with the screws used to secure the hull-to-deck joint. The mast is stepped on deck and supported below by a compression post.

The halyards are wire-to-rope and run through external sheaves. A single Lewmar #7 winch is mounted on the mast. Two more #7s are mounted on the cockpit coamings. There are no headsail tracks but an almost unlimited number of headsail sheeting angles is possible by using the slotted toerail and a snatch block. The mainsail is sheeted nearly mid-boom and connected to a traveler mounted on the cockpit sole.

The standard sails are a 5-ounce Dacron main and a lapper jib. These combine for a sail area of 248 square feet. A 150 percent genoa and a spinnaker with gear were optional. Tiller steering was standard.

### Under way

To fully understand how and why the Lancer 25 sails the way it does, an understanding of the IOR is helpful. Under the rule, bottoms tended to be flatter, especially forward. This resulted in a sharp, deep entry and had a negative effect on steering. Shapes tended to be finer or pinched in the bow and stern, which made boats difficult to steer downwind, especially under a spinnaker. The larger headsail and smaller mainsail takes more effort when tacking and may make these boats less attractive as family cruisers. Add to this the Lancer's long, fat, and shallow keel, and you have a boat that requires constant attention to the helm, is a bit tricky to tack or jibe, and makes noticeable leeway.

The few Lancer 25s that are raced have PHRF ratings of 264. By comparison, the popular Cal 25 outboard model, of which there are large fleets, rates mostly 222 seconds per mile, as does the shoal-keel Catalina 25.

### Things to check out

The simplicity of the boat makes for a short list of things to check out. Besides age-related issues, there's

always the potential for a wet and delaminated core. Sound carefully for leaks around deck fittings, especially stanchions. There have been reports of leaking portlights, but this is an easy fix. Remove the interior side panels and examine the hull-to-deck joint, which could be damaged in a hard docking. The boat originally came with wire-to-rope halyards. If they have been replaced with all-rope halyards, make sure that the masthead sheaves were also replaced.

### Conclusion

Taken overall, the construction of the Lancer 25 is above average, and its rigging and controls are adequate. Its hollowed-out keel gives this trailer-sailer "space appeal." At 3,400 pounds displacement, this boat must be towed by an SUV or pickup truck. Its sailing qualities are fair and it is best suited for protected waters, such as inland lakes and reservoirs. Expect to pay \$2,500 to \$4,000, keeping in mind that condition is everything. *▲*

*Gregg Nestor, a contributing editor with Good Old Boat, has had a lifelong interest in all things aquatic. Gregg has written several books, including The Trailer Sailer Owner's Manual: Buy-Outfit-Trail-Maintain. Last June, he and his wife, Joyce, took delivery of a 1994 Caliber 35 and spent the next two months refitting and addressing some neglected maintenance issues so they could go sailing.*

**A**s our Pearson 28, *Indecision*, approached her 30th birthday, my wife, Mary, and I began to think about refreshing her non-skid. Because non-skid wears gradually and renewing it can be time-consuming and expensive, we procrastinated (as other sailors probably also do), ignoring the problem for as long as possible and blaming our old deck shoes for the slippery decks. But when new shoes failed to solve the problem and we thought about the safety issues involved, we began some serious research.

Our sailboat has hanked-on sails, so we needed a non-skid surface that would provide sufficient traction on a slippery, slanted deck but wasn't too aggressive on body parts. We also wanted something that would be durable and easy to clean. Of course, it had to look good too.

More non-skid products are available now than in the past and they generally fall into two categories: manufactured sheet materials and paints employing

**Aging non-skid doesn't just detract from a boat's appearance, it presents a real safety problem as it wears smooth.**

non-skid additives. Manufactured sheet materials are available in various sizes, thicknesses, and molded-in patterns. These are cut to fit. Some sheet materials — such as Treadmaster and Nautolex Decko Dot — must be applied with adhesives. Others — like SeaDek — come as peel-and-stick sheets.

Many paints, both one-part and catalyzed, can be mixed with additives like ground walnut shells or sand to achieve a random grippy surface. Some of these paints are modified with thickeners and then rolled to achieve

# Getting

## Old decks get

a stippled surface. Another, Ultra Tuff Marine non-skid, is a water-based resin with recycled rubber granules blended into a single component.

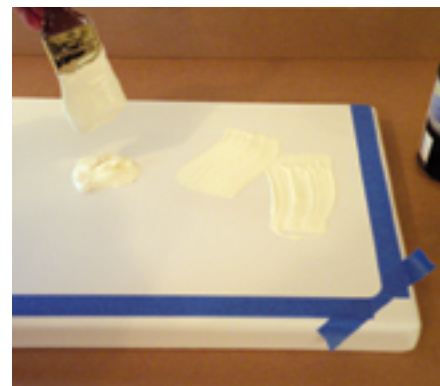
Each approach has its advantages and drawbacks. All require prep work and differing degrees of skill and patience to achieve good results. The manufactured sheet materials promised a professional-looking surface and durability, but we were concerned with the difficulty of removing or repairing individual sections. The paint products, particularly those with



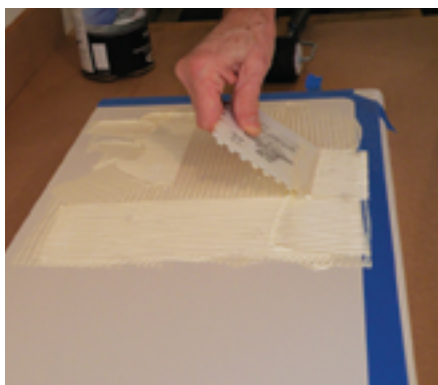
After preparing the surfaces, Stephen masked around the areas to be coated.



KiwiGrip's thick consistency means it could be spooned from the can.



The first step in the application was to place piles of paint on the surface.



Next, Stephen used a notched trowel to spread the paint across the surface.



Still using the spreader, Stephen covered the entire surface with an even coating.



The special roller works the paint onto the surface and gives it its "grippy" texture.



# a grip

## *new non-skid out of a can*

by Stephen Perry

additives, also promised professional results and might be easier to repair or renew. We were still weighing the pros and cons of both methods when our research turned up a product called KiwiGrip that employed a third approach.

### Texture in a can

KiwiGrip is a relative newcomer to the U.S. market but has been in use in New Zealand for more than 15 years. This product is a one-part acrylic paint that gets its anti-skid texture through

application with a special roller. It comes pre-thickened to a consistency similar to what you would get by adding thickeners to the paints noted above. KiwiGrip is available in five standard colors, and the company will mix custom colors for a small additional fee. The company website describes it as a user-friendly product that can be applied by the average person with professional-looking results. Claims like that are widespread and personal experience has taught us to be skeptical about anything that sounds too easy,

**Fresh non-skid boosted the crew's ability to move around the boat with surefooted confidence.**

but we thought the product deserved a closer look.

KiwiGrip is pre-thickened and relies on a proprietary roller for its non-skid properties. That eliminates the need to mix in a non-skid additive, or sprinkle it on top of the wet painted surface, and two potential problems associated with those methods: the incomplete or uneven distribution of the additive and difficulty duplicating the non-skid pattern later if repairs are needed. The paint has a creamy consistency and the special roller creates a stippled pattern similar to what many boat manufacturers mold in during construction.

In some cases, KiwiGrip requires less surface preparation than other products; for example, no sanding is necessary when the product is applied over existing factory non-skid. Those surfaces should be cleaned with soap and water and dried. As with almost all paints (and resins), glossy surfaces should be sanded with fairly coarse sandpaper to ensure a good mechanical bond. It's also important to remove wax from any surfaces bordering areas where non-skid will be applied.

### A decision made

We decided a paint-based non-skid would be the best way for us to achieve a professional-looking result while allowing the most flexibility for future repairs or renewal. We also wanted a contingency plan and thought this approach would be easiest to reverse or

### Resources

KiwiGrip may be ordered directly from the company, Pachena LLC, or through one of its distributors. A list of distributors in the U.S., Canada, and worldwide is available on the company's website. When ordering directly through the company's website, each order includes one roller cover. An additional roller cover is included for each additional 4-liter (or equivalent) order.

#### Pachena LLC

206-306-2222 (Seattle, WA)

info@pachena.com; www.pachena.com

## Materials and tools

**B**efore beginning any of the actual "wet work" involving paint or other coatings, I try to have everything on hand that I might possibly need. Here is the list of what we had at the ready for the non-skid project and a few notes that might be helpful.

- One quart KiwiGrip, color beige. Expected coverage is about 25 square feet. As with all paints, coverage can vary considerably. We would be covering

15 square feet with our trial run on the cockpit seats.

- Special texturing roller, a few disposable brushes, ½-inch notched plastic trowel, paper towels, sponges, masking tape, scissors, utility knife (an X-Acto knife is also useful), mixing sticks, two or three putty knives, disposable latex gloves, trash bags, and a couple of buckets with clean warm water for cleanup.
- Tarps to shield the cockpit area from the sun while we applied the product. Warm decks accelerate drying time and this can affect adhesion as well as the appearance of the finished surface. We ran the tarps from the lifeline on one side of the boat, over the boom to the lifeline on the opposite side, and tied them in place.



correct if something went awry during the application.

I was initially concerned about KiwiGrip's longevity because it's a waterborne finish. My past experience with similar finishes was that, for outdoor use, they're not up to par with the usual solvent-based products. However, several waterborne epoxy paints and catalyzed finishes have come on the market in the last few years with reportedly good results. Waterborne paints are now used in many applications, including antifouling paints and commercial floor coatings. Acrylics are also used in many automotive paints and are said to have excellent adhesion, color retention, and scratch resistance.

We chose to give KiwiGrip a trial run on a small area before proceeding with the rest of the boat. We planned to start with the cockpit seat areas because their well-defined, nearly rectangular shapes seemed easy to mask and roll out quickly. The seats also had several blemishes where hardware fasteners had been removed and we wanted to see how well these could be covered. If something didn't look good right away, it would be easy to wipe off the material before anything set up. The instructions supplied with the product were very clear. We also sent a couple of emails to and called the U.S. distributor, Willy Stiggelbout, for additional advice. He provided moral support plus a few practical tips.

### Getting to work

With the research completed, we were ready to get started on restoring security to our decks. It's always convenient to have an extra pair of hands available, especially when a project involves painting. Among other



*Indecision's cockpit provided ideal surfaces on which to test the non-skid paint.*

things, a helper can speed cleanup if there is a spill, allowing the painter to maintain concentration and the job to progress smoothly.

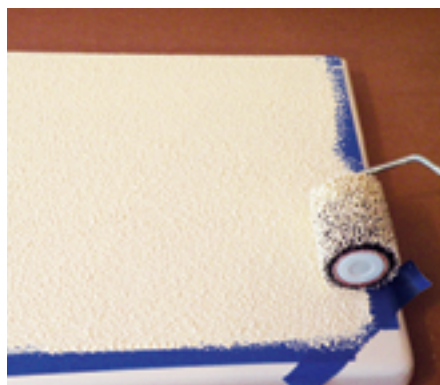
With the Kiwi product and all the usual painting paraphernalia in hand, we discussed who would do what. I, because I had the most experience in finish work, would mask off areas to be treated, then we would work panel-by-panel. Mary would distribute several small piles of KiwiGrip on each panel and I would spread and roll it. Mary would stand by to hand tools to the "expert," clean up as needed, and try to keep things together when the unexpected occurred.

We chose a weather window carefully. It was August. We wanted a day with moderate temperatures and humidity and with no rain in the forecast for 48 hours. A windless day

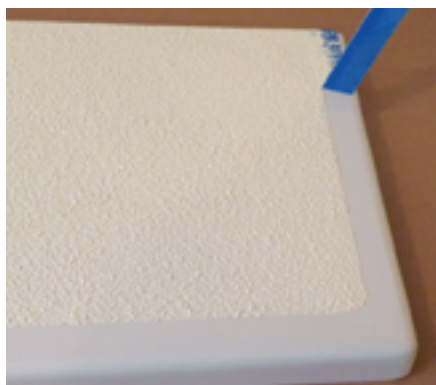
would be ideal to keep dust and debris off the freshly painted surfaces.

After washing the cockpit seats and letting the surfaces dry, we masked off the areas to be coated with blue painter's masking tape (because it contrasted well with the surface). We cut the rounded corners out of 2-inch tape and used 1-inch tape along the straight edges between the corners, keeping as close as possible to the margins of the existing non-skid and pressing the tape down firmly to prevent the KiwiGrip from bleeding under the edge.

Once the prep work was complete, we found ourselves looking at each other, knowing that the next step was to dip the brush in the can. There's always that moment before commencing any project when you look around, wondering what's been forgotten.



**Stephen rolled the paint in all directions until the surface texture looked right.**



**Before the paint had time to set, Stephen carefully removed the masking tape.**



**The finished texture is easy on the eye and the skin but provides a good grip.**





For a modest outlay in time and money, old non-skid can be made to feel like new.

### Adapting to circumstances

As it turned out, there was not enough room in the cockpit for us to work elbow-to-elbow, so we quickly revised our original plan for Mary to distribute the KiwiGrip and for me to spread

and roll it. Instead, I mixed the paint thoroughly and poured a small amount into a paint tray. Using a 3-inch brush, I dropped several piles of the KiwiGrip on the first panel, quickly spread it out using the 1/8-inch notched trowel and then rolled the area slowly. The paint spread easily and I slowly rolled it in all directions, as if I were painting a Sheetrock wall, until the texture was even and looked right.

We looked at each other again and proclaimed almost simultaneously how good it looked! I proceeded to the next panel and easily repeated the success of the first.

By the time the second panel was complete, the brush was slightly crusty from the paint drying a little too quickly. I thoroughly cleaned the trowel, roller, and brush in clear fresh water. Then we removed the tape. A little bit of paint came off with it; the non-skid was still far from dry but a couple of thin spots along the edges had dried more quickly than the rest. By applying more material with a Q-tip (a small thin stick works too), we were able to touch up those spots. Then we were on a roll and quickly finished the remaining two panels, being more careful to remove the tape promptly. This resulted in a nice clean edge.

The day had warmed up as we went along. This made a difference in how the KiwiGrip behaved on the last panel. The paint dried faster, resulting

in a slightly more pronounced stipple pattern as it was rolled. A few touch-ups would be needed but we left well enough alone for the moment; we would complete the finishing touches after our work had cured.

We left the tarps up, put the brushes and other painting tools in a bucket of water, and left for the day. We could barely contain our excitement about coming back to give the new non-skid surface a trial.


A couple of days later, we returned to the boat, took down the tarps, and looked everything over carefully. We agreed the minor differences in degree of stipple between the panels were not pronounced enough to be a concern. The non-skid looked great and worked well; simply running a hand over the surface said "grippy."

We still had almost half of the first quart of KiwiGrip left. By our calculations, this would be enough to coat the cockpit sole. So on a 60-degree day in mid-October, we repeated the process on the cockpit sole. The lower air temperature extended our working time. I spread the paint a bit thinner than before to make sure we would not run short, but the end result was indistinguishable from what we had done before.

### To be continued . . .

We enjoyed several weeks of sailing with our new non-skid surfaces until it was time to haul out and cover the boat for the winter. During what was left of the season, the non-skid proved its effectiveness and we purchased enough KiwiGrip to renew the rest of *Indecision's* deck in the spring. *▲*

*Stephen Perry is a marine surveyor and consultant who enjoys restoring good old boats in his spare time. He and his wife, Mary Broderick, have been sailing coastal New England waters together for more than 20 years on their Pearson 28, Indecision, and hold USCG Masters licenses. They are currently restoring a Nicholson 35 and planning an extended cruise.*

 More online . . . For more notes on KiwiGrip, tips for making the job go smoothly, and lessons Steve and Mary learned, please go online to <[www.goodoldboat.com/reader\\_services/more\\_online/KiwiGrip.php](http://www.goodoldboat.com/reader_services/more_online/KiwiGrip.php)>.

### Resources (continued)

#### Marine non-skid manufacturers American Safety Technologies

Exterior/interior non-skid coatings  
[www.astantislip.com](http://www.astantislip.com)

#### Durabak company

Exterior/interior slip-resistant coatings  
[www.durabak.com](http://www.durabak.com)

#### Nautolex Decko Dot

Marine non-skid flooring  
[www.csctextiles.com/nau.htm](http://www.csctextiles.com/nau.htm)

#### SeaDek Marine Products

Peel-and-stick marine non-skid  
[www.seadek.com](http://www.seadek.com)

#### Soft Point Industries

Rubber texturizing agent for paint  
[www.softsandrubber.com](http://www.softsandrubber.com)

#### Treadmaster

Anti-slip deck covering  
[www.tiflex.co.uk/marine/marine.html](http://www.tiflex.co.uk/marine/marine.html)

#### Ultra Tuff Marine

Non-skid polyurethane safety coating  
[www.ultratuff.net/utmindex.htm](http://www.ultratuff.net/utmindex.htm)

# Displacement Hull Speed 101

## *As fast as physics allows*

by Don Launer

**A**lthough it's somewhat of a misnomer, the term "displacement hull" is used in reference to a boat whose displacement at speed is the same as its displacement at rest. All hulls displace their own weight at rest (see "Buoyancy and Displacement 101," September), but some hulls, when driven fast enough, are able to climb up and plane on the surface of the water. These hulls, called planing hulls, displace considerably less water when at speed than at rest. The loss in buoyancy is made up for by dynamic lift. Most large monohull sailboats have displacement hulls.

### **Making waves**

When a boat travels through the water, it creates a wave that moves at the same speed as the boat. There is a direct relationship between the speed of a wave and the length of that wave. (In fluids, the length of a wave, its wavelength, is usually, but not necessarily, measured from crest to crest.) The faster the speed of a wave, the longer its length. As an example, a tsunami wave often will travel in the open ocean at speeds of hundreds of miles per hour. The wavelength (from crest to crest) is also very long — 20 miles or more — which explains why boats in open water don't notice when a tsunami wave passes beneath them. (For the purposes of this discussion we will ignore how very shallow water and variations in the density of water affect the behavior of waves.)

A boat moving slowly creates a slow-moving wave with a short wavelength. In calm seas, the resulting series of waves can be seen along the hull.

### **Speed limit**

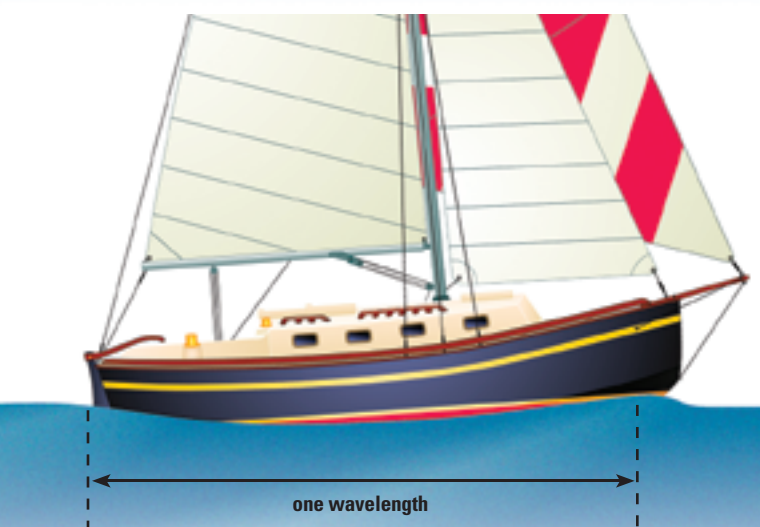
Because the length of a wave is proportional to its speed, as the boat moves faster, the wavelength becomes longer until the point arrives where the length of the wave that the boat is creating is the same as the length of the boat's waterline. If the boat tries to go faster than this, the wave it creates will be longer than the waterline of the boat.







As a boat increases its speed, the wave, too, travels faster and its wavelength is longer. When the wavelength reaches the length of the boat's waterline, the boat has reached its "displacement hull speed."



When a boat attempts to go faster than its displacement hull speed, it creates a faster wave with a wavelength longer than the boat's waterline. In effect, it is trying to go uphill on the face of the wave that it has created, resulting in the familiar squat of the stern.

## “The top speed of a displacement hull is limited by the length of its waterline.”

We've all experienced the phenomenon when a boat "squats down" in the stern. This happens because the hull is in the trough of the wave it's creating while the bow is on the crest. The boat is now attempting to go uphill on the face of the wave it's creating. This holds true for all displacement hulls, whether they are a 30-foot sailboat or the QE2.

To make a heavy boat go uphill takes a tremendous amount of power — more than most displacement hulls have available — and to attempt to do so would be extremely wasteful of fuel for a negligible result. So effectively, the top speed of a displacement hull, often referred to as its "hull speed," is limited by the length of its waterline or, in other words, by the length of the wave it's creating.

Many of us have seen this condition when towing a dinghy. When the towing speed exceeds the dinghy's displacement hull speed, we see the dinghy squat down at the stern as its bow rises on the face of the wave it's creating. This puts great tension on the towline and considerably reduces the speed of the towing vessel.

### Calculating hull speed

For most good old boats, hull speed can be calculated using the formula  $S = 1.34\sqrt{L}$ , where  $S$  is the hull speed in knots and  $L$  is the waterline length in feet. The number 1.34 is a constant. The number 1.4 would more accurately represent the speed of a wave whose length was  $L$ , but many naval architects use the lower number because the effects of achieving maximum hull speed are usually observed *before* the wavelength reaches  $L$ .

As the formula shows, maximum hull speed is proportional to the *square root* of the waterline length, which explains why a boat with a 40-foot waterline doesn't sail twice as fast as a boat with a 20-foot waterline.

### Rule breakers

Waterline length is not the speed-limiting factor for all hulls. Long slender hulls, such as those of multihulls, incur relatively low wave drag (drag due to creating waves) compared to the wetted-surface drag, or viscous drag. The notion of limited hull speed does not apply to these hulls. *▲*

*Don Launer, a Good Old Boat contributing editor, built his two-masted schooner, Delphinus, from a bare hull and has held a USCG captain's license for more than 34 years. He has written several books, including Navigation Through the Ages and The Galley: How Things Work, and frequently gives talks on the history of navigation.*



# Maintenance

## *Year-round sailing leads to*

### **A new bottom**

Salt water introduced us to a variety of new critters intent on turning our hull into a reef and slowing our passage. Our first surprise was that our beloved VC 17 bottom paint had to go: it wasn't formulated for warm southern salt water. We thought we could paint over it, but learned from

Interlux that, to ensure a good bond for any new paint, the VC 17 would have to be removed entirely. We tried washing it off with acetone, then lacquer thinner. We quickly realized there were not enough rags in Mobile to accomplish the task. We ended up sanding it off.

Since we'd gone that far, we applied a barrier coat of Interlux 2000 before painting with ablative bottom paint. Over the years, we've used hard finishes (Trinidad), water action ablative (Micron CSC), and chemical ablative (Micron 66+), in that order. We discontinued Micron 66+ due to adhesion problems. We are currently using Micron Extra, trying for a two-year finish.

### **Effects of salt water**

Our second surprise was that the running lights virtually never all worked when we needed them. Salt water caused bulb bases and press fittings within the fixtures to corrode, and we usually discovered these failures just before a night crossing. We finally replaced the fixtures with Hella sealed LED units, which was a win-win: the lights are reliable and use less current.

Next on the learning curve was the need to monitor our zinc anodes. A friend's boat was eating prop-shaft anodes at the rate of two every three months. We were going through a pair

**A periodic cleaning of the engine compartment provides a thorough inspection of belts, wiring, mounts, and fluid leaks, above. Barry operates each seacock quarterly to ensure it will function freely when needed, at right.**

a year on our 43-footer (we'd never had to replace them in fresh water). We had both boats tested for stray current. Our vessel was neutral but his wasn't (yet, after several rounds of testing, they never isolated the reason).

Seacocks required more attention. Even when actuated monthly, one or two tend to become locked and require cleaning and lubrication during our bi-annual haulouts. Another safety issue arose with our lifelines, which have become discolored and corroded at the ends of the white polymer jackets (because the coating deprives the stainless-steel wire of the air contact it needs). I've seen this coating become sticky within a year on other boats. Our next set of lifelines will not be covered.

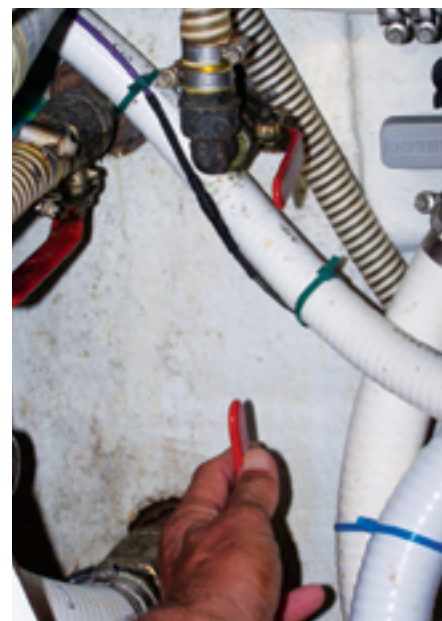
### **Engine maintenance**

Where oil changes were once part of our autumn routine, our engine's service schedule is now dictated by the hour meter following the guidelines in the manual for the Yanmar diesel. Every 150 hours, the oil gets changed; every 300 hours, we change the oil and filter. We check engine mounts, belts, and shaft

**W**hen we decided to expand our sailing horizons from northern freshwater "summer boating" to full-time cruising, we didn't fully realize the impact that would have on vessel maintenance. Up north, we created a to-do list in the fall of every year as part of our haul-out and winterizing routine. When spring came around, we prepared ourselves and our boat for the long-awaited sailing season by going through the to-do and launch lists. This ritual was dictated by the seasons . . . primarily due to winter's effect on fresh water.

Spring outfitting covered most of our annual maintenance issues: bottom paint, Cutless inspection, zincs, varnish, waxing, winch lubrication, steering (fit and lubrication), engine controls, rigging, engine coolant, pressure-water systems (flush and inspect), remounting sails and canvas, lines, and safety gear. It was also the time when we completed projects we'd planned over the winter while looking forward to the sailing season ahead. As a result — other than perhaps an engine-oil change or dealing with a broken piece of gear — we were set for the summer.

Full-time cruising is a different world. Our boat now remains in salt water for extended periods of time and the exposure has led to increased maintenance. We also use our boat daily, year-round, and we don't always haul it annually. Once we made this transition, we found we were doing our maintenance on the run rather than by the seasonal clock.





# on the run

## year-round upkeep

by Barry Hammerberg

connections when doing the oil change. Since using the boat full time meant more engine hours, we learned to carry enough oil and filters for two oil changes. There are times I think of our sailboat as a slow trawler with a very tall antenna.

The primary fuel filter that came with the boat was marginal under heavy use, and once caused a loss of power in rough seas. I removed it and installed a Racor filter. We carry multiple cartridges for this unit and for the secondary filter on the engine. We check the Racor's sediment bowl with each oil change.

When we bought our vessel, we installed a PYI Max-Prop and kept the fixed three-bladed propeller as a spare. We had the Max-Prop rebuilt last year when tip play exceeded  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. We have not yet reinstalled it, since the boat must be hauled to do so. With the Max-Prop, we paid a premium in higher fuel consumption compared to the original fixed three-bladed propeller. We sailed faster with this prop, but sailing faster seemed more important when we were on the Great Lakes in that we were traveling with a sister ship and wanted to maximize our weekend cruising range. That said, we still appreciate the additional boat speed as we frequently buddy-boat with longer vessels.

### Batteries and electronics

Originally, we had flooded-cell batteries and we checked the fluid level with each oil change. Our first set of batteries lasted less than a season due to an improper installation. Our second set lasted four years (we go through a 50 percent discharge cycle daily). With our current AGMs, I check the post connections for corrosion four times a year. We monitor battery charge and discharge performance with a Link 2000 (I wouldn't be without it, though I cross check by monitoring voltage). We carry a spare alternator as we consider electrical power to be mission-critical. Additionally, we have solar panels and a wind generator.

Our biggest ongoing headache has been our electronic navigation instruments. Some would say our boat is over-equipped, and they'd be right. We have two chart plotters, an autopilot, a depth sounder, wind-speed instruments, two tridata repeaters, a gyro compass, and a rate-of-turn compass. (I keep a list of models, serial numbers, and software versions on our website for easy reference.) Most of the components work all the time. However, the wind indicator almost never works right and the chart plotters crash frequently. It's not an obvious wear or corrosion issue — it appears to be a factor of product design and reliability. If we were to do it all over again, we'd go minimalist with a good GPS-linked laptop charting program, a wind vane, and a handheld wind-speed indicator.

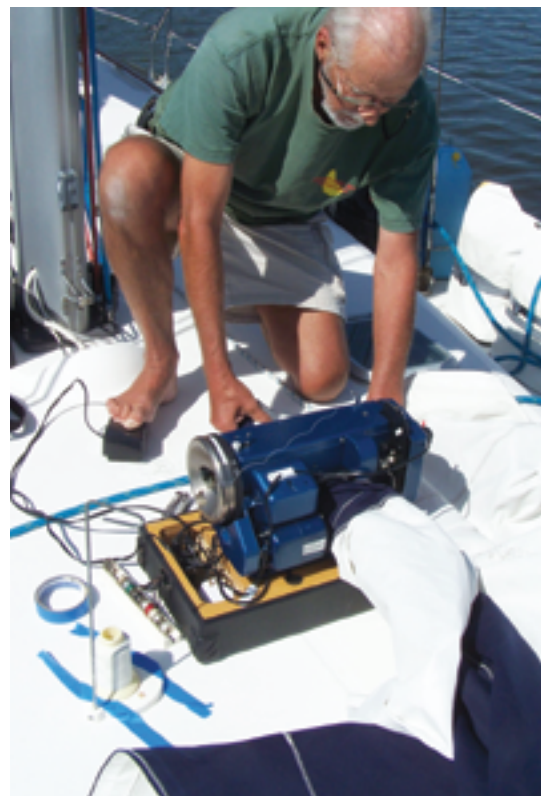
### Sails, canvas, and rigging

Each year of cruising is roughly equal to four seasons on the lakes. Consequently, preventive maintenance is now part of our daily routine. Every time we hoist our sails, we do a quick inspection for loose stitches or frayed tapes. We carry a Sailrite sewing machine on the boat so we can take a "stitch in time" and thereby prevent most major repairs. We treat the dodger and Bimini the same way. We move zippers and lubricate them monthly with Zippy Cool to prevent corrosion and salt from locking the sliders in place. We also wash the canvas annually and mist it with 303 Fabric Guard to maintain water repellency.

I check the standing rigging during my morning walkabout. Believe me, it's scary finding a piece of broken cotter pin on the deck. I find myself holding my breath until I find the source and fix the problem. Each time I go aloft, I visually check wire, fittings, and the spreader mounts. I inspect the rigging thoroughly semi-annually, going aloft with a magnifying glass to look for corrosion stains, separated strands, and



Barry has laid out everything he needs for an oil and filter change, top. The diaper is used to catch any oil spilled while changing the filter. The pump, above, seals over the outside of the dipstick tube and draws the crankcase oil out through it. The sewing machine, below, allows on-the-go sail repairs to keep the boat sailing and prevent more extensive damage.



## Maintenance tasks



Annually, Barry loosens the turnbuckles and applies Tef-Gel to the threads to prevent seizing, at left. Barry goes aloft regularly to check the rigging and make sure lighting, spreaders, and stay attachments are in good condition, center. He wears a Cruising Solutions headset for communicating with the deck crew. The boat's heads suffer from cracks around the stand, at right above. Even with two layers of epoxy as a foundation, brightwork requires a fresh topcoat of varnish every three months, at right.

cracked fittings. I do the same for the mast, boom, vang fittings, and blocks.

We check our running rigging with each use, end-for-ending the lines when exposed portions show chafing or stiffening. We also check our mooring lines with each use and replace them when they become stiff or worn.

### Plumbing

The heads in our boat are an ongoing project. We use a pump lubricant to keep them operating smoothly. I rebuild them as needed, replacing foot valves, choker valves, and pumps. My wife jokes that she decided to marry me when I said I did toilets. To her dismay, she later found I really didn't "do toilets" at home. On the boat, however, I'm regularly tearing them apart, proving her decision to be a wise one after all.

The economics of purchasing parts often leads to replacing the entire units, since it is cheaper and easier. The biggest cause of failure on our Jabsco manual heads is cracking around the base of the pump barrel and at the pump's mounting flanges.

We've replaced our pressure-water pump once, at 12,000 gallons. We don't do any special water tank cleaning, since we turn over the water in the tanks every two weeks (more than 16,000 gallons so far). We do filter the water into and out of the tanks, mainly to prevent sand from getting into the system.

### Brightwork


I believe every proper sailing vessel should have teak — a small piece you can

hold in your hand and store in a drawer — something that should be taken out only to impress guests. Unfortunately, our vessel has acres of teak.

Maintenance of our brightwork is an ongoing experiment. So far, we've seen the longest life with two coats of West System epoxy (using their 207 hardener) overlaid with three coats of Captain's varnish. I prefer the deep grain colors and depth of finish this system provides. We renew the surfaces with a scuff sanding and another coat of varnish when they start to dull or scratch.

### Maintenance record

We record all maintenance in our vessel maintenance log, noting the work done, the date, and who did it. We also note when this maintenance should be repeated. If work needs to be put off for parts, we keep an active to-do list in a separate section of the log. I record needed parts on my phone (a Palm) so I remember to buy them when I'm in a marine or hardware store.

Our diligence has paid off in the reliability of our vessel. We've logged more than 28,000 miles on our "quickly getting to be a good old boat." Is our system infallible? I guess not. The other day, we realized we'd not changed the lubricant in our dinghy engine's lower unit in three years — something that was on our autumn haul-out checklist in years past. Whoops! Where did the time go? 

*Barry Hammerberg has owned and worked on boats for more than 50 years. He was trained as an engineer and*

*gained a solid understanding of boats and equipment through careers in production fiberglass molding, vacuum-bagged and cold-molded custom boats, and machinery design and construction. For the past four years Barry, mate Ruth, and their parrot have been living on their 43-foot Jeanneau, Another Adventure, following the warm seasons along the East Coast from the Bahamas to Nova Scotia.*

## Spares aboard

**W**e keep a minimum inventory of spare parts as most are readily available in our cruising area. We carry only mission-critical parts — those whose failure might prevent us from reaching port: alternator, fuses, engine belts, raw-water pump impellers, fuel-pump diaphragm, head-repair kits, fuel filters (primary and secondary), and oil filters. Light bulbs are not on the list, but they were before we converted to LEDs.

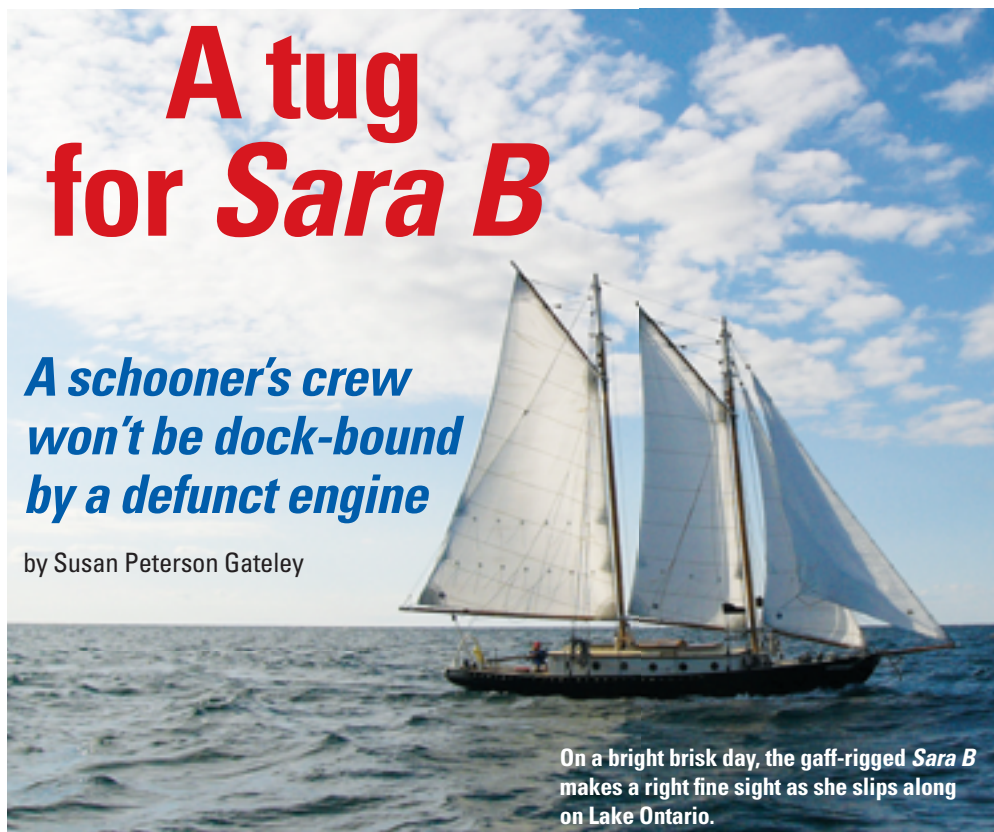
We also carry our flexible repair solutions, items that are not parts but that can be used to make repairs that will allow us to make our next destination. These include miscellaneous nuts, bolts, screws, pins, cotter pins, wiring supplies, thread, epoxy (5-minute and laminating), fiberglass cloth, paintbrushes, engine oil, duct tape, 3M 5200 sealant, silicone caulk, electronics spray, and tools for every fastener on board.



# A tug for Sara B

## A schooner's crew won't be dock-bound by a defunct engine

by Susan Peterson Gateley



On a bright brisk day, the gaff-rigged *Sara B* makes a right fine sight as she slips along on Lake Ontario.

CHRIS GATELEY

Sailing a heavy fixed-keel boat without an engine could be viewed as a challenge and a good opportunity to improve one's skills. Or it might be just plain dumb.

Our good ship *Sara B*, a "true-to-type" Tancook schooner yacht, was built as an apprentice shop training project in the 1950s in Nova Scotia. When her engine, Lake Ontario's oldest living Thornycroft diesel, suffered a mid-season transmission failure, we were dismayed and disheartened. The offending part was extracted and sent off to a friendly machine shop, which began what turned out to be a lengthy repair process for the

British-made antique. As weeks became months and the season dwindled, we watched the spiders rig their webs on every part of our boat. Summer faded into September and we missed the old girl. "I wish she was still on a mooring," I sighed. "We could sail her without a motor then."

We pondered getting *Sara B* out and back into her dock in the weedy shallows by sailing, line handling, grapples, bolting an outboard onto her, using sweeps or a push pole, or some other technique. Our unwieldy vessel's long keel, gaff rig, and projections at both ends gave us pause. With 12 tons behind that bowsprit and no brakes, things could get ugly. Yet we knew engineless schooners far larger than our little 47-footer were (and still are) routinely maneuvered in close quarters using sails, tugs, and yawl boats. And skill. The old-timers did it — all we needed was a little shove in and out of the dock.

While gazing upon our old yacht one evening during happy hour, my spouse proposed that, since we were a little short in the skills department, we go buy a tug for her. A check of craigslist the next morning revealed a wealth of cheap old runabouts and, two days later, we owned a 15-foot 1972 Mark Twain runabout with a 70-hp outboard. We equipped *Tug* with a half dozen oversized ash cleats and four Geo tires, launched her that weekend, and motored to the dock. The plan: lash her alongside, use reverse to pull out, then swing around and head for open water. What could go wrong? Actually, quite a lot, as it turns out.

### An uneventful maiden outing

As we prepared to cast off, the schooner crew asked the tug driver what's next. "I have no idea," he replied. "I'm making this up as I go."

Surprisingly, the first outing went quite well. Our departure from the dock on a day of light wind was uneventful. We anchored *Tug* and raised sail on *Sara B* without mishap (though at least 30 spiders fell from the rigging). Our old boat slipped off with a whisper of her bow wave and a few quiet creaks of leather and wood from the gaff rig. We were sailing again. It felt grand!

When it was time to head back, we sailed alongside *Tug* as if she were a mooring and picked up a line buoyed off to the anchor. We then lashed up and pushed back to the dock. In the calm of the bay, the process went without a hitch and the crew of the *Sara B* was considerably emboldened: "We've gotta' try this again!"

Sailing without an engine requires a different mindset. You can't hurry when the winds are light. If you have an appointment at 2 p.m., allow for being becalmed. You had better know your vessel's turning radius under sail if the outboard refuses to start and you have to sail onto the dock while towing your tug. Leave extra room on a shifty day near shore lest you get caught aback or miss stays. And have at least one, if not two, backup plans.

Anticipation and vigilance are essential for engineless sailing as are good basic sailing skills. Quick thinking and improvisation help. Having a cell phone along is probably a good idea. We got cocky after a couple of light-air excursions within the protected bay and made a couple of forays into the open lake. They proved humbling.

### A test of mettle

The following Sunday was a day of sapphire blue water, 10- to 12-knot steady sweet onshore wind and perfect sailing. A dozen white-winged sloops were tacking up the



**Sara B and Tug, pushing at her hip, set forth on another joint adventure.**

bay as we trooped out on the dock with picnic lunch and gear. Three sailors plus two guests and a dog climbed aboard and we made a smooth exit from the dock. It seemed to me we were leaving the dock with more aplomb than we had managed with some of our “normal departures” aided by the diesel. A few wakes bounced *Tug* around on *Sara B*’s quarter as we pushed up the bay, but the lash-up survived. We pushed through the channel and entered the wide blue lake. At last — freedom.

It took several tries to anchor on the rocky bottom. We taped a note, “Be back soon,” on *Tug*, cast off, and hoped she would be there when we returned. If someone hijacked her or she dragged, we figured we’d at least be able to sail ourselves back into the bay with the onshore breeze. We wondered momentarily whether it had been smart to leave the key in the ignition.

*Sara B* romped off with real enthusiasm and pointed her bowsprit for Canada. The lonely little white runabout festooned with Geo tires bobbing around in the open lake quickly dwindled to a white speck and then was gone. It was wonderful to really sail again. *Sara B* put her rail down and

stepped along smooth and easy. In no time, we were 5 miles offshore. Sure was nice to sail in a straight line for more than 10 minutes. We broke out the crackers and lemonade and celebrated.

The brief fall afternoon spun away astern and daylight dwindled. We noted the sun was getting low and the thought occurred that we really should go in before the wind died. We reluctantly turned *Sara B* homeward. She surged along on a broad reach and, as we approached *Tug*, we remarked that the lake had kicked up and the wind sure hadn’t dropped any: “Man, this is really getting bouncy — look at that little boat jumping around! How is the driver going to get in there?” A collision at sea and a sunken runabout seemed like real possibilities.

Our first pass at the buoyed-off pickup line missed by 75 feet. The second and third passes also missed. “Four is my lucky number,” announced the helmsman as we approached the buoyed line once again. This time we snagged it, though in the ensuing melee, the

flogging jibsheet sent my eyeglasses overboard. As *Tug* danced alongside with real vigor, the driver belatedly donned a life jacket and waited his chance to get aboard while we tried with the boathook to keep her from bashing *Sara B*. The tug driver finally disembarked and the motor started immediately. We cast *Tug* off and turned to weighing anchor ... no simple task in my new myopic state. Thank goodness for the good old hand windlass!

That one was a little more exciting than we had bargained for. But we were game to try again. It sure was fun to sail the old girl, and the novelty of trying to use our brains as we attempted to get *Sara B* from point A to point B without her engine had not yet worn off. Still, after the latest outing, I was beginning to appreciate just how sharp those old-timers were as they managed their unwieldy ships. They used every trick in the book, including grapples and heaving lines, raffee sails, kedging, and sweeps ... plus others I don’t know about.

## A little too testing

On the next Sunday, the weatherman predicted 10- to 13-mph winds from the south. Perfect mild weather, flat water, nice easy sailing. “Let’s go!” We took along two experienced crewmembers for this one and expected a sweet gentle September sail. We hoped to make a day of it and arranged to meet at the dock at 9 a.m. When we assembled, we noted the wind stirring the treetops looked a tad stronger than 10 mph. Maybe more like 20. “Well, that’s OK. We’ll just reef the main as a precaution. We can always shake it out.”

This time, I was *Tug*’s driver. The plan was for me to push *Sara B* out of the dock and follow her out into the lake where she would anchor. I would then come alongside to shift the anchor to *Tug*. We’d be under the lee of the land with nice flat water this time so it should be dead simple. Piece of cake.

In the open bay, with a puffy brisk wind, *Sara B*’s crew raised just the reefed main and staysail. She took off like a racehorse and broad reached down the bay at hull speed. I followed in *Tug* and marveled at the way she ran — she flowed over the water with effortless grace. Other people have

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told me she looks magnificent under sail. They weren't exaggerating. She was splendid even under shortened canvas. She left no tracks that day; I heard at least one gull weep with envy.

But out in the lake and hard on the wind, progress was not effortless. She put her rail down and slogged. Under the lee of the land, the crew opted to tie in a second reef. With *Tug* well anchored in a nice 10-foot mud patch, we raised sail again and fell off on a reach. *Sara B* stepped along smartly under a scrap of sail as little whitecaps blossomed on the green water around us. In minutes, we were a half mile offshore and well on our way to Oswego.

"Maybe," we thought, "we ought to go the other way close-hauled just to see what it's like." We tacked around and headed back. Now suddenly feeling the full weight of the wind and hearing it whistle through her rig, we said, "You know, it's kinda' brisk out here. Let's bag it. Let's just see if we can even get back into the bay!"


We beat our way upwind to *Tug* and lashed alongside uneventfully in the calm water. Then we headed for the channel. As we turned upwind against gusts of 25 knots and higher, *Tug* bounced and plunged through the chop and strained hard to shove 12 tons of wood and gaff-rigged windage up the channel.

We crawled along, barely maintaining steerage. The bow tried to fall off, but we were able to crab her around again and keep moving. I watched the homemade cleats and tight-stretched springlines closely. Everything held, although one tire popped out of place repeatedly. They made good sturdy fiberglass motorboat decks in those days.

It was slow going, though, and *Tug* sucked up fuel doing it. About halfway in, the driver hefted the tank and found it alarmingly light. "Wow! Hope we don't run out of gas. We started out with at least 4 gallons!" We decided that, once in the bay, we would drop *Tug* so she would be free to go get some more gas. Meanwhile, *Sara B* would tack toward the dock. We plunged down the bay under short canvas and hooked up with the refueled *Tug* for an uneventful tow to the dock. There we declared that was just about as interesting as we wanted to make it.

## To sail is better than not to sail

I suspect there are a few folks (maybe quite a few) who would think this whole sailing sans engine business was ridiculous, if not downright hazardous. Sensible people would simply haul their old wooden boat early if they couldn't use it and maybe get to work on fixing some dry rot.

But it had been a strange, and at times disturbing, summer for us. Life, they say, is like a roll of toilet paper. When you get to the end, it goes fast. We'd heard of far too many folks who had been caught short by the toilet paper roll of mortality over the last few months. Though we seek, perhaps unwisely, to make permanent the impermanent, we know *Sara B*'s days with us, like our own, are numbered. She *needed* to go sailing again! And so she did. 

*Susan Peterson Gateley has written a half dozen books on sailing and Lake Ontario, including one that features Sara B. Visit <www.silverwaters.com> for excerpts and more stories.*



*Tug and Sara B together taught their owners a few new tricks.*

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If the definition of cruising is performing boat maintenance in exotic locations, does that mean the more maintenance, the more exotic? During last summer's cruise from Tacoma, Washington, at the bottom of Puget Sound, to the Canadian Gulf Islands about 200 nautical miles to the north, my wife, son, and I learned just how much fun working on a 1975 Cal 34 could really be. The project felt less burdensome because we did the work in many of our favorite places.

While my wife, Melissa, readied *Moonrise's* cabin for our two-week vacation in the islands off the coast of British Columbia, I focused on routine maintenance on our Westerbeke diesel engine, replacing the raw-water impeller, pump belts, zincs, and any other item within my nascent abilities. The engine had always been a reliable workhorse. As I tinkered, I noticed that it needed to be topped off with fresh water. It wasn't really low, and I couldn't see any obvious leaks, but I did wonder when I had last added water.

The next day, after a long stretch of hot sunny weather, we left the marina in rain and fog. Was this a foreshadowing? Summer breezes are notoriously fickle in Puget Sound and, with no wind to speak of, we motored 75 miles up to Port Townsend, our jumping off point for Canada. The next morning was just as flat with an added bonus of dense fog. During our 30-mile crossing of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the engine held strong and true.

By temperament, we are a lazy sailing family, preferring to find a nice quiet anchorage and explore the area for a few days. The Gulf Islands provide plenty of opportunities for such idleness. Slowly going nowhere pretty much sums up our entire itinerary. On the first day, the sun came out, the wind kicked up, and we were greeted

by orcas feeding off the southern tip of San Juan Island. Sailing with the orcas! It couldn't get much better than that.

### An inkling of trouble

After a week of island hopping, we were ready for showers and a bit of civilization. We took off for a nearby harbor. The sailing was great at first, but we had to motor the last couple of miles. By the time we found our marina, the engine alarm was going off and my blood pressure was going up. Navigating through a mooring field in a busy harbor with the engine alarm blaring is not a good way to unwind at the end of a day.

During our stay, I refilled the engine's freshwater tank and tried to figure out why we were losing water. We had a slow leak, but I couldn't determine its location.

Fortunately, we enjoyed great sailing weather for much of our Gulf Islands vacation. Throughout our stay, I monitored our engine water closely. We were losing just enough water to be worrisome. We were reminded,

however, that it could always be worse. After anchoring one night between the Secretary Islands, we enjoyed coffee with the owners of a Catalina 30 as they waited for the tide to return and lift their boat from their too-snug anchorage.

Our water woes came to a head as we motored into an anchorage one evening. By now, the high-temperature alarm was going off with increased frequency. Life at anchor required a running engine to charge our batteries and the freshwater system was losing water at, well, an alarming rate.

Melissa chided me for messing with the engine. "It's a delicate balance. If you fix one thing, it stresses the other stuff," she said as she headed off in her kayak in search of otters. Andrew, after I pried him out of a book, was a bit more helpful. We lay on either side of the engine and peered inside the compartment.

On a Cal 34, the engine is mounted backward and a V-drive is used. That means the belts, alternator, and pumps are all less accessible for

# A working vacation

*Maintenance seems less onerous in the right surroundings*

by Michael Boyte



inspection and maintenance. A few minutes of poking, however, revealed a damp freshwater pump. Running the engine for a few minutes made the problem more obvious; we could see a trickle of water coming from the bottom of the pump.

### Trouble revealed

The weather was perfect for a pump-removal project. We were moored at a popular marine park with a light breeze rocking the boat as we slowly unbolted and coaxed the pump from the engine for the first time in 34 years. As we removed the pump, the source of the failure became obvious. The bearing and seal were shot. No amount of poking, chin rubbing, or hitting the pump with a hammer could repair it. Andrew and I reinstalled the pump and considered our options.

Now, to the delicate equation of provisioning for another five days, we had to add an unknown quantity of water to provide for the needs of the engine. Our tanks were already pretty low, so I transferred a few gallons to a spare container as a reserve just for the engine. Then I began praying for wind.

Melissa is an adept shirker of worry. She says she doesn't have to worry because she has such a resourceful husband, but I suspect the truth lies elsewhere. After Andrew and I described the ramifications of our findings that day, Melissa suggested that the best course of action was to stay nestled at anchor for a few more days. I admit the plan had some appeal. However, the possibility of running out of water, engine, and battery power in the near future forced us to consider getting back to a marina in the U.S. This would allow us to clear into customs, pick up water, and begin to make our way back to our home base in Tacoma.

Sailing out of our protected anchorage the next morning, we found plenty of wind and used the engine for a mere 15 minutes. Our run south was beautiful — a beam reach southwest toward the open strait. Melissa kept a sharp eye out for orcas and other wild things. While sailing close to the south side of one island, we spotted feral goats on the steep slopes. Slowly, the troublesome engine faded from my mind.

**Aboard *Moonrise*, the water shortage was restricted to the engine cooling system, and eventually mitigated by ingenuity, at right and below. An anchorage neighbor experienced a more distressing, if temporary, depletion due to a falling tide, on facing page.**

As we approached the strait, Melissa began to mope. "I don't want to go back! There's nothing to do in the harbor!" she whined. "Oh look! I see more orcas!" She pointed vaguely toward the Canadian side of the strait. With such beautiful wind and warm weather — a rarity in the Pacific Northwest — I was none too anxious to return myself. Engine? We don't need no stinkin' engine! So we sailed over to an island anchorage on the Canadian side for one more night on the hook.

Although we'd been given great wind for sailing that day, this is the Pacific Northwest and you cannot count on wind. Ever. Andrew and I toyed with different strategies for dealing with our water loss. The fill for the engine water tank can only be reached through a small deck plate in the cockpit. With only 3 inches of clearance between the top of the cockpit sole and the engine, removing the radiator cap meant burned fingers and scraped knuckles. We decided that leaving the radiator cap off would ease the tank-filling chore so, whenever we motored, we constantly watched our engine temperature and listened for the high-temperature alarm. That was our cue to reduce engine speed and slowly add more water to the system. This approach worked, but it was cumbersome and required that we leave the cockpit deck plate off, inviting an accident if someone stepped in the hole.

By the next morning, our water situation was becoming dire. We were out



of fresh water in our tanks and were now down to the reserve containers I had put aside earlier. Running the engine during the night to top off the batteries made it clear to us that the water loss was accelerating.

As we left our anchorage, our luck held and we were greeted by a grand breeze. We headed for the American side of the strait on a close reach. The 6-mile crossing to San Juan Island felt like a reward for the callous disregard of our engine. The engine had the last word, though. The high-temperature alarm was in full voice as we



wound our way through the mooring field and up to the customs dock.

After clearing customs, we headed directly to the fuel dock to fill up on fuel and water. By now, it was nearly noon. We had hopes of sailing farther south before dark, so we made haste. While we made our way through the mooring field and down the narrow, rock-strewn pass, I became more anxious about the engine. The seal on the water pump had now failed to the point that water was pouring out at a prodigious rate. Threading through the pass heightened our anxiety and Melissa stood ready to add water while I drove.

### More trouble

As soon as we were safely through the pass and headed out into the strait, I handed the wheel to Andrew and went below. Melissa immediately greeted me with a question. “The water pressure seems kind of low. Why would *that* be?”

She asks questions like this with a certainty in her voice that implies that I will always know the answer. I do hate to disappoint her, so I have developed the ability to lie convincingly until I figure out the truth. “It’s probably just

It appeared that forces beyond our control were conspiring to keep us on vacation. We turned around and headed back to the harbor for another refill. We anchored for an hour to have lunch, enjoy the view of the harbor, and collect our thoughts. It was now around two in the afternoon. The days were still long but winds were building and gusts to 30 knots were predicted in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. I was due back at my job on Monday morning. We really needed to get across that strait.

### A topping (-off) solution

While we were bobbing at anchor, Andrew went below and began rummaging about in the storage area. He came back a few minutes later with the garden sprayer that Melissa had brought along. These little sprayers make pretty good portable showers; just fill with warm water, pump it up, and you have a good stream of water for washing off the funk of the week. Andrew had other ideas though.

“If we had a little longer hose,” he said, “we could fill the sprayer with water and then pump water into the engine without having to open up the

We were now fighting the incoming tide and heading into a nicely building breeze. Having an engine we could depend on was more important than ever and, so far, the fill system was working well, providing a much-needed sense of control and a dawning realization that I might actually make it back to work on time. Now we had one more command to add to our sailing lexicon. In addition to “Prepare to tack!” and “Hard a’lee!” we had “Give ‘er a pump!”

We headed out into the strait and raised sail for the long slog home. It was going to be a long day and night until we would rest, but the teamwork and ingenuity we’d used to keep our engine running replaced our anxiety with excitement and a new confidence in our abilities. We continued on our way, ready for the next adventure in old boat maintenance. *▲*

*Michael Boyte sails the Salish Sea with his wife, Melissa White, aboard their Cal 34, Moonrise. Currently, they are developing a cunning plan to ditch the house, kids, and other shore-based responsibilities to pursue the cruising life full time.*

**“Greatly encouraged by Andrew’s engineering prowess and with freshly filled water tanks, we left the harbor for the second time.”**

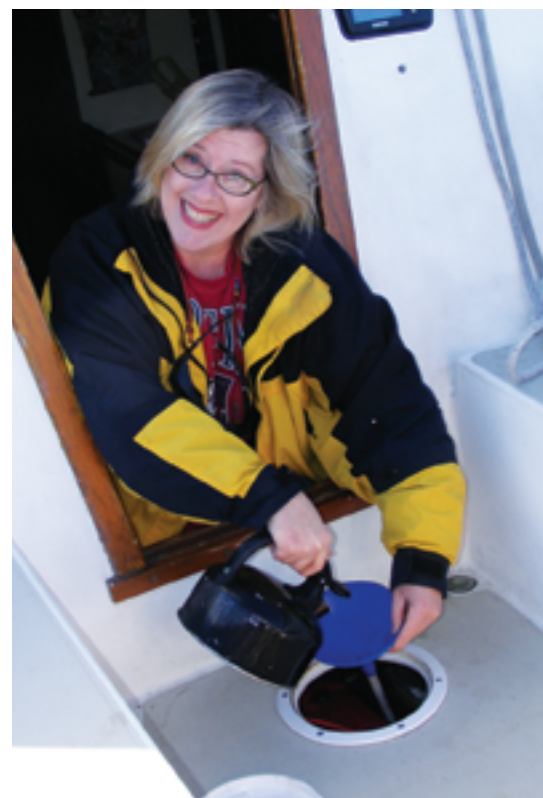
an air bubble in the line. That’ll clear up in a minute,” I said, while secretly wondering if water pumps belonged to a strong union and were banding together in solidarity.

The truth was more prosaic than sentient water pumps but no less ridiculous. Looking in the head, I found the sink, cabinets, and floor thoroughly soaked with all of the fresh water we had just pumped into our tanks. Someone — and I want to make it perfectly clear that this someone was *not* me — had turned the faucet on full when we were out of water and forgot to turn it off when nothing came out. Once the water tanks were full and the breaker to the pump was turned on, water poured out with abandon all over the head compartment. The engine had hidden the noise and our attention was diverted as we ran through the pass.

compartment or burning our hands.”

These are the moments that fill a father with pride. Encouraged, and feeling a spark of hope, we put our minds to finding the extra hose and various other parts to build our new fill system. Within a few minutes, we had rigged up the sprayer to deliver water into the engine with a minimum of fuss. Just a few pumps on the sprayer and we could add water whenever our now sharply attuned senses felt the engine might be getting a little too warm.

Greatly encouraged by Andrew’s engineering prowess and with freshly filled water tanks, we left the harbor for the second time. As we rounded the top of the island, Melissa shouted, “The whales! I knew we would see them again! *Now* I know why we had to be delayed for so long! If we had left on time, we’d have missed them!”

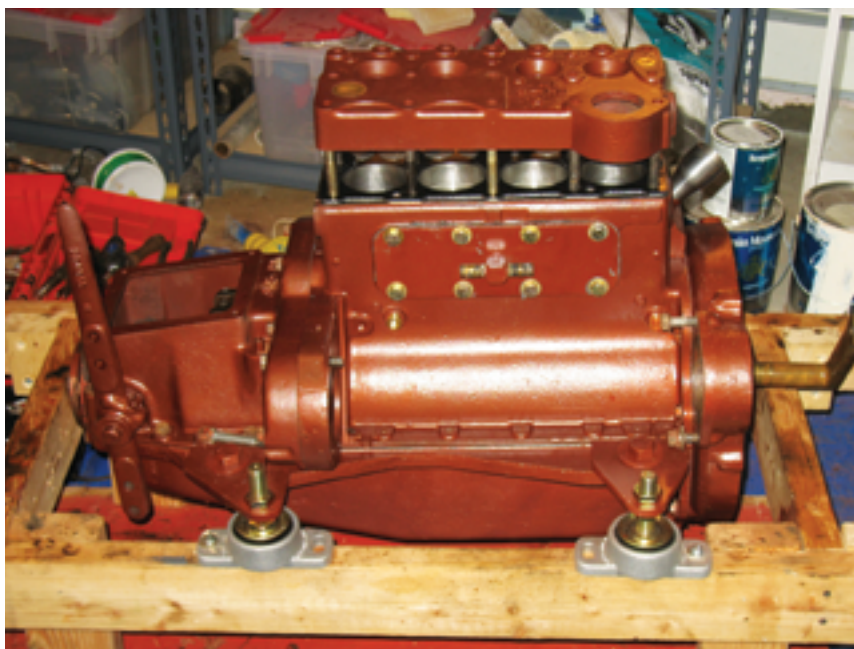


**First mate, wife, and mother, Melissa pours the engine a “cuppa” in her new role as mechanic.**





Disassembly of the engine began in the fall with the removal of the cylinder head, at left, and the re-machined head went back on the refurbished block in the spring, at right.



# An affordable A4 rejuvenation

*A hands-on rebuild saved both beast and budget*

by Rob Mazza

**O**ur 41-year-old C&C Corvette, *Trillium*, has the distinction of being built originally as a gift to retiring Ontario Premier John Robarts from his Progressive Conservative Party. We bought her in 1996 knowing this illustrious history but also knowing full well that she was equipped with her original Atomic 4 gasoline internal combustion engine. In 13 years of cruising north Florida and south Georgia, and then the Hudson River and Long Island Sound, I can't say the A4 gave us completely reliable service.

Indeed, during our Florida years, around Jacksonville, we established an excellent relationship with Wayne York and Robert, his mechanic, who saved our cruising bacon more than once, replacing burned out wiring and rebuilding

carburetors. However, through all this I managed to keep at arm's length from the mysterious metal beast corroding in the bilge. Just a look at the schematic of the carburetor was enough to discourage any exploration in *that* area. Ye Gods! Look at all those tiny pieces! Little did I know then that the carburetor has, in reality, only two moving parts.

However, like a lot of A4 owners, I came to a crucial crossroads in my relationship with this mysterious hunk of metal. Two years ago, while cruising on Long Island Sound, I ran her completely out of oil due to the failure of the oil seal on the water pump. I not only ran her out of oil, but I continued to run the engine in that condition for a considerable number of hours. Only when I noticed that the engine was beginning to sound

like 200 individual parts rattling together did I actually shut it down to investigate. Needless to say, by then the damage was done. Cruising buddies Jim and Lee Luce helped me sop the spilled oil out of the bilge, and I was able to rebuild the water pump with spare parts we had aboard. But, from then on, the engine was never quite the same. Specifically, she was burning an inordinate amount of oil . . . so much so that we always bought two or three quarts at every fuel fill. She also left a cloud of blue smoke in her wake and a rainbow-colored scum on the water under the exhaust.

This was a situation that should not continue. The general diagnosis was that the piston rings were shot, allowing oil to leak into the combustion chambers, burn with the fuel, and shoot out the exhaust. The fact that the cylinder compression was still high only complicated this diagnosis. However, no matter the cause, oil was disappearing from the system rapidly, and it wasn't ending up in the bilge. So the choices were:

- Replace the A4 with a diesel
- Replace it with a "new" rebuilt A4
- Rebuild the engine myself

### An economical choice

We deemed the first option too expensive as it would cost more than the then 39-year-old boat might be worth in resale value. We still sail with 12-year-old sails, so spending money on the boat does not come easily. Have I mentioned we're cheap?

Rebuilt units are available from Moyer Marine, but this option was still slightly more expensive than I'd like.

As to the third choice, why not? I am a mechanical engineer and a naval architect, so I am quite familiar with the theory behind the internal combustion engine. I've also been in the boating industry for a good many years. *Surely*, I should be capable of doing this,

mention the adverse environmental impact that a sailboat should not be inflicting on the world. Besides, if completed successfully, this could be a very rewarding experience. I'd built International 14 dinghies over past winters and enjoyed the process. I needed another winter project.

I also have to admit that driving the decision was the need to remove and replace the gas tank, which was beginning to cause me concern. The only way to get the fuel tank out was to pull it forward though the engine compartment. Obviously, this was more easily achieved if the engine weren't there. Therefore, I made the fateful decision in the early fall of 2008 to pull the engine, rebuild it over the winter, and reinstall it before launching in the spring.

### Moral and material support

I should mention at this point that I had no intention of embarking on this journey on my own. Anyone who has lived with an Atomic 4 is familiar with the online advice and service that Don Moyer and Moyer Marine provide to us, sometimes reluctant, devotees. It was to Don's *Universal Atomic 4 Service and Overhaul Manual* that I immediately turned and that I depended upon and followed throughout the winter project.

**“I made the fateful decision to pull the engine, rebuild it over the winter, and reinstall it before launching in the spring.”**

shouldn't I? It's not rocket science. I wouldn't begin to know how to rebuild a computer, and the molecular reaction that takes place in curing resin is well beyond my comprehension, but even I could understand the interactive and interdependent systems at work in a pre-computerized 1950s-era internal combustion engine.

I had already replaced the rudder, replaced all the chainplates and knees, rebuilt bulkheads, and installed opening ports. It was now time I finally addressed the long ignored and neglected iron beast in the bilge. It would no longer suffice to simply cross my fingers and hope for the best. The current situation was expensive (more oil), and embarrassing (smoke and oil slicks), not to

Earlier in the year, I had attended one of Don's superb seminars where he demystified the workings of the A4 and gave probably the best explanation of how the coil works that I have ever heard (though I admit that I have not heard many). He gave this seminar at the workshop of his Amish collaborators just outside Lancaster, Pennsylvania. These superb machinists produce the replacement castings and components that keep this venerable engine going into the 21st century. And they do this in a machine shop that is exceptionally well equipped... and runs on hydraulic, rather than electric, power. Attending the seminar showed me that I could probably do this and that I had access to skilled and knowledgeable



Rob used the boom to lift the engine out of the cabin and lower it to the trailer.

machinists. Best of all, I learned I could deliver the pieces to Don and his Amish machinists for a complete rebuild if I found myself beyond my depth. Always have a Plan C.

### Extracting the engine

*Trillium* was hauled early in the fall and blocked for winter storage in the boatyard. The C&C Corvette has a reasonably accessible engine space. However, the first question was how to hoist this 350-pound lump of metal out of the bilge and onto a trailer. Fortunately, the rig was still in the boat and the boom was positioned in its usual place over the companionway. Hmmm, could I hoist the engine with the boom, slide it aft along the boom through the companionway into the cockpit area, swing the boom outboard, and lower the engine onto the trailer without breaking the boom or capsizing the boat on her jack stands?

I remembered a mainsheet system I always liked that had a traveler car that



moved independently of the mainsheet, so the car could move without altering the tension on the sheet. If this theory could be turned upside down and used on the boom, then I could have a system to lift the engine by leading the mainsheet to a two-speed winch. I would be able to move the hoisting point aft by using the reefing lines, also led to a winch. After swinging the boom outboard, we could use the same mainsheet to lower the engine onto the temporary beds on the borrowed trailer.

To reduce friction on top of the boom, I duct taped a strip of Mylar in place where the lifting blocks were

**“We took up the weight of the forward end with a loop around the flywheel housing, then slid the engine slightly uphill on the beds.”**

tied off to the boom. To further support the boom, we rigged a bridle at the extremes of the required range of travel supported by the main halyard. The ends of the boom were supported by the topping lift aft and the gooseneck forward. We also ran the spinnaker halyard from the masthead to the trailer hitch on my Outback on the opposite side of the boat from the trailer to help counter any tipping moment as we swung the boom over the trailer. This all sounded great in theory but was yet to be proven in practice.

The first step was to remove all the rusted and surprisingly small lag screws holding the engine mounting pads to the wooden beds. At that point, we removed the larger chunks of metal to reduce the weight that would need to be lifted. This included the starter motor, alternator, and exhaust manifold. After disconnecting the engine from all its systems, we took up the weight of the forward end with a loop around the flywheel housing, then slid the engine slightly uphill on the beds far enough forward into the cabin that the lifting eye on top of the engine was accessible to a clear lift to the boom.

At this point, we lowered the flywheel end onto a short transverse 6 x 6 to take the weight of the engine, and transferred the 2:1 tackle and snatch block to the lifting eye. Then, as I guided the engine around the centerboard pendant tube, helper Joe

Pantalone cranked on the cockpit two-speed primary winch to take the weight of the engine on the boom. Amazingly, the engine began to levitate off the beds and 6 x 6 as the mainsheet took the full weight. However, even at 2:1, the amount of cranking and the load on the winch was more than we anticipated, as evidenced by the puffing and panting emanating from Joe in the cockpit.

As the engine cleared the beds, we used the reefing lines to pull the attachment point on the boom farther forward to pull the engine completely clear of the engine compartment and to one side, clear of the centerboard pendant

tube. Once the engine was positioned far enough forward and to one side to clear all obstructions, we continued lifting, watching for any untoward deflection in the boom. The lifting had to continue until the engine was located just under the boom so it could be slid aft through the companionway opening over the bridge deck, into the cockpit, and high enough to clear the coamings as it was swung outboard over the trailer. This entailed even more puffing and panting on Joe's part. Have I mentioned yet that Joe was the recent recipient of a heart transplant? Like every part of this improvised apparatus, his new heart was really being put to the test!

Finally, the engine reached its maximum height and we re-rigged the reefing lines to pull it aft. Much to our relief and amazement, that's exactly what happened. As they say, it's great when a plan comes together. After the engine was over the cockpit, we swung the boom outboard past the coamings and lowered the engine and secured it to the temporary beds built for it on my other helper, Pete Moltzen's, borrowed trailer. Amazing!

When the engine arrived in the driveway at home, we lifted the engine on its temporary beds onto Joe's borrowed dolly, secured it, and slid it off the trailer and down the ramp. Then, with block and tackle, we lowered it into the basement. Phase One was completed.

## The dismantling

The first piece I removed from the engine was the cylinder head, which came off surprisingly easily. Now the studs themselves would need to be removed. Not wanting to spend money on a stud remover (I'm cheap, remember), I borrowed a technique I picked up on the Internet and used two stud nuts locked together and a ratchet wrench that I encouraged with taps from a wooden mallet. All this was after soaking the studs with penetrating oil. It was a dicey process trying to break the studs free without breaking them off in the block.



As disassembly begins, the Atomic 4 shows its 39 years of wear, inside and out.



New pistons and the crankshaft with its freshly machined journals await assembly into the refurbished engine block.

Just as I felt I had this licked, the A4 brought me back down to earth. The second-to-last stud to be removed refused to budge and one or two slightly more aggressive taps with the mallet sheared it off. Removing the side cooling-water plate produced two more sheared studs. Once I learned that the Moyer machinists charged only \$15 to remove a broken stud, my cheapness gave way to expediency. The broken studs could wait until I delivered the block to the Amish for machining.

Next, the valves came out (I only lost two valve retainers that went flying across the basement), then the reverse gear. At this point, Don's book states that if you decide to progress to the next stage, the culmination would be holding the crankshaft in your hands. After I separated the block from the oil pan and removed the connecting rods and pistons, that is exactly what happened! It was not much of an exaggeration to say I felt like a surgeon holding a beating heart in his hands. It was that satisfying.

### The rebuild

Now that the engine was dismantled, someone more expert than I would need to determine what had to be re-machined. We discovered a broken bearing sleeve on the crankshaft end of the connecting rod for the #2 cylinder and, using Plastigauge, found that two other sleeves were well outside the required tolerances. My initial communication with Ken Seigh at Moyer was somewhat confusing since he said his machinists didn't determine what needed re-machining, but rather that they would only machine what I told them to. However, once I got all the pieces to them, Ken came back with detailed recommendations. The whole crankshaft would need machining, which would require fitting the next larger bearing sleeves. Also, all the cylinders would need to be re-bored, which would lead to larger-diameter pistons and rings.

However, the Amish did take their time, and even though the pieces were



**Rob, the engine surgeon, is a happy man as he holds the "beating heart" in his hands, above. The beast in the basement emerges to become the beast in the bilge once again, below.**

delivered to them well before Christmas, the machining wasn't completed until early April. Friends who live in Lancaster picked up the amazingly clean, painted, and polished components for me. Compared to the oily, greasy, and rusty pieces that had been delivered, the transformation was remarkable.



Following Don's book to the letter I reassembled the pieces in reverse order of disassembly.

### Spring reawakening

Come spring, we hauled her out of the basement to the garage, reconnected her to the panel and wiring that had been removed from the boat, and hooked her back up to the battery and fuel. The moment of truth had arrived. After all that work and effort, would she run? Would she even *start*? Well, not initially. But after I tracked down a fuel problem, she immediately leapt to life, surprising me and spraying my wife with cooling water spewing from the Vetus muffler. I adjusted the timing and oil pressure and felt an immediate sense of

relief and satisfaction.

Now that the engine was operational, I still needed to remove the old fuel tank. I emptied it and, in the process of manhandling it, put my finger through the bottom . . . I slid the new custom aluminum tank from Klacko in place after repainting the whole area. While the tank and engine were out of the way, I also replaced the old cockpit drain valves with new larger Forespar seacocks and completely rebuilt the old engine beds, fitting aluminum caps to take  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch-diameter stainless-steel machine screws rather than mild-steel lag screws. All that delayed reinstalling the engine into late May.

Once again, we loaded the engine on Pete's borrowed trailer, called Joe, and made the trek back to the boat. Running the film in reverse, we lifted the engine off the trailer, swung it over the coamings into the cockpit, slid it forward on the boom through the companionway, lowered it past the centerboard pendant, and on to the forward portion of the rebuilt beds and the 6 x 6. We removed the snatch block from the lift bracket, repositioned the mainsheet at the flywheel housing, and eased the engine aft to its original position.

Over the next few days, I realigned the engine and screwed the mounts to the aluminum straps glassed to the tops of the beds. I reconnected the fuel and





Lifted by the boom once more, at left, the rebuilt engine made the return journey to its home under the cockpit, where it joined the new aluminum fuel tank and cockpit-drain seacocks, at right. *Trillium* looks ready to put another 39 years on her engine, below.

Timing is everything between the electrical, fuel, cooling, exhaust, and mechanical systems. If one of these systems malfunctions or interacts improperly with the others, the whole ceases to function. How's that for an appropriate allegory for life? It's also impressive to see that much power emanating from so few moving parts.

Taking the engine apart and putting it back together again, and having it actually perform better than it did originally while also eliminating the problems that initiated the rebuild, was a confidence-building experience. I am now comfortable in my ability to deal with any problem this engine may present in the future. Bring it on!

Having confronted and overcome this psychological barrier, I'm ready to move on to the next challenge in a 39-year-old boat. Let's have a crack at the 12-volt electrical system and figure out why that battery won't hold a charge.

Would I recommend this process to anyone else? Absolutely, but with caveats. Someone once told me, "Never rebuild an engine that doesn't need



rebuilding." In my case, the inordinate consumption of oil demanded attention. However, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" would seem to always be good advice. ▽

*Rob Mazza designed for C&C Yachts for 15 years, Mark Ellis Design for seven years, and Hunter Marine in Florida for almost four years before moving to the supply side of the marine industry. A job with Baltek took him to New Jersey and Rob and his wife of 40 years, Alexandra, now sail Trillium out of the Nyack Boat Club on the Hudson River in Nyack, NY.*

reinstalled the panel and wiring and the shaft coupling, throttle, and choke. As in the garage, we again breathed a sigh of relief when the engine started and ran.

During our first season, the engine ran all summer and the oil at the end of the season was still an amber color, not the black sludge we had to endure for the two previous years. She started every time, burned cleanly, and ran smoothly even at a low idle. She is showing every indication of being ready for another 39 years of reliable service.

### A Zen-like experience

Right off the bat, I gained respect for the internal combustion engine and the A4 in particular. This experience was very much "Zen and the Art of A4 Maintenance." With the A4, unlike computer chips and chemical reactions, you can actually see and understand how the engine works. You can also see how human thought was translated into a working machine. The whole thing just makes sense. The internal combustion engine relies on the interaction and cooperation of separate and disparate — but totally interdependent — systems.

### Resources

#### Moyer Marine

www.moyermarine.com  
410-810-8920

#### Klacko Marine

www.klackomarine.com  
905-945-3767





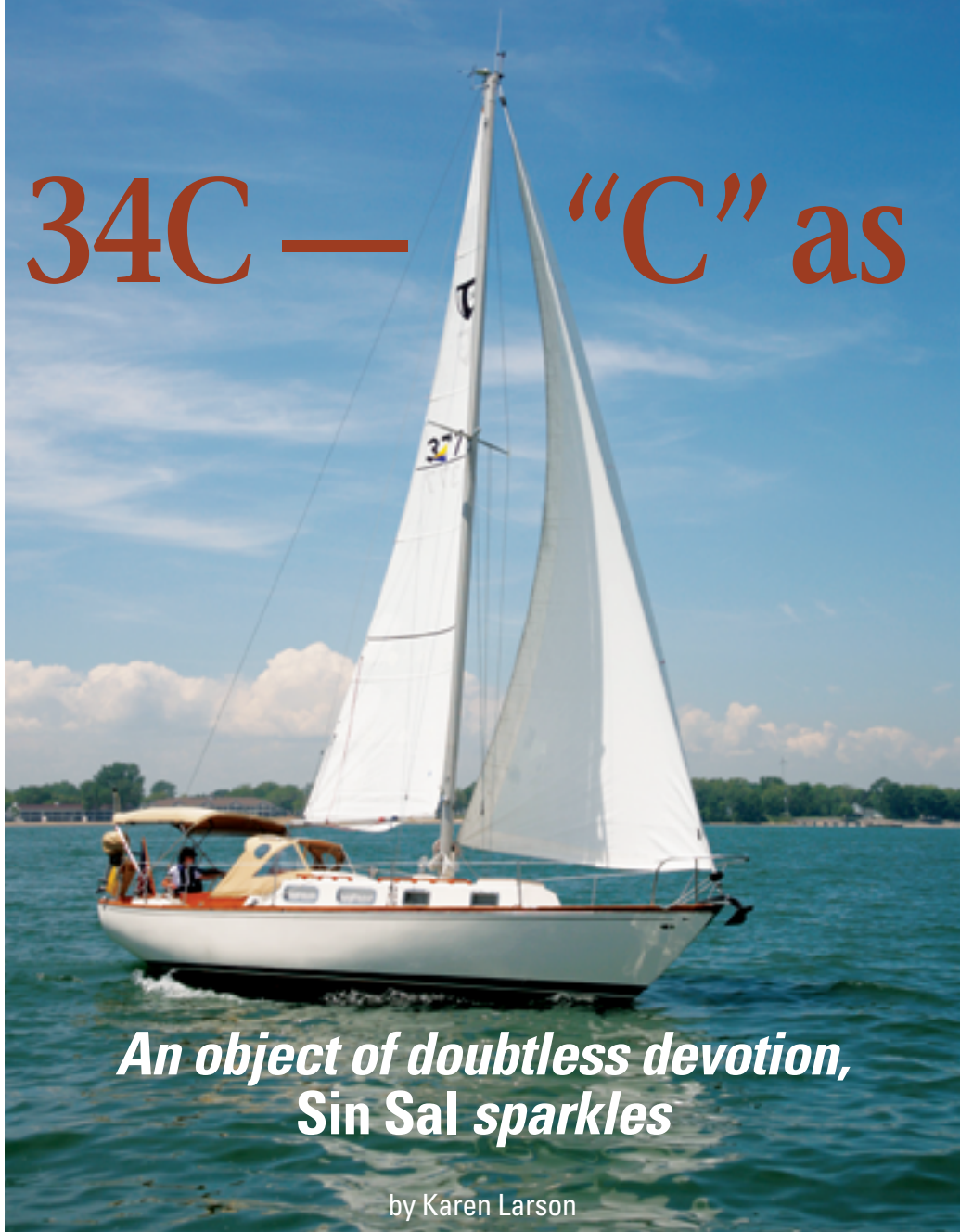
# Tartan 34C — “C” as

When he suggested that we feature the Tartan 34C owned by Max Guzman and Donna Delahanty, Tom Wells described this boat as “nothing less than a jewel case on the water.” After we’d seen her, Jerry Powlas observed that this vessel, built in 1976, “looks as good — inside and out — as any of the brand-new boats at the boat show.”

Jerry and I own a 1976 sailboat that — in spite of our diligent efforts to keep her young — continues to show her age. That *Sin Sal* remains a showcase 35 years after she slipped down the ways is a testament to the attention she’s received while in Max and Donna’s care.

In addition to having conscientious owners, *Sin Sal* has been blessed with excellent credentials. She and her sisters were designed by Olin Stephens in 1967. The 34C was the third boat built in the Tartan line, following the Tartan 27 and the Blackwatch 37.

Tartan produced approximately 525 of the 34Cs between 1967 and 1978. While there was no 34 already in the Tartan family, the suffix “C” was added from the



*An object of doubtless devotion,  
Sin Sal sparkles*

by Karen Larson





# in “class act”



**When Max Guzman and Donna Delahanty found a Tartan 34C they liked, they turned to and made a jewel out of her. As these pictures show, their *Sin Sal* is lovely from any angle, and she's a fine sailer too.**

beginning. I've heard it referred to as “C for classic,” but how can a boat become a classic right out of the mold? This design is clearly a classic *now*, but I go with those who say the “C” stands for “cruising.” Number 377, *Sin Sal*, has been thriving due to the ministrations of Max and Donna since 1997.

Donna was already a sailor when she met Max. She and her previous husband thought sailing seemed like a nice thing to try. So, while she was in Florida for other reasons, Donna signed up for the Annapolis Sailing School course in St. Petersburg.

“I went by myself,” she recalls. “It was a two-day course. My first big revelation was that you can't sail straight into the wind. That was in 1982. I've been sailing ever since.”

By the time Donna and Max became an item, both were “re-singled,” as the term has it, and Donna was the owner of a Cape Dory 25. They were both engineers with Bell System companies — Donna in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Max

in Richmond, Virginia — and their paths had crossed a couple of times over the years at seminars and conferences. Eventually, they began what became a long-distance courtship that lasted five years until Max, who was due to be transferred to Baltimore, found a job with Cincinnati Bell instead.

## **Max becomes a sailor**

Donna sailed *Wind Song*, her Cape Dory, out of Port Clinton, east of Toledo on Lake Erie, a four-hour drive from Cincinnati. The woman who stole his heart was a sailor, ergo Max was going to have to become a sailor. They laugh as they describe one of their early cruises aboard *Wind Song*.

Conditions caused them to move the boat from one anchorage to another approximately five miles away in the dark. Donna had sailed into this anchorage at night several times before, knew the landmarks well, and her approach was serious, conscientious, and safe . . . but not as strongly *confident*

as Max, a newcomer to sailing, would have liked. Because it was dark, and perhaps because he had to put his safety in the hands of someone else, he recalls, “It was rather scary.” Still, they arrived without incident, and Max could put a check mark in the box next to “Has experienced night sailing.” These days, the two switch roles aboard effortlessly. There are no pink or blue jobs aboard *Sin Sal*.

Their sailing skills grew and the two were soon looking for a larger boat. They admired a Tartan 34C just down the dock from their Cape Dory. It was owned by close friends of theirs. So when they found a sister ship that had everything they wanted (a key feature was its new Yanmar with just 38 hours), they were hooked. Still, the purchase of a sailboat is one of life's major investments. They deliberated for a week. Apparently they deliberated about one hour too long. When they walked into the broker's office to make their offer, they learned that the man who had just walked out had





*Sin Sal* probably looks better belowdecks than when she was new, especially given what was fashionable interior decor in the 1970s. Max and Donna have lavished attention on her, with new upholstery and a new teak table, at left above, and new countertops, at right above, without making any significant alterations to her layout. Because the engine is wonderfully accessible, it gets a regular spit and polish too, below.

purchased *their* Tartan! Devastated, they went back to the drawing board. But, a month later, they learned the sale had fallen through after a survey showed a soft deck. The deck was fixed for \$3,000 and the boat became theirs after all.

### New-name conundrum

She was *Second Wind* when they bought her. With one of her previous owners, this boat had been to Bermuda. In spite of the boat's having a nice

history as *Second Wind*, the name didn't suit Max and Donna, and their Tartan remained unnamed for a season and a half while they considered their options. Since Max's 100-year-old father had immigrated from Mexico, they focused on Spanish names. As it turns out, one of Max's specialties is mixing a mean margarita. His version has been dubbed a maxarita. But Max doesn't like the salty rim. After considering that their boat is sailed on a lake without salt and that they prefer their margaritas without salt, the two agreed on the name *Sin Sal* (without salt).

Their passion for Spanish names has also crossed over to their two blue point Siamese cats. Jesus (pronounced the Spanish way) got his name quickly. But they deliberated over a name for his brother, Julio (also pronounced the Spanish way). Seeing a church ("iglesia" in Spanish) on a visit to Texas, they got a good laugh by the inspiration that came to them to name him Julio (as in Julio Iglesias, the popular singer). The cats are affectionate lap cats and contented sailors most of the time (although Jesus does tend to get seasick on rough passages).

Once they retired from their communications jobs, in 2004 and 2007, Max and Donna and their two feline crewmembers began spending a lot more time aboard at Herl's Harbor Marina in Port Clinton and sharing time with sailing friends in the nearby U.S. and

Canadian islands. The southwest end of Lake Erie is a beautiful sailing area with a little something for everyone, from remote anchorages to tourist towns with tall ships, T-shirts, and taffy.

But wanderlust grows as your time allows and as your larger cruising vessel makes it possible. Max and Donna have cruised *Sin Sal* as far west as the North Channel of Lake Huron and as far east as the Thousand Islands, where Lake Ontario meets the St. Lawrence Seaway. So far, the North Channel has been their favorite destination. Perhaps they'll finish off their Great Lakes exploration with a season in Lake Michigan and another in Lake Superior. It wouldn't be out of the question for this cruiser that Tartan built.

### A sensible sailor

As a keel/centerboard boat in the Olin Stephens tradition, *Sin Sal* has a fairly shoal draft. Max and Donna sail her almost exclusively with the board up on shallow Lake Erie but will lower the board to help point higher or to reduce weather helm. Her shallow draft is 4 feet, versus 8 feet with the board down. Of course, the Tartan 34C also has that lovely CCA profile with her graceful sheer and overhangs. Our sense, after cruising aboard for two days, is that she's a good sailer as well. She has roomy decks and a keel-stepped mast. Donna says one of this boat's biggest assets is the amazing amount of stowage belowdecks.





We were impressed that it offers headroom throughout for a 6-footer.

The Tartan 34C has a sensible interior. Some would say she has legendary engine access with the engine box built into the cabin rather than under the companionway ladder. Her other magic feature is the access to the icebox from the cockpit and from the galley. Few boats at the time were designed with this innovation. The cabin also has lots of light from her many ports. *Sin Sal's* opening ports are not original, but they can make a big difference when the weather is hot on the south shore of Lake Erie. The drop-down table hangs on the bulkhead and can do an instant vanishing act, increasing the size of the cabin when it's not needed.

Some would say this boat has too much teak. But not Donna. She has become known around the marina as the Varnish Queen. She has varnished every spot of wood inside and outside the boat. She used a combination of gloss and satin finishes on the interior teak to add a distinctive flair and textural interest to the cabinet and bulkhead surfaces. Donna first used a polyurethane varnish on the interior for its durability and a two-part polymer finish for the exterior. She says the real advantage of the two-part polymer finish was its fast buildup, and she used it for eight years until it was no longer manufactured. At that point, she stripped the exterior teak and applied seven coats of UV-protected polyurethane varnish. Each spring, she sands the teak lightly and applies a couple of coats of fresh varnish. All the work, she points out, is really in the preparation. No matter what product one uses, the preparation is pretty much the same.




**Donna, the Varnish Queen, has left her mark throughout *Sin Sal*, in the galley and main saloon, at right, in the forepeak, at bottom, and on the new teak-and-holly cabin sole.**

*Sin Sal* wasn't in showcase condition when she came into the Guzman/Delahanty family. That part came later. She had her original cushions. Her teak sole was stained. She had plastic portlights and archaic instruments for depth and speed. But the very first repair these two took on after purchasing *Sin Sal*, was the water intrusion at the chainplates. Max says this is a weak spot on the Tartan 34C.

### Gilding the jewel case

Max and Donna added stainless-steel opening ports and another overhead opening hatch, a teak-and-holly sole, a cork sole in the head, and new electronic instruments. They installed an automatic bilge pump and another pump in the head. They put Corian countertops in the galley and head, added a shelf for pots and pans under the galley sink, replaced the Formica table in the cabin with a new teak one, and had a cockpit table built to their own design and specifications.

They added an anchor roller, a new steering wheel, an omni-directional TV antenna on the masthead, a diesel heater, an outboard motor lift, new main and jib halyards, a new continuous reefing line for the roller furler, and refrigeration. They replaced the cockpit sole and fitted stainless-steel Dorades in place of the originals. They added an Autohelm, full cockpit canvas with a Bimini and dodger, and cockpit cushions. They Awlgripped the hull and deck using a roll and tip method. And the Varnish Queen varnished, and varnished, and varnished.

*Sin Sal* is indeed a jewel case on the water. She turns heads wherever she goes. 

*Karen Larson and her husband, Jerry Powlas, founded Good Old Boat to connect people who share their passion for sailing and making boats, old or not so old, better. They spent three months last summer cruising Lake Superior in their C&C 30, Mystic.*



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# The Tartan 34C and its peers

## Standout boats from outstanding designers

by Ted Brewer

The Tartan 34C is a very handsome design by Olin Stephens, one of the most gifted designers of the past century. In finding yachts to compare with it, I came up with two other classics: Charlie Morgan's keel/centerboard 34 and Bill Luders' lovely Sea Sprite 34 which, although a full-keel hull and designed years later, is still reminiscent of the classic, long-ended, sweet-sheered CCA yachts of the 1950s and '60s with their moderate beam and husky displacement. These designs are quite dated by today's standards but I knew and admired all three of their designers . . . so I guess that dates me too!

The Morgan 34 is the earliest of the three and appears to be a smaller version of the famous, race-winning 1961 design, *Paper Tiger*, that was certainly inspired by Olin Stephens' famous 1954, 38-foot 6-inch *Finisterre*, the winner of three Bermuda Races. The CCA rating rule favored the beamier, shoal-draft, keel/centerboard hull to quite a degree, so boats like *Finisterre* and *Paper Tiger* (sailed by some great skippers) won more than their share of races. While most of the earlier keel/centerboard yachts had typical V-shaped boards, Charlie Morgan fitted a much more efficient, narrow, and deep high-aspect-ratio board to the Morgan 34, similar to the board on *Paper Tiger*.


Not only did Sparkman & Stephens give the Tartan 34C a high-aspect-ratio board, they also cut away the lateral plane aft to greatly reduce wetted surface and improve the efficiency of the fin. This would definitely give the 34C an edge over earlier keel/centerboarders in light to medium air. The first 34Cs had 526 square feet of sail, with a 13-foot-long mainsail foot, not unlike the sail plan of the Morgan 34. However, within a few years, the 34C's mainsail foot was shortened to 10.5 feet, possibly to reduce weather helm but also to lower the IOR rating. The result, a 473-square-foot sail area with a high-aspect-ratio main, did not seem to hurt performance greatly, except perhaps downwind.

The Sea Sprite 34 appears to be a later development of the very successful Luders 33 with the same waterline, draft, and displacement but with 500 pounds more ballast

and 3 inches greater beam. With over a foot more draft than the others, she should be the stiffest of the three and could undoubtedly prove her mettle on a long breezy windward slog. The Tartan 34C and Morgan 34, with their shoal draft and ballast carried high, would be quite comparable in stability and, like most centerboarders, initially tender when compared to a deep-keel hull. Their strong suit is when reaching and running, rather than a hard thrash to windward. In any case, the Tartan has the better PHRF rating, 168 to 174, compared to the Morgan's 189, and this would seem reasonable. Downwind, the Morgan's greater sail area will be in her favor, but I still expect the 34C to outperform her under most conditions. In any case, this short waterline trio will simply not keep up with the modern, long-waterline lightweights in most conditions.

Nevertheless, they still have advantages for the cruising sailor. All three have reassuring capsizes numbers, indicating they are capable offshore cruisers. Indeed, one 34C has made a solo circumnavigation while many others have made notable ocean voyages, both cruising and racing. The very-shoal-draft Morgan 34 might be the choice for the Chesapeake, Bahamas, and Gulf waters, while a Luders 34, in good hands, would seem capable of Cape Horn. When it comes to motion comfort,

the three also show very well for their size, thanks to their combination of good displacement, moderate beam, and short waterlines.

The accommodations of these yachts may seem sparse and tight alongside modern designs. Many experienced sailors will tell you today's beamy, long-waterline boats just give you more room to get thrown around in when the seas start to stand straight up. Despite the snug accommodations, the graceful and beautifully balanced overhangs and the sweet sheer-lines of these three old-timers will get nods of approval in any port they enter. 

*Ted Brewer is a contributing editor with Good Old Boat and, in common with the designers he mentions in this article, he has designed a great number and variety of sailing yachts that were good in their day and are still good today.*



Tartan 34C

Morgan 34

Sea Sprite 34

	Tartan 34C	Morgan 34	Sea Sprite 34
LOA	34' 5"	34' 0"	33' 11"
LWL	25' 0"	24' 9"	24' 0"
Beam	10' 2"	10' 0"	10' 3"
Draft (CB up/down)	3' 11"/8' 4"	3' 3"/7' 9"	5' 0"
Displacement	11,200 lb	12,500 lb	12,800 lb
Ballast	5,000 lb	5,000 lb	5,000 lb
LOA/LWL	1.376	1.374	1.413
Beam/LWL	.407	.404	.427
Disp./LWL	320	368	413
Bal./Disp.	.45	.40	.39
Sail Area	473 sq ft	550 sq ft	532 sq ft
SA/Disp.	15.1	16.3	15.6
Capsizes no.	1.82	1.72	1.75
Comfort ratio	28.1	32.4	32.8
Year introduced	1968	1965	1981
Designer	Olin Stephens	Charlie Morgan	Bill Luders



Christmas came early at the Larson/Powlas household in the shape of a sail in a big box, some assembly required.

**N**ever say “never.” For nearly 20 years, I have loudly proclaimed that I would never sew a sail for *Mystic*, our C&C 30. I had my reasons.

It’s a huge and daunting project. There are headboards and corner patches requiring the services of a veritable sewing machine from hell. I always thought the sailmaker’s craft was not for the untrained or faint of heart. Sail shape is too critical to leave to rank amateurs. Our lives could depend upon the quality of our sails. I felt I wasn’t worthy.

But over the years of sailboat ownership, Jerry and I have repaired and modified a lot of sails. In addition to that, I have sewn miles of stitches on Pacific blue Sunbrella (*Mystic*’s color) making sailbags, mainsail covers, winch covers, and assorted trim. Then I did the same in brown Sunbrella for our Mega 30 project boat, *Sunflower*.

Much of this sewing was done on a home sewing machine. But eventually we bought a Sailrite Ultrafeed, an industrial-strength machine that is capable of sewing many layers and, what’s more, is blessed with miraculous walking feet. These feet help slippery fabric (such as sailcloth) move evenly through the machine’s feed dogs.

By acquiring this monster machine we shot down one of my best reasons for avoiding serious sail work. More miles of stitches followed: winter tarps for both boats, upholstery and further interior and exterior knick-knacks for *Sunflower*, and innumerable tarp and sail repairs.

On his own, Jerry took on a couple of major sail modifications that I would never have tackled: he added a foot reef to one jib and hanks to another, replaced a series of batten pockets in the mainsail, modified the Flying Scot jib we use in a blow, and converted a couple of roller furling sails that came with the Mega into hanked-on jibs. (I know. Most people go the other direction when it comes to hanked-on sails and roller furling. But Jerry’s approach is more “retro.”) Working together, we inserted vinyl telltale windows in all of *Mystic*’s jibs.

You can tell someone’s resolve is weakening when she says, “I’d never build a new sail. But if I ever had to build one, I’d want to start with a spinnaker. That’s a nice starter sail, because the sailcloth is light . . . and our lives don’t depend on the quality of a spinnaker.”



# Sewing their first sail

**Cautious amateurs start with a kit — for an asymmetrical spinnaker**

by Karen Larson

Over the years, I have said those words. More than once. Jerry recognized that chink in my armor for what it was.

But *Mystic* didn’t need a spinnaker. Not with our huge 170 genoa that is a great light-air sail. Spinnaker? *Mystic* never had one. Never will, we figured. That is, until the summer of 2009 when we crossed Lake Superior from Isle Royale to Duluth, Minnesota, about 150 miles to the southwest. The relative wind direction was too far abaft the beam for a clever combination of main and jib. The main masked the jib. But a wing-and-wing setup wasn’t quite right either. There was no drive in the jib and the slatting caused by miles of rollers provoked a certain amount of grumbling among the skipper and crew.

Jerry became an overnight convert, and I became a somewhat unwilling accomplice. (Isn’t that the way accomplices usually plead?) Some of the worst disasters on our 20-foot Flying Scot involved spinnaker fire drills and usually wound up with an unplanned swim. One tends to recall these events vividly. My motto remained: “We don’t need no stinkin’ spinnaker. Besides, I’m never going to sew a sail.”

But the die was cast. Jerry suggested that perhaps we could take on a little asymmetrical spinnaker kit project during that quiet week between Christmas and New Year’s.

He said we'd sew this one as a team. So we selected the colors for the panels and ordered a kit from Sailrite. Perhaps Christmas had something to do with it; before I knew it, I was completely in the spirit of the thing.

### A special package

A week later, a really big box arrived. Weighing in at 25 pounds and standing taller than I do, this box was my first clue about what we'd gotten ourselves into. A nice touch is that the box included a sample copy of *Good Old Boat* magazine as part of a promotional program we've had with Sailrite for years. It's one of our many ways of spreading the word about this magazine to do-it-yourself sailors. And there were personalized instructions with our names, our kind of boat, the type of spinnaker we'd ordered, and other personal details with a note, for example, that we had not ordered sail numbers for our cruising chute.

Unpacking the box and checking the packing list was easy. But then the work began in earnest. Each panel in the spinnaker had been computer-generated and cut on a flat-bed plotter, complete with seam markings and inked-on labels about which panel was which. This was a good idea, since there were 41 panels, all looking very much alike. No worries, mate. This is the "insert tab A into slot A" approach to sailmaking.

And if that weren't clear enough, some good fairy had hand-written further information on a flurry of little white stickers and stuck them all over the panels. Each little note was extremely useful. There was no wasted effort there. The same thoughtful sprite had also supplied us with a bunch of scrap sailcloth left over when the cutting was completed. We could use this scrap to check our sewing machine tension and to make as many test strips as we needed. We would also now have a lifetime supply of telltales (so long as we aren't hung up on the need for red and green telltales, since this spinnaker's color scheme is two shades of blue and white).

### More strength, less stretch

The sail design that Jerry — in consultation with Sailrite's sail designer, Jeff Frank — selected for us is an SKR cut, a Sailrite proprietary design, which stands for Sailrite Kit Racing, even though this is an asymmetrical cruising spinnaker and we don't intend to race. Just to prove that it's asymmetrical, it's 40 feet at the luff, 38 feet at the leech, and 22½ feet at the foot. Sailrite also has an SKR mainsail and genoa cut. According to Matt Grant at Sailrite, all three designs have the panels and rows of stitching arranged so "the thread lines run with the load path" to minimize bias stretch.

He points out that the SKR cut is more expensive than the typical tri-radial cut because there are more panels to sew together and more wasted fabric. (Wait a minute! Did he say *more* panels to sew?) The other factor in this sail cut is that the design itself is able to take more stress, so lighter fabric can be used for spinnakers on larger boats or, alternatively, racing boats can carry a sail of their usual weight cloth in a bit more wind. Although it didn't start out that way, these days the folks at Sailrite recommend their asymmetrical racing cut to cruisers as well as racers.



As the sail neared completion it threatened to engulf the room and the machine operator, at top. Assembly began with four separate parts: the three corners and the midsection. Jerry works on a reinforcement patch for the clew, at middle left, and the head awaits further stitching, at middle right. Jerry puts the final touches to the tack section, above.



## “Where could we find a clean, empty space more than 40 feet long and 22 feet wide?”

### Sewing in sections

The design of this spinnaker allowed us to build the sail in four subsections: top, middle, and two bottom pieces. We started at the top. That was when we got our first inkling of the true size of this sail. There was *no* room in our house — not anywhere — that was long or wide enough for laying out even *one* subsection of this mammoth sail. Dragging each long, *very* long, triangular section of crinkly ¾-ounce ripstop cloth through the house was somewhat akin to having a long train on a wedding gown.

We sewed these long pieces together while carefully following the diagram that came with the kit. We followed

the guidance offered somewhat like a paint-by-numbers plan, since we lacked the space to see even a part of a subsection laid out flat. Some things you have to simply accept on faith.

Each panel was to be attached to the previous one with a double row of zigzag stitches. With this project, I learned to appreciate the sticky two-sided Seamstick tape as never before. This repositionable tape took the place of pins, holding each seam in place perfectly while we attached each new panel and sewed it to the previously assembled section of sail. I had previously disliked Seamstick because in other canvas projects it had gummed-up the sewing needles and made them sticky, but the fine #10 needles we used with the thin ripstop fabric did not get gummy enough to be a problem.

The second time we became aware of the gargantuan proportions of this sail was when we neared the ends of a subsection and had to maneuver our ever-growing creation around in a tight space.

### Home-loft limitations

We did our sewing in the dining room, which we cleared of all furniture except for two large tables, side by side, that served as our sewing platform. Even with that arrangement, the large spread of cloth caught on table corners and required constant repositioning as we worked our way from one end of a seam to the other and back again.

Picture that you begin with the entire sail or part of a sail in your lap. Then, as you sew up to the other end, this large wad of fabric must move off the floor at your feet and across the table to the far side. When finished, you “merely” flip the whole thing over and sew back up the same seam on the back side in the other direction, starting once more with the whole pile in your lap. We could have put the sewing machine on the floor. That would have simplified some of this, but I don’t think either of us would have ever walked again if we’d done two weeks’ worth of sewing while crouching over a sewing machine on the floor.

Eventually, all the subassemblies were completed and we moved on to the multi-layered corner patches. Jerry did this work by himself as the quiet week between Christmas and New Year’s Day had vanished and magazine deadlines began competing for my attention. When he’d completed that heavy work, we sewed all the subassemblies together. Now we’re *really* talking about a monster sail!

### The big picture

Before completing the edging and the final corner protection, we thought we should find a way to spread out the whole sail somewhere in order to see visually if we had made any mistakes. But *where* could we find a clean, empty space more than 40 feet long and 22 feet wide?

I thought of the gymnasium in our area community center. This was a request that they apparently don’t get every week, judging by the dumbstruck looks on a couple of faces when we showed up with an enormous bag and said, “We’d like to spread our sail out on the floor somewhere, if you please.” That gave us the chance to tiptoe all over the sail, removing little white stickers and assuring ourselves that *Mystic’s* newest, largest, and most colorful sail was assembled correctly.

To finish, Jerry sewed on the red, green, and white edging and then completed the final chafe protection on the corners, hand-sewing leather patches on each.



After spreading the sail out on the local gymnasium floor to inspect it in toto, Karen and Jerry returned it to the dining room for the finishing touches. Before sewing them on, Jerry attached the edge tapes with Seamstick tape, top. When he’d hand-sewn leather anti-chafe patches on the corners, above, the sail was done.

### Kit and kaboodle

The Sailrite kit included all the right pieces, perfectly cut and carefully labeled. It also included good directions. We found their online video to be very helpful as well. Since seeing the process is an effective way to understand a project of this type, we watched the video a half dozen times at least as we arrived at each new stage of the process.

We found it valuable to load up a number of bobbins at one time so that, when one ran out in the middle of an 18-foot seam, we could easily pop in a new one without having to get a formidable ball of sail out of the way first.

We were tripped up twice by a couple of items that were not supplied in the kit but were called for in the directions. The first was #10 industrial sewing needles for the Ultrafeed

## Sock it to me!

**E**very cruising spinnaker needs a snuffer. While we were buying the sail kit from Sailrite, we ordered a spinnaker sock kit too. This kit, at first glance, was more intimidating than the sail kit, since nothing was custom precut just for us. Instead, we received all the parts we needed and a few bolts of cloth from which to cut a 38-foot tube. After taking a look at some of the challenges involved, we decided to build the sail first.

The Sailrite spinnaker sock is more than a large tube with a metal ring at the end to hold the tube open. There is, in addition, a long pocket that runs up the length of the sock and through which the uphaul and downhaul lines run so they don't get tangled up with the sail.

The first challenge in the dead of winter was how to make an even taper on a piece of cloth that long. The pocket on the outside of the sock, for example, would taper from 15 inches at the wide opening to 5 inches at the top, nearly 38 feet away. No space in our house comes close to 38 feet. Jerry made a series of amazing calculations for the taper at 5-foot intervals. He did the same thing for the sock taper. We cut out the pieces and began to sew.

The whole project took a little more than two days to complete. Once you have the pieces cut, the sewing isn't very complicated or time-consuming (unlike the spinnaker itself, which seemed like a never-ending sewing project). There is some handwork and a few fussy bits at the top and bottom of the sock, but they're easy to understand, especially with the help of Sailrite's how-to video.

The finished sock did help us stuff a very large spinnaker, that was threatening to take over the house, into something more manageable, although Jerry thinks of the finished sausage tube as a giant anaconda. In a note to Matt Grant at Sailrite about



**Jerry shows off the sock that would swallow the spinnaker, and then be looking for a place to live aboard *Mystic*.**

his assessment of this part of the project, Jerry wrote, "The Sailrite anaconda spinnaker sock lives. As the last knot was tied, it rose up, hunted down a Sailrite spinnaker and ate it . . . all but the last few feet."

I do have one last question: "Where are we going to store this monster snake on our boat?"

Truly. That was the most important question.

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machine. These rather fine needles are used with thin ripstop nylon. Since our usual canvas projects require sturdier needles, we didn't have industrial needles for our Ultrafeed machine of this size on hand (my Singer sewing machine needles were not sized for the Ultrafeed). Since we could have been sewing this spinnaker on any kind of machine, I understand why the kit couldn't supply these needles, but we were caught unprepared nonetheless.

The next thing called for that was not included was a 3M adhesive spray called Super 77. This was available in a local crafts shop, but it would have been much simpler if this had been supplied with the kit or if the kit specifically noted that this product should be purchased locally before beginning.

Even though we sewed yards and yards of seams, we never thought all that practice made perfect. Even by the end of the project, we thought our rows of stitching were somewhat unprofessional looking. They're not bad. Not bad at *all* really, but I don't think any sailmaker will offer either of us a job anytime soon.

There was just one more associated project. We still had to make a spinnaker sock. And — egads! — this kit did

**“Now that we've built one sail, we're feeling much more worthy as sailmakers.”**

*not* come with pre-cut sections. It arrived with a great bolt of cloth, detailed instructions, and Sailrite's best wishes (*Oh dear!*). They also sell a video about building a sock. We started with the video (watching it many times) before we began yet another daunting task.

During our great summer vacation odyssey of 2010, we had a chance to fly the spinnaker several times. It performed amazingly well and looked great. My regrets about not having professionally perfect stitching all melted away. You can't see our imperfect seams when that monster sail is flying.

Now that we've built one sail, we're feeling much more worthy as sailmakers. Even while we were still sewing the spinnaker, Jerry began making noises about building a storm jib. They're small, you know. How hard could it be? As for me, I've been rather taken by the Mainster light-air mainsail discussed in our January 2010 issue. You just never know when the temptation could come upon one of us again. *△*

*Karen Larson and Jerry Powlas founded Good Old Boat and live by the do-it-yourself creed they encourage through their magazine.*



All that winter work paid off over the following summer when *Mystic* had several opportunities to show off her owners' handiwork while giving them many hours of pleasant light-air sailing.



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# Partners in sailing

## Joint ownership provided a path to the water

by Steve Gibb

Picnicking one day in a park in Oxford, Maryland, on Chesapeake Bay, we watched sailboats glide into a wooded anchorage. That did it.

I had moved to the Washington, D.C., area to be closer to my then girlfriend, but the possibility of our joining the world of big sailboats seemed remote, especially on the joint salaries of a journalist and public health worker. And although I had sailed and raced small boats in my native Michigan, I was intimidated by the responsibility of handling and caring for a large boat. We were surprised, too, at how many sailboats we saw that seemed to have fallen into disuse and wondered how their owners could pass up the ability, that we so envied, to be on the water.

Years later, a journalist colleague took me out sailing on a 1976 Hunter 25, *Rhode Keel*, that he and three others owned in partnership. Terry, another co-owner of the boat, was also on board. We left their slip on the Rhode River on a beam reach and it wasn't long before

the sunlight scalloping the waves was making me think about finding a way to have a boat of my own. When they gave me the tiller, I fixed on a landmark and, sheltered in the shadow of the mainsail, we sailed home from Thomas Point Lighthouse under cobalt skies.

Seeing the quality of the light that afternoon and feeling the movement of the boat convinced me that if ever an opening in the partnership arose, I would be interested in filling it. I knew enough to sense they were solid sailors but, more important, they were excellent company and relaxed about teaching me things. I hoped I had made a good first impression by docking well, pulling into the last slip to starboard and stopping on cue. This is particularly tricky in that marina as maneuvering room is limited by a shallow marine railway nearby.

### An opening

Then my reporter colleague accepted an offer in Geneva and asked if I would

Ken Cunningham, Natalie Cunningham, and Steve Gibb sing the praises of the partnership through which they share the joys and responsibilities of owning a sailboat, at left, and their boat, *Que Sera*, opposite page.

be interested in taking over his share of the boat. I leapt at the chance to join the partnership that shared *Rhode Keel*. Not only was this an economical way to access sailing on the bay, I also liked the idea of learning from and sharing the experience with others while keeping a sailboat in active use. Having sailing partners meant not having to play “host” every time we sailed with non-sailing guests and provided me with a new circle of developing friendships.

Within our partnership, Terry had the most big-boat sailing and racing experience and was generous with his knowledge, time, and sense of adventure. An old family friend and a business colleague of his rounded out the foursome, which had originally been formed in 1993. Over the years, this group has involved eight different configurations of owners. The marina managers, who also work as watermen on the bay, say it is the longest running sailing partnership they've ever seen.

The group has a few basic rules. If someone fell behind on his monthly payments of \$130 — which are paid into a kitty to cover all maintenance, slip fees, insurance, and upgrades — he had to take over organizing the financial management of the boat, such as year-end settle-up, which was normally Terry's arena. Everyone lends a hand in maintaining the boat as well as commissioning and decommissioning her in spring and fall. Haulouts are supervised by whomever is available. In any given month, we each had a week, starting on a Friday, for our own use, and we often allowed other partners to share our sailing times when our schedules permitted. Over time, we fell into the rhythm of sailing together on weekends.

The Chesapeake is a forgiving teacher, with muddy bottoms that prevent damage during groundings, waves that hardly ever grow more than a foot or two (unless a southeaster is blowing), and multiple safe harbors if thunderstorms kick up. With the help of my sailing mentors and the practice



that comes of sailing often, I quickly got the hang of winches and anchors and handling the outboard.

### A bigger, newer boat

A year after I joined the partnership, it became increasingly clear to us that, despite her dry bilge and handy roller furler, *Rhode Keel* was growing old. Just down the road from our marina we found a boat brokerage with a 1983 Endeavour 32 for sale.

Buying a boat as a group is a bit like buying a house together: everyone has one thing he can't live without and other things he may have to accept as compromises. Our joint list included a Bimini, roller furling, and an autopilot. My requirement was a long berth, as I stand 6-feet 4-inches in my socks. *Que Sera* met all our requirements and was in excellent shape. The 24-hp Universal diesel needed routine maintenance but it ran, and the sails were pretty much blown out but serviceable. We could postpone costly upgrades. We read up on her sailing qualities and learned she'd be steady in heavy winds. Deciding to go ahead, we sold *Rhode Keel* to a friend. The transfer coincided with a partnership transition, so the former set of partners split the proceeds from the sale of *Rhode Keel*. We then made a "capital call" so the new partners could buy into our new boat.

That was when my education began in earnest: varnishing trim and coamings, handling water pumps and depth sounders, managing communications with our marine mechanic — a retired anthropology professor — and taking care of our gorgeous wood-paneled interior. These were all new tasks we never had to contend with on the Hunter.

I've taken on much of the maintenance out of a desire to learn and to be useful. I've picked up valuable tips from our mechanic and through trial and error. Because *Que Sera* is sailed by several skippers, I made start-up and shut-down checklists and plasticized them. These reminders help us safeguard the engine and electrics, ensure that springlines are set to cope with tides, and ensure that we knot the jib sheets so the jib won't unfurl in a storm when she's untended in her berth.

My real sailing lessons have come from Terry, who taught me to sit to leeward when I have the helm so I'll be able to see the jib telltales as well as the crab pots that can foul propellers (as I discovered one howlingly chilly day on *Rhode Keel*). Terry also urges me to avoid pinching, or sailing too close to the wind. I've gotten the hang of falling off a few degrees, noting the corresponding surge in boat speed.


He's detailed the finer points of how to use the traveler to flatten the main and improve her progress to windward. I can assist Terry with setting the spinnaker — he's really the first among equals under sail — but I have yet to try it when he's not aboard. Early on, I came up with the idea of maneuvering *Que Sera* manually out of the slip with the help of boathooks until we're clear of the finger piers because of her excessive prop walk. I also learned to maintain just enough speed for steerage as we approach the dock.

Our partnership was reduced to just three members when one member's family moved to California. Despite some early efforts to locate a replacement, we've put recruitment on hold as we're enjoying our greater access to the boat.

My then-girlfriend had become my wife, and our kids, now 10 and 6, are building a bank of positive experiences

on gentle-wind days when we swim off the boat. And, for years now, I've taken my father and a friend on three-day weekends in the fall to Maryland's Eastern Shore.

When the partners and friends sail her together, we always learn something. We enjoy holding long electronics-free conversations and playing hand drums and flutes on cool autumn evenings huddled next to the warm engine compartment. We also hold an occasional informal "book group," with everyone agreeing to read the same book before we embark.

As partners, we share costs and maintenance for *Que Sera* but, more important, we sail together a lot, which strengthens our bonds. What's sad to us is seeing the number of boats at our marina and elsewhere that have fallen into disuse. *Que Sera* is sailed all spring, summer, and fall by a partnership based on the bonds of friendship. What else are good old boats for? 

*Steve Gibb lives with his wife, Carolyn, and two children in Silver Spring, Maryland, where he works in environmental communications. He has been a member of the sailing partnership for three years. The consortium sails Que Sera out of Edgewater, Maryland, on the Chesapeake Bay.*



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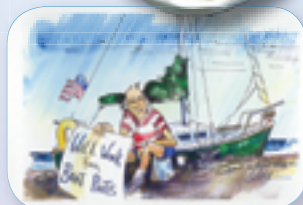


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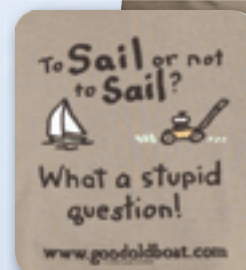


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To get the dinghy on board, Richard and Beth first disconnect the lower lifeline, then pull the dinghy by its painter up and over the ship's gunwale.

We wouldn't cast off without our 8-foot pram in tow. It's convenient to have her in the water and ready to go when we finally drop the hook for the day. We secure the oars with bungee cord when under way, and there is a sculling notch in the transom to enable the use of one oar, just in case.

Sailing through narrow passages and miscalculating the tide at anchor make occasional groundings all but inevitable, and we've saved the day more than once by getting the kedge out fast. Also, when sailing singlehanded, it's nice to know there is something trailing at some distance in the wake of the mother ship to grab hold of in the event of a misstep on the foredeck.

Whether in the chop and whirlpools of a tide against wind sea under the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, or crossing the Strait of Juan de Fuca, or rolling and pitching in the wakes of big powerboats, she tows remarkably well, seldom shipping enough water to fill a teacup.

### A reliable towline

We tow our dink with a line made up in two parts. First there's a 20-foot painter

# Row, tow,

# and stow

## *A little pram dinghy is a workhorse and a comfort*

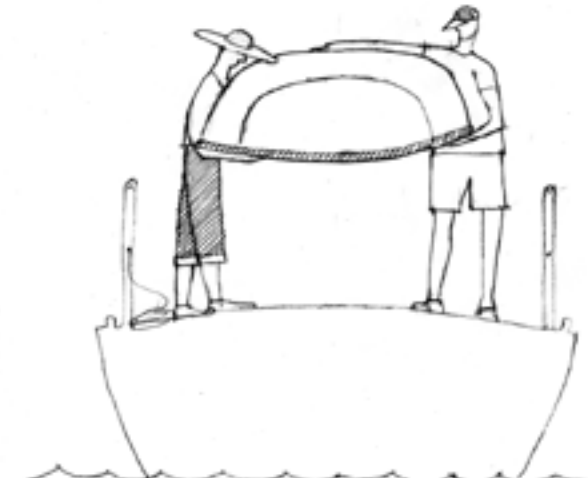
by Richard Smith

of  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch nylon. This is permanently fastened to a bow eye with an eye and thimble in the towline. The other end is whipped and ready to bend to a 50-foot line with a trusty bowline. I've used polypropylene for a towline, but it's nasty stuff to work with: it doesn't knot well and its splices and eyes are unreliable. It doesn't have the springiness of nylon and a friend of mine learned that it doesn't always float; he got into a lash-up with his prop when backing down on it one night.

The nylon I prefer to use will sink, but I've threaded it through some fishing-net floats held in place by stopper knots to prevent it from sinking and tangling with the prop or rudder. I can judge speed roughly by looking back to see how many floats are in the air. Ripples and sounds are also good indications of speed and reminders that the dink is still back there. It's surprising how far you can get before you notice there's no tender following along. It's good to get into the habit of looking over your

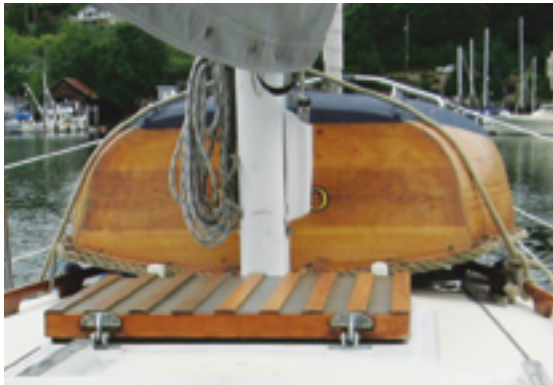


Next, they lift the dinghy from under the port upper lifeline and rest it athwartships across the port and starboard lifelines.



They then invert the dinghy and turn it to face fore and aft, with its bow toward the bow of the mother ship.





**Stowing a dinghy aboard a 31-foot boat is no mean feat, but *Kuma's* tender fits neatly between the mast and the foredeck cleat.**

method keeps the dinghy from nudging or slamming the big boat in the night as the tide changes. It works in most situations except when large powerboats come close by and the dinghy tries to roll and pitch in their wakes. Keeping one fender a little higher than the other on these occasions helps, but sometimes the only solution is to get her aboard.

When on board, the pram's inverted transom rests just forward of the mast in chocks. Her bow rests on deck just short of

the windlass. I made the chocks of 1½-inch Douglas fir. They're through-bolted to the deck with backing plates in the fo'c's'l.

shoulder from time to time. I've replaced the painter this year as it was showing signs of chafe and there's no telling what the sun's done to it.

I run the towline through a large chock and bend it to the starboard stern cleat. I used to tow with a bridle going to both stern cleats but, due to the MOB ladder and a few other stern obstructions, I find it more convenient to use the starboard cleat. With this arrangement, I can deal with the chafing gear at the chock — currently

a scrap of old towel — more easily, changing it as I vary the towline length to match wave patterns.

### No nighttime nudging

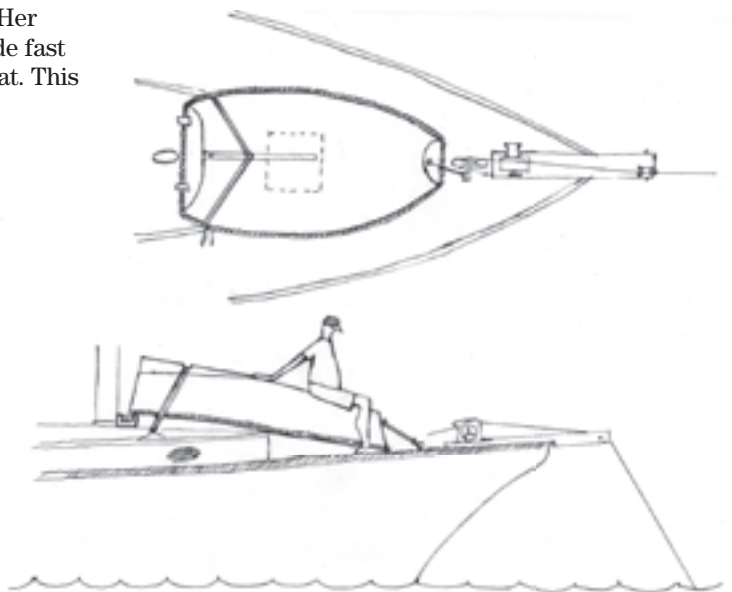
When anchored or moored to a buoy at night, I've found the best method of securing the dinghy is to put a fender on either side of the lifeline gate and bend the painter to the starboard midships cleat. Her stern line is made fast to a jibsheet cleat. This

### Match the dinghy to the deck

It's important to carry a dinghy whose size and shape doesn't prevent the normal safe and efficient operation of the boat. Our boat is a 31-footer



**They lower the dinghy's port side, balance it inboard of the port lifelines, and make ready to lower the stern transom into the chocks.**



**Once the stern transom is in the chocks, they secure the dinghy by tying the towing eye to an eyebolt on deck and running a lashing line over the aft end of the skeg from handrail to handrail.**

## Dinghies and tenders



As well as being practical, a wooden pram dinghy has aesthetic appeal. *Kuma's* tender is sturdy but light enough for two people to easily manhandle. The sculling notch, at left, means she can be propelled with one oar should the need arise. She is easy to row and gives the crew a way to exercise and explore, at right.

and, though a 9-footer would have advantages, an 8-foot pram is a good compromise between carrying capacity, stability, weight, and available space. There is room to get around the dinghy's 4-foot beam to get at the

bow mooring cleat, work the manual anchor windlass, and sort out snarls in the roller furler. Our 8-foot plywood-transomed inflatable can use the same chocks. One drawback is that both dinghies cover the fo'c's'l hatch ...

which brings out certain claustrophobic tendencies in my good wife.

### Getting the dinghy aboard

The best location is one thing; getting the little dink there is quite another.

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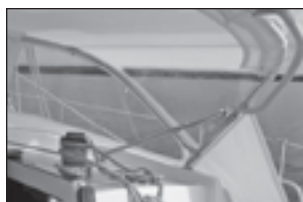
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For convenience, and to avoid stern clutter, Richard tows the dinghy from the starboard quarter cleat, at left, and protects the painter from chafe with a rag. The fishing floats knotted into the nylon painter make the nylon float and help keep it away from the propeller. When *Kuma* sails at speed, the dinghy sits high and rarely ships more than a cupful of water, at right.

I've considered davits, but they don't go well with our curvy transom and can interfere with visibility and the general simplicity we strive for. A halyard or other sort of hoisting system may make the job easier. For now, we just pull her up and over the rail.

The routine starts with the lower port lifeline. Normally, it's secured to the bow pulpit with a lashing of  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch line and a few half hitches. We release this and carry the lifeline back to the first stanchion where it's out of the way. The two of us then grab the painter and haul the dinghy on board between the top lifeline and the toerail. (My to-do list reminds me to fit a stainless-steel rub strake to protect the teak.) Now, she's beached on deck with her bow lying on the upper lifeline on the starboard side. We then work the stern around to rest on the port-side upper lifeline.

That's the easy bit. At this point, she's on board but athwartships and right side up. The next step is less straightforward; she must be turned to point fore and aft with her bow forward . . . and inverted. (This is easier said than done and takes a little practice to do smoothly and well.) Once she's turned, we place her starboard rail inside the mother ship's port toerail. We carefully lower her, inverted, and fit the transom to the chocks.

### Tying her down

We attach a designated  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch hold-down line with a bowline to the port handrail a foot or so forward

of the transom. We run this line across the dinghy's bottom to the opposite side, back again, and over again before we secure it with a half hitch to the starboard handrail. We attach the painter to the bow mooring cleat or a through-deck eye. I don't like the idea of fixing the stern hold-down to the cabintop handrail because of the strain on the bedding compound, but it will suffice until I install a couple of eyes. I'm also thinking of notching the dinghy's skeg to hold the tie-down lines forward a little.

This is an arrangement that calls for improvisation. Whatever your method, try not to lash the dinghy down in a way that impedes any activity on the bow or your ability to go forward. Beware of securing lines that might cause the crew to trip.

### To tow or to stow?

There are advantages in towing your tender and keeping her in the water day and night, where she is immediately available for any purpose, pleasurable or otherwise. Occasionally, however, when you've charted a difficult passage and bad weather threatens, or if you have to haul out in the middle of a cruise, or if the boat and its tender must be left unattended for long stretches of time, or for many other good reasons, it is well to have a method for bringing the little dink on board, safely and independent of the help of others.

It's taken years to develop our routine and almost every season we find new and better ways of doing things. It's why we sail. *A*

*Richard Smith's bio is on page 13.*

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# An uplifting conversion

*A hard dinghy becomes a rigid inflatable*

by Frank Lanier

**T**wenty years, two kids, and a dog later, I finally had to face facts — the family dinghy no longer fit the family. My wife and I had acquired *Melelu*, an 8-foot fiberglass Dyer knockoff, while living aboard in Hawaii. Because she served us so well over the years, I tended to ignore or even sugarcoat the signs indicating the need for something with a bit more carrying capacity. After all, if rowing to shore once is good for the ticker, then twice or even three times to ferry dog, kids, and supplies is even better, right?

My false logic finally hit shoal water when I clamped my newly purchased outboard on the dinghy transom and loaded up the family for an oar-free victory lap around the harbor, an event that nearly ushered the entire Lanier clan into Davy Jones' Locker. Both *Melelu* and my wife let me know that they'd reached their limits and that something had to be done . . . now!

## Decisions, decisions

Like most sailors, I craved the benefits of a hard dinghy (durability, the ability to sail, superior rowing) but lusted after the increased stability and carrying capacity of an inflatable. A rigid-hull inflatable seemed to offer the best of both worlds, but the prices seemed out of this world, particularly as *Melelu* was still in great shape. What's a tightwad sailor to do? The idea came to me while looking at a Walker Bay dinghy on display at a local chandlery.

To increase stability and carrying capacity, Walker Bay dinghies can be fitted with a one-piece tube kit. While looking at one of their dinghies with the tube option installed, I noticed the dimensions and overall shape of the Walker Bay were very similar to my own dinghy, although the Walker Bay has a finer bow.

After I made some rough initial measurements and inspected how the tube was attached, I felt confident I could use the Walker Bay kit to retrofit *Melelu* with minimal effort. A closer look was in order to confirm my theory and to compare the cost of the Walker Bay tube with other options.

The Walker Bay RID (Rigid Inflatable Dinghy) tube kit for their 8-foot dinghy comes in two models, the 275R (with a PVC tube) and the 275H (with a Hypalon tube). Each kit contains the tube (a single U-shaped affair with four separate air chambers), four sections of pre-drilled aluminum mounting track, a tube/valve repair kit, a foot pump, and all the hardware required to install the tube on a Walker Bay dinghy.

Mounting the tube on a Walker Bay dinghy is straightforward, particularly on those models where the hull has been pre-drilled to accept the tube's mounting tracks. The kit also includes instructions and patterns for drilling and mounting the tracks and tube on non-RID-ready Walker Bay dinghies



Fitted with an inflatable collar, main photo, Frank's dinghy has extra buoyancy to carry the family, which has grown in number over the years he has owned the dinghy, inset.

(a plus for my particular project). Once the tracks are bolted to the hull, the tube is then fed into the track (via an attachment similar to a boltrope) starting at both sides of the bow and working toward the stern.

As the aluminum tracks were designed to match the finer bow of the Walker Bay, I knew some minor bending would be required for them to fit the more rounded bow of my older dinghy. This didn't appear to be much of an issue as the tube (rather than the tracks) does the actual curving around the bow. Just to be sure I wasn't overlooking some subtle detail, I called the folks at Walker Bay, told them about my plan, and asked for their thoughts.

No one there had seriously considered selling their tube kits for use on other manufacturers' dinghies. This is understandable. Since Walker Bay is in the business of selling dinghies, they designed their tube kits to enhance the sale of their own products. After some consideration, representatives there agreed that, while it could probably be done, they didn't recommend this unconventional use for their kits.



This was mainly due to the wide variety of possible hull shapes and track modifications that would be necessary. The final quality of the alteration would, naturally, depend on the skills of the individual doing the work.

They raised the possibility of voiding the tube's warranty due to non-standard installations. However, no one told me definitively that that would be the case. I learned that the company later took a harder line, perhaps after giving the idea further thought. Brigitta Shore, the company's media relations specialist, was quoted in *Practical Sailor* as saying, "Walker Bay Boats cannot guarantee their product if it is not used for the intended purpose. In this case, the tube kits are built to fit Walker Bay's boats, a custom manufactured product. If they are used for any other purpose, the warranty is void. The reason is that hull shapes differ, as do their materials, which can cause strains, wrinkles, and stresses."

### The options

Blissfully unaware of Walker Bay's stance, and not too worried about warranties anyway, I began comparing prices. West Marine was selling the 275R PVC tube kit for about \$800, while the 275H Hypalon tube kit was running approximately \$1,200. The difference in price is primarily due to Hypalon's touted superior resistance to UV degradation. While both materials are advertised as being rugged and durable, Hypalon is particularly recommended for use in warmer climates. Bear in mind that warmer doesn't necessarily mean tropical; Walker Bay recommends Hypalon for use in my home port of Norfolk, Virginia.

A quick Internet search showed that rigid-hulled inflatables in the 8-foot range with Hypalon tubes started

## “Walker Bay recommends Hypalon for use in my home port of Norfolk, Virginia.”



A dry fit of the partially inflated Walker Bay collar showed Frank where he would need to make adjustments.



To accommodate the fuller bow of the Dyer knockoff, Frank had to bend the aluminum mounting tracks.



Frank might not have tried this without the collar in place.

out at around \$3,000. Buying a Walker Bay 8-foot dinghy, at \$800, and the 275H tube kit would total approximately \$2,000. I could save \$400 if I chose the Walker Bay dinghy and PVC tube kit. Or I could upgrade *Melelu* for the cost of a Walker Bay tube kit alone.

About this time, I discovered another viable alternative that warranted serious consideration. This was another tube kit made to retrofit hard dinghies offered by Dinghy Dogs. This kit consists of two tubes 84 inches long and 10½ inches in diameter that attach to the port and starboard sides of a hard dinghy using lines and four 3-inch nylon cleats. The cleats are mounted at the bow and stern on each side of the dinghy. Each tube is also attached near the waterline using an 18-inch length of PVC track. A flap/boltrope attachment slides into this track. The track is attached utilizing industrial-grade double-sided foam tape and/or stainless-steel screws. The kit includes both attachment options. Each kit contains everything needed to attach the tubes, along with a foot pump for easy inflation.

The company's website says the tube construction consists of an inner bladder of 10-mil polyurethane fabric and an outer covering of super-tough polyester-reinforced vinyl fabric with UV inhibitors.

Two immediate benefits stood out when looking at the Dinghy Dogs option: the price (approximately \$425) and ease of installation. As the tubes are separate and attach to the sides, they can easily be mounted on most hard dinghies, regardless of bow shape. They can also be more quickly and easily removed than the Walker Bay tube should the need arise.

I had the opportunity to view an installation of the Dinghy Dogs and, although I appreciated the benefits associated

with them, I really liked the look provided by the one-piece Walker Bay tube. I also wanted the Hypalon fabric for its longevity. Hypalon was not an option with the Dinghy Dogs kits.

Based on the options above (material, estimated savings, and my loyalty to our good old family dinghy) I ordered Walker Bay's 275H tube kit.

### The installation

Walker Bay's instructions for the tube kit were thorough and helpful, particularly the section on retrofitting non-RID-ready Walker Bay boats. The crucial part of the installation for my dinghy was proper placement of the track assemblies to ensure the tube would look right and perform correctly. Not surprisingly, the paper template provided to drill and mount the boltrope tracks on non-RID-ready Walker Bay boats didn't work on my dinghy without some creative interpretation (primarily due to *Melelu's* more rounded bow).

The first thing I did was to partially inflate the tube and dry-fit

it around the upturned hull of my dinghy to get a feel for fit and appearance. After supplementing the template directions with measurements taken from a fully assembled Walker Bay RID, I found the minor bending of the tracks required to fit the bow of my dinghy turned out to be relatively simple and well within the ability of most do-it-yourself sailors. Probably the most critical aspect (from a track-mounting standpoint) was making sure the distance they were mounted below the dinghy's gunwales remained constant (roughly 2½ inches) throughout their entire length.

### The results

Now that we've used our upgraded *Melelu* for more than three full seasons, we agree that the difference has been nothing short of amazing. Not only did the tube provide a huge increase in stability and safe load-carrying capacity (under power and sail), the retrofit also looks great and provides additional protection to the topsides of the mother ship when the dinghy's tied alongside.

## Tube kits side by side

**A**lthough I ultimately chose to go with the Walker Bay tube, the Dinghy Dogs were an attractive option. My dock neighbor Steve did purchase Dinghy Dogs and, after some deliberation, he and I came up with the following list of pros and cons based on his experience with them over the past year.

### Pros

- Excellent stability. As Steve put it, "I'm not a small man and the Dinghy Dogs support my weight even when I'm standing on the rail of my 9-foot dinghy."
- At \$425, the price is considerably less than for the Walker Bay conversion kit. You could almost purchase three sets of Dinghy Dogs for the money you'd spend on a Walker Bay Hypalon tube kit.
- Installation and removal of the tubes is quick and easy.
- Excellent website and outstanding customer support from the manufacturer.

### Cons

- To me, at least, the Dinghy Dogs don't look as clean or classy as the Walker Bay tube kit. Steve also states, "If you don't have enough freeboard, the tubes may ride high enough to interfere with rowing. I plan on shortening the length of material that attaches the tubes to the tracks in order to hold the tubes down a little farther from the dinghy's gunwale."



Dinghy Dogs are separate tubes that fit on each side of a dinghy's hull to provide additional buoyancy.




Dinghy Dogs attach to cleats at the bow and stern of the dinghy and are held down by a short tab in a track.



Inflated, the Dinghy Dogs resemble pillows on either side of the boat.



“I really like the look provided by the one-piece Walker Bay tube. I also wanted the Hypalon fabric for its longevity.”

Although the upgrade was a bit unconventional, the installation worked well for us, and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it. Like-minded sailors should weigh each option carefully before deciding if it's the right choice for them. 

*Frank Lanier is an avid boater and SAMS-accredited marine surveyor in Norfolk, Virginia. His first boat was a 1974 Ericson 34 that he and his family lived aboard while cruising the Hawaiian Islands. These days, he sails on Chesapeake Bay with his wife Marilou; children, Tristan and Alyssa; and dog, Biscuit the sea schnauzer, aboard their 1978 Union 36, Melelu (Marilou in Hawaiian). Frank can be reached via his website, <[www.captfklanier.com](http://www.captfklanier.com)>.*

## Resources

### Dinghy Dogs

[www.dinghydogs.com](http://www.dinghydogs.com)  
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### Walker Bay Boats

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# Chart storage

*Flat, yes; horizontal, no*

by Connie McBride

**F**inding charts we'd stored on board our 34-foot Creekmore, *Eurisko*, used to be a constant game of hide and seek. When we put charts on the navigation station (a logical choice), one of the kids would move them to get into the refrigerator underneath. The dinette table is big enough for charts, but it's also used as a school and computer desk, so charts would often stay there for all of five minutes before they were moved. Every horizontal space is walked upon, sat upon, or used to store something else.

After months of moving charts from one spot to the next, with one of us always hunting for them after someone else hid them, I suggested storing them rolled. My husband vetoed that idea the first time he tried to plot a course on a chart that curled around his parallel rule.

Finally, after considering every horizontal space, I started looking at empty, flat, vertical surfaces. I found the perfect spot below the hanging locker doors.

## A web of webbing

I decided the simplest way to hold the charts against the wall was to strap them in. After a few mockups, I built a sort of pocket out of nylon webbing for the charts to slide into.

The area I had to work with is 46 x 27 inches. I chose to make the pocket 40 x 16 inches, knowing that the bottom would sag and that charts could stick out the top a few inches. I began with 2-inch nylon webbing, the widest we had on board, though I would have preferred 3-inch webbing. For the two horizontal straps, wider is better.

Because nylon stretches and the number of charts to be stored there varies, I made each horizontal strap out of two pieces buckled together. I screwed the outer ends of each of these straps to the bulkhead using finish washers to spread the load. Their ends are 40 inches apart because, when centered, this leaves an aesthetically pleasing border



Charts accumulate in great numbers on a cruising boat and storing them flat often presents a challenge. Connie turned the problem on its side and attached a "chart basket" to a bulkhead.

around the charts on the bulkhead. It's also larger than the folded charts, so they can overlap and not stand out from the bulkhead as far as they otherwise would. This is important since we have a swinging door that barely clears that bulkhead. Besides, 40 is easily divisible by 5.

Next, I cut four pieces of 1-inch nylon webbing 20 inches long. I folded one end of each back on itself and stitched it to form a 3-inch loop through which to slide the top horizontal strap. I drew a light pencil line 6 inches below the bottom horizontal strap and marked it every 8 inches to divide it into five parts. At these marks, I screwed the bottoms of the four straps to the bulkhead. Again, I used finish washers and folded the webbing over, screwing through only the bottom layer. This hides the screw heads.

With these six straps in place, I filled the pocket with charts. We frequently store as many as 100 charts in this pocket. Occasionally, I have to adjust the straps. The buckles make this an easy job. After eight years with our chart pocket, we still consider it to be a good solution. And we always know where our charts are hiding. ▽

*Connie McBride, her husband, Dave, and their three sons have been living aboard their 34-foot Creekmore, Eurisko, for 10 years. Now that two of the boys are in college, Connie has time to post experiences and wisdom gained from their cruising life on her website <[www.simplysailingonline.com](http://www.simplysailingonline.com)>.*

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# Anchor rode safety line

*In case the splice doesn't play nice ...*

by C. Henry Depew

I have eye-spliced my new anchor rode to the nylon thimble, seized the splice with small nylon twine to help keep things in place, and everything looks good. A nagging doubt nevertheless remains. As I do with all such splices, I wonder whether it will hold when put under the strain of anchoring my boat in 20 knots of wind and 3-foot seas.

Just to be sure, I always add a "safety line" to the setup for initial testing. My safety line is a length of nylon line tucked into the rode, looped through the shackle that connects the rode to the chain, and tucked back into the rode. I leave this line a little slack, since I know that the splice will tighten somewhat with use and thus lengthen a bit.

The idea is that if the splice is going to fail, it will do so during the first couple of uses. If it doesn't, now that it has "set," I can trust the splice and remove the safety line.

Once I have completed the eye-splice and added the safety line, I have two choices for testing my work.

A length of nylon line plays "safety" when Henry tests a new eye-splice.

One is to secure it to the trailer hitch on a vehicle and idle slowly forward. The other is to go out in fairly shallow water (Northill folding anchors are very hard to come by these days), set the anchor, and back down on it with the boat. After a couple of hefty tugs, I will pull the anchor and see how things look. Then I'll reset the anchor and tug again. If the safety line is still slack, I know the splice is going to hold.

Of these two choices, the vehicle test takes less time, I stay dry, and I can better regulate the strain on the splice. What's more, I'm not risking an anchor. The safety line, of course, is my first line of defense against losing my prized anchor if I *do* test in the water ... as well as the indicator of the quality of the eye-splice with either testing method. *▲*

*C. Henry Depew learned to sail on an Optimist Pram and advanced to Flying Juniors in his college years. Later, he bought and rebuilt a blizzard of sailboats (nine in six years). He is active in the United States Power Squadron and sailboat racing activities with the Apalachee Bay Yacht Club.*

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# New covers for old instruments

## *Cloth panels replace plastic snap-ons*

by Marlin Bree

**Y**our white plastic instrument covers are deteriorating in the sun, they don't fit as tightly as they did when they were new (they used to snap on, remember?), and some have begun to crack a bit around the edges. One of these days, when a fine breeze pipes up, they'll blow off and go to whatever marine heaven awaits good old instrument covers. That final resting place probably won't be on your boat.

The reason you have these little covers is to prevent your expensive instruments from deteriorating and their transparent plastic faces from yellowing from UV exposure. But replacing the covers isn't easy. There's a good chance that your instruments may not be manufactured anymore and the corresponding covers aren't available. If you're lucky enough to find a replacement cover, the price may surprise you; a small plastic lid may cost \$20 plus shipping and handling. You probably have a number of instruments, so you do the math.

When I checked around to replace the white plastic instrument covers on my 20-foot custom wooden sloop, *Persistence*, the cost made me think. I needed three covers: for my knotmeter, for my depth sounder, and for my through-bulkhead compass. The simple round covers for my analog knotmeter and depth sounder were still in production, but my compass was no longer being made, nor was its cover.

As a confirmed do-it-yourselfer (I built my own boat, so I am relatively fearless), I decided to make my own. I pieced the old broken compass cover together with tape and attempted to lay up a replacement cover of fiberglass and epoxy. The result looked terribly rough and unshipy. This plan might have worked, I suppose, if I'd kept it up, but I lost heart after I laid up the first layers and stepped back to regard the mess.

I began rethinking instrument covers. Do they have to be white circular plastic? Must they snap on? What else might protect my instruments from the elements and the sun, look good, last a long time and, oh yes, not cost a small fortune?

After a little thought, I figured that two simple cloth covers might do fine. The two instruments could be



The covers match up on both sides of the companionway. A set of twist-lock fasteners atop the cabin allows the cloths to be unbuttoned at the bottom and folded up to reveal the instruments when they are needed.

protected by one cover, and that would need to be flat. The other cover, for the bulkhead compass, would need to be rounded. In my workshop, I found some pieces of 5.4-ounce Sunbrella left over from a sun cover project for my genoa. It was a tanbark color, which would look good against *Persistence's* deeply varnished woods.

### Instruments first

I took aboard a piece of light cardboard and masking tape and began to paste together a makeshift pattern to fit over the knotmeter and the depth gauge. I left a margin of several inches around both sides and the bottom. I wanted the top to fit under the trim that protects the edge of the cabintop. I marked where the six fasteners would go.

When I transferred the pattern to the Sunbrella, I added several inches all around it. Then, at each edge, I folded 2 inches of cloth back to form a double-faced area and shot it with a little bit of 3M Super 77 spray adhesive to tack it in place. With my wife's old sewing machine, I sewed down this hem using UV-resistant thread.

The cover at this point looked bland and unstylish, so I thought a bit of decoration was in order. In my scrap bin, I found a piece of cream-colored leather salvaged from a broken office chair. I drew a star decoration (on boats, a star signifies good luck) and added this decoration to the cover (see "A star is made," page 67).

### Compass cover

The other cover had to fit around the compass, which stuck out a few inches from the bulkhead. Since it wasn't flat, this posed a new problem. Moreover, because the compass is set into the forward-leaning bulkhead, I had constructed a shim of solid mahogany to level it. This shim was about 2 inches thick at the top and tapered to a point on the bottom. To accommodate the outward bulge of the compass, I had to shape the cover. To do this, I marked a 4-inch circle in the



center of the pattern and cut slits radiating out to the edges. By sliding the outer edges over one another slightly, I created a curved form.

I added a matching leather star patch on this cover too, but made this patch round rather than square. I added a long flat panel on the top for two twist-lock fasteners and attached a section of leather along the bottom for another twist-lock fastener. The whole cover fit loosely over the compass, protecting it and the mahogany shim better than the old plastic cover had done. With twist locks on it, I knew this cover would not fall out or blow away.

### Fitting the covers

There is a little trick to getting these cloth panels on straight. The instrument cover to starboard went on first, with the top edge of the cloth butting up against a piece of mahogany that edges the cabintop.

First, I fitted the nickel-plated brass twist-lock fasteners into the edges of the cloth covers. I lightly laid the eyelet in the marked area and, with just a nick of a sharp knife, cut tiny holes for the prongs. Once the eyelet was in, I could insert the washer on the opposite side and fold over the prongs to lock the eyelet in place. Next, I cut the cloth out of the center of the eyelet where the stud would pass through. This required a razor-sharp knife blade.

I held the panel up against the bulkhead, marked the holes for the top left and right fasteners and, only then, drilled an undersized hole to screw in the twist-lock fastener itself. Only after these two critical areas were in place did I complete the rest of the panel's fastenings. Later, I went back, unscrewed the twist-lock studs, and saturated the holes with epoxy to encapsulate the wood. This procedure makes the holes very strong and I don't have to worry about rot.

The compass cover to port went on the same way. To ensure I'd have a flat, unwrinkled, and taut panel, I was careful to make up the eyelets before drilling the holes for the studs. I also fitted another twist-lock fastener atop the cabin on each side so I could fold up the cover from the bottom and affix the bottom eyelet to the top twist-lock stud. This way, I can readily see the instruments without totally removing the covers — and I never misplace a cover.

I now have two fine cloth covers for my instruments and can be proud of this custom installation I did myself. It's distinctive, cost very little money, used up some materials I had lying around, and gave me some satisfying time in my home workshop. I've had them on for a couple of seasons and they hold up very well, as Sunbrella should. They have survived wild winds of about 75 miles per hour — but not from a sudden Lake Superior storm. My boat is a trailerable craft and even my old 4 x 4 can sometimes reach a little above posted speed limits, especially going downhill. Even flapping wildly for miles, the custom cloth covers hold on just fine. ▀

*Martin Bree is a veteran Lake Superior sailor and marine journalist. He has written award-winning articles about his adventures on the world's biggest, and arguably sometimes baddest, lake and several books, of which the latest is The Dangerous Book for Boaters. His website is <[www.martinbree.com](http://www.martinbree.com)>.*

## A star is made

To make my star decoration, I used a patch of the tanbark material and a piece of leather. But, here's the secret: the leather itself is not star-shaped; a cutout in the fabric forms the star, letting the contrasting color of the leather patch on the inside show through.

On the cloth patch, I drew a chalk outline of the star. I followed that up with a second dotted chalk line about ½ inch in from the first. The unbroken chalk line was the outer edge of the star; the inside dotted line was where I would be cutting a star-shaped hole out of the middle of the piece of cloth.

Snapping a new disposable razor-sharp blade into my lock-back knife (a new job needs a new tool), I cut out the star along the dotted lines, folded it under to the unbroken line, and smooshed each hem down so the cloth would accept a bend. In short order, I had a cutout of a star in the patch of Sunbrella.

I turned the small cloth patch over to reveal what would be its hidden side, straightened out the folded-over material, and shot it with 3M Super 77 spray adhesive. I folded the hems down to their lines and, after a few minutes when the glue had set, carefully stitched the edges with the sewing machine.

I sewed the cloth patch with the star shape to the leather. To hold everything in place, I spritzed the inside of the panel and then smooshed that down over the leather with its cream-colored side facing out. I then sewed around the whole star with a straight stitch, working at a slow speed for maximum control. (For ultimate control sometimes you have to turn the sewing machine wheel by hand.) A second set of stitches convinced me that sucker wasn't going anywhere. It looked pretty too.



The tanbark-colored compass cover is made of leftover Sunbrella. The star decoration is cream-colored leather scavenged from an old office chair. The eyelet in the leather tab at the bottom can be secured to a twist-lock on the cabintop to expose the compass.

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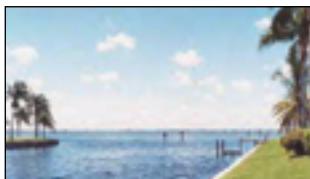
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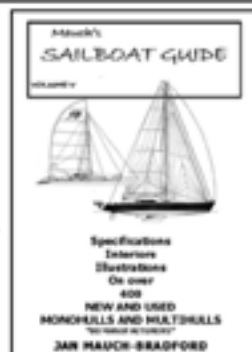
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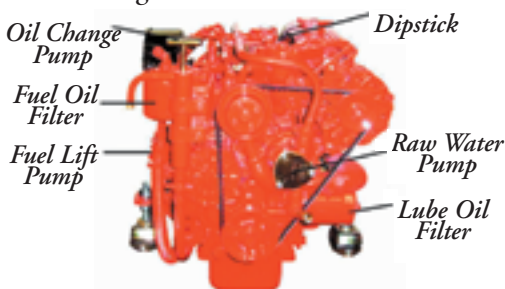
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# Stone Free

## Independence is the best gift for a youth

by Connie McBride

If our priorities define us, then my husband, Dave, and I are irresponsible, capricious, and more fond of boats than money.

A few Novembers ago, we sailed back to St. Croix for the fourth time with our annually depleted cruising kitty. As usual, within a week, Dave and I were employed and our son David was bored.

At 14, David decided this particular boredom could best be remedied with a small sailboat that was easy to singlehand yet rugged enough to sail with friends to Buck Island — the local daysailors' Mecca, 5 miles upwind from our anchorage. Thinking this would make the perfect Christmas present, Dave and I sent out a request via the coconut telegraph.

While wandering around the boatyard, we saw a friend who had not yet heard of our search. He turned to his brother, whose wife manages the yacht club, and asked, "Do you want to sell yours?" We surveyed the boat while he verified with his wife that it was indeed for sale. We arranged to exchange \$600 for the boat the next evening. So, just five weeks before Christmas, leaving ourselves with only \$200 in the bank, we bought our son his first sailboat, a Catalina Capri 14.2.

### Open secret

We hid the present in plain view. Since Dave works on other people's boats for a living, we told everyone, including David, that Dave was repairing the little Catalina for its owner (which was technically true). Only five people knew the boat had a new owner and they were sworn to secrecy — no easy promise to keep on a small island.

The first day, Dave took a grinder and removed the entire cockpit floor while I gasped in the background. Was it really that bad? As he pulled out the rotten waterlogged stringers, I was reminded why he works on boats and I tend bar. Dave gave the mast step the same violent treatment. He removed all the rot from the boat, then rebuilt and painted the pieces.

We pieced together the rig, had used sails sent down from Bacon Sails in Annapolis, bought running rigging, and set up a mooring and anchoring system. Dave made a boom tent so David could stay dry if he were ever anchored in the rain or overnight.

On Christmas Eve, with a rainbow to windward, a friend helped us launch her. Then Dave and David's big brother, Nick, sailed her to her mooring: our boat's temporarily redundant 35-pound CQR. After the boys were asleep, we rowed to the Catalina and tied on a



The heavens smiled upon a Christmas present in the making.

giant red bow. The stage was set. Not since I was a child have I been so eager for Christmas morning.

Knowing this would eclipse all other presents, we saved it for last. I had printed out pictures of the repairs and put them in a small album, which I wrapped. David opened the gift and flipped through the pictures, not sure what he was seeing, until he came to the last page where I had inserted a note, which read, "So, David, what are you going to name your boat? She's all yours. Merry Christmas!"

### Realization

He stared at the note for several seconds before he looked at me and whispered, "Really?" After we assured him that he was not still sleeping, he ran on deck to look at her, floating behind us. He and Dave rowed over so Dave could show him how to rig her, how her boom tent was designed, and the items we had gathered and stowed for him.

Since Christmas turned out to be too windy to fully enjoy sailing a small boat, David asked for a second set of reef points and spent the day gathering life jackets, a flashlight, bailer, and various other goodies to personalize his boat. What she needed now was a name. For David, a Jimi Hendrix fan, that was easy: *Stone Free*. To ride the breeze . . .

We believe the purpose of money is to provide ourselves and our children with happy lives relatively free from stress and worry. To this end, we work a few months a year at jobs we enjoy to earn the money we need to enjoy not working the rest of the year. The money we spent on *Stone Free* has brought David more happiness than anything it could have done for us. It was indeed money well spent. *Δ*

*Connie McBride writes about cruising topics on her website <www.simplysailingonline.com>. See page 64 for her bio.*



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