

Cruising Small and Simple *pg42* | DIY Chainplates *pg20* | The Red Queen Problem *pg50*

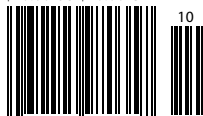
GOOD OLD BOAT

Inspiring hands-on sailors

Issue 152: September/October 2023

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6



20



39



42



48

GOOD OLD BOAT

Issue 152: September/October 2023

FEATURES

- 16 Hard-Earned Wisdom**
A sailor learns some painful lessons after buying his first cruising boat.
by Mark Barrett

- 20 Bronze Beauties**
A timely prompt leads a DIYer to create new chainplates.
by Damien Contandriopoulos

- 28 A Boat to Grow With**
A young couple finds a boat to call a home, from San Francisco Bay to the Chesapeake Bay.
by Ashley Gremel

- 34 Family Room**
A second head is transformed into a cozy cabin for a blended family of five.
by Samantha McLenachen

- 42 Cruising Small and Simple**
The challenges and rewards of 48 days sailing the Florida Keys
by Robert Van Putten

- 50 The Red Queen Problem**
Why taking care of things big and small on your boat makes a difference.
by Brandon Ford

- 15 Simple Solutions**
A novel use of Formica makes a convenient place for to-do lists.
by Marissa Neely

- 26 Simple Solutions**
Tape can provide a quick fix for torn or cracked vinyl windows.
by Drew Frye

- 39 Learning Experience**
A momentary mistake with a jib changes a family's summer sailing plans.
by Allie Hoogerwerf

- 48 Sailing Tales**
A winged visitor catches a ride on a glorious late summer sail.
by David Popken

- 53 Simple Solutions**
Creating an engine water bypass for easy winterization
by Lee Mueller

- 54 Simple Solutions**
Taming the lazarette mess with easy-to-make mesh bags
by Ashley Gremel

- 61 Reflections**
A mariner grapples with an unfamiliar reluctance — and finds the cure.
by Craig Moodie

DEPARTMENTS

- 6 Review Boat**
Vancouver 27: A bluewater cruiser in a small package.
by Bert Vermeer

ON THE COVER



Janet Gannon and her husband, Damon, are enjoying a sabbatical cruise on the East Coast of the United States aboard *Fulmar*, their 1982 Pacific Seacraft 37. "Our cruise started with a whimper as we both came down with Covid-19 a week after leaving our home port of Brunswick, Georgia," Janet told us. After recovering with a month on the dock at Titusville, Florida, they proceeded south to Vero Beach, affectionately known as "Velcro Beach" amongst East Coast cruisers. The municipal marina there offers moorings set in a snug, mangrove-ringed bay, where she found the three boats on the cover rafted together at dawn.

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Contributing Boats

A few boats behind the stories in this issue.

Orion, 1987 Sabre 38 MKI Centerboard Sloop

“We bought *Orion* in March 2012 on the Toms River in New Jersey, and instead of trucking her back to Texas for a major refit, we sailed back in little bits. It took 22 months to accomplish the task, as we were both still working full-time jobs. To accommodate our careers, we would fly to the boat, get onboard and move south for a week, find a marina, button her up and go home for two months, then rinse and repeat.”

Designer: Roger Hewson

Owners: David Popken and Kris Johnson

Home Port: Seabrook, Texas

Fun Fact: Ask any Sabre owner and they will tell you that these boats are special and the sailing qualities are second to none. During an offshore trip from Clearwater, Florida, to Pensacola, Florida, the boat was so well balanced that I maybe touched the helm twice in three hours. While not a pure racer, the 38 MKI is capable of very solid, if not impressive, speeds under sail, and has acquitted herself admirably in many offshore races.

Kestral Magic on page 48.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRITZ SEEGBERS

Juniper, 1973 C&C 30 MKI

“While we have eyes for bigger boats as our boys get older, we love the way *Juniper* has been updated to include beautiful details like teak and holly floors and custom built-in cabinets. She is the perfect boat for this phase of life as we continue to learn and adventure with our family.”

Designer: C&C Design

Owners: Colin and Allie Hoogerwerf

Home Port: Muskegon, Michigan

Fun Fact: *Juniper* was named after the Latin term for an Eastern red cedar (*juniperus virginiana*), a tree that commonly grows on the shores of Lake Michigan.

All Wrapped Up on page 39.



Intrepid, 1978 San Juan 21

“We love the effortless and spritely way she sails; this is a really nimble boat! We often sail while everyone else is motoring. All the work we did to convert a spartan racer to a comfortable cruiser makes it special to us — the oak companionway doors, insulated and cedar-lined cabin, wood cabinetry, and raised deck design, which makes the forward V-berth a forward lounge.”

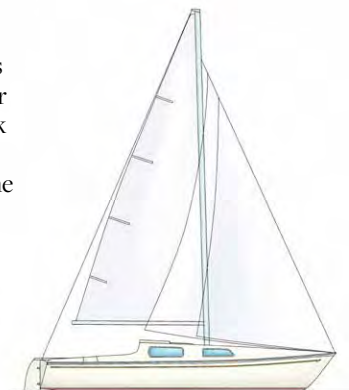
Designer: Don Clark

Owners: Robert and Heidi Van Putten

Home Port: Loon Lake, Washington

Fun Fact: She was stored in a chicken coop for 42 years!

Cruising Small and Simple on page 42.



In Praise of Off-Season Sailing

BY DEBORAH BACH

As we approached the marina in downtown Poulsbo, trees clad in brilliant orange, gold, and red leaves along the town's waterfront came into view.

It was a spectacular fall weekend years ago, and we'd brought a couple of friends along to enjoy a sailing trip to the picturesque town on Washington's Liberty Bay. I can't remember what we did that weekend or what we ate, but I distinctly remember the crispness of the air and the lovely softness of the autumn light.

I've always loved fall, though I know it can feel bittersweet. The summer boating season is over, the days are getting shorter, and the Big Dark — those seemingly endless months of gray that residents of the Pacific Northwest dread — will soon descend. But that reality is tempered by the knowledge that unlike in some parts of the country, where boats must be hauled out for the winter until the following spring's thaw, we live in a place where it's possible to sail year-round. For that, I feel incredibly fortunate.

In Puget Sound, where we do much of our sailing, the climate is mild, there's rarely snow, and the water temperature hovers around a chilly 50 degrees or less for much of the year. We're used to wearing fleece and puffy jackets on the boat even in summer, so winter sailing doesn't feel all that different. One of the first projects we undertook after buying our boat was installing a Webasto forced air heater so we could sail all year and stay warm. Five years ago, we added a cockpit enclosure, which has been a

game changer — what was previously an exposed outdoor area is now an extra room that can double as a solarium in inclement weather.

There are appealing reasons to cruise in the off-season. Anchorages are blissfully empty, trails uncrowded, tourists departed. There are few things I enjoy more than a walk on the beach in winter or a rainy day spent holed up in our saloon with a cup of coffee and a good book, listening to the sound of raindrops on the cabin top.

One of our most memorable winter sailing weekends was more than a decade ago, when we took friends of ours for an overnight trip from Seattle about 9 miles across Elliott Bay to Bainbridge Island. It was Brian's birthday, and his wife, Kristen, had arranged a surprise party at a pub on the water for him. A light dusting of snow fell that evening, and after a fun evening at the pub, we walked down the docks back to the boat surrounded by a winter wonderland. We had a lively sail back to Seattle the next day in about 15 knots of crisp wind, punctuated by Kristen's delighted whoops from the cockpit.

But our off-season sailing has been sadly limited since buying our 1984 Passport 40 in 2012. A rolling refit, which has involved replacing almost all of the boat's systems and undertaking countless other projects large and small, has meant taking her out of commission each year in fall or early winter. And since boat projects inevitably stretch on longer — often *much* longer — than we anticipate they will, we're usually scrambling to have *Rounder* ready for the official start of boating season each May.

One winter, *Rounder* was wrapped in a Conestoga wagon-like cocoon and confined to the dock for about five months while we refinished her decks. Another year, we replaced the countertops in the galley and rebuilt the refrigeration. In the months before and after the coronavirus pandemic hit, we spent long days in a rented shipping container repainting the boat's mast as part of a full rereg. Last year we tackled the remaining big winter project, replacing the boat's rudder, rudder post, and steering system, an undertaking that stretched out for close to half a year.

We've now completed most of the major projects on our list — or at least, the ones that won't require taking the boat out of commission for months on end. As fall gets underway this year, I'm looking forward to getting out on the water, revisiting some of our favorite places and discovering new ones, and enjoying the stillness and beauty this season brings. And maybe we'll finally get to use that heater. 🐻



Ratio Clarifications, Nap-Friendly Cockpits, and a Boat Review Revisited

Nap-Friendly Cockpit

Contributing Editor Allen Penticoff, who reviewed the Jeanneau 379 in the July/August 2023 issue of *Good Old Boat*, provided this update to his review:

I received a note from *Good Old Boat's* publisher, Karla Sandness, inquiring as to why I had not reported my Penticoff Napability Index (PNI) rating of 1-5 for the Jeanneau 379 review. Karla indicated that she likes this bit of reporting. I had to look at my draft to see for sure that I had not included the PNI, and yep, it was indeed not there.

I certainly had a number in mind. The boat's owner, Thor, knew in advance it would not get a high rating and was OK

with that. After observing him nap on the port cockpit seat, I could only give a rating of 3, since the seats are too short for a proper stretched-out nap (curled up is fine). As I mentioned to Karla, a boat with a PNI of 5 is probably not as good as a 4, since a perfect napability rating of 5 would mean that the seats are quite wide and long, and in turn, may not be so good for sitting and bracing while under sail. I don't think I've reviewed a boat with a 1 or 2 PNI, although I've sailed smaller boats that are unnappable. My own American 14.6 can be napped on — that's part of its appeal to me — but I'd give its seats a PNI of 3, since they are long but narrow.

My apologies to Karla and other readers for not including my napability assessment. You now have it.

—Allen Penticoff
Rockford, Illinois

Boat reviewer Allen Penticoff gives the "napability" of the Jeanneau 379's cockpit a 3 out of 5.



In Praise of Bronze

I enjoyed the piece by Ashley Gremel ("The Hull Story," March/April 2023) on through-hull fittings, to the extent of feeling remarkably moved by it.

There is something inspiring about bronze. It's an ancient and beautiful material, not to mention costly and heavy. I've got thousands of dollars tied up in bronze on my little H-28. I know and love every piece of it, with an emotional seriousness that I simply can't summon for stainless steel. There are appropriate places for both materials, of course. But my attitude toward stainless is distinctly more clinical.

I liked the interlude in the middle of the piece, when Ashley turned to thoughts about the boat maintenance process as a holistic exercise. It reminded me of Robert Pirsig's discussion of "gumption traps" in the book *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. As a matter of kindness, we have to find ways to pace ourselves so that we can fully attend to each task.

When we rush the work, our minds are already racing ahead to the next task; we're not really present in the moment, and that is often when disaster strikes. Threads are crossed, so we torque even harder. Fasteners shear off. A critical part falls under the engine. Worst of all, there is no joy in it. That's why bronze is particularly valuable. It calls us to be present. There is the joy. How simple it is! And we do better work when we don't rush.

As an aside, my good old boat is a Herreshoff H-28, *Barbarian*, built in 1956 by John T. Taylor in Vancouver (next page, top left). I don't have a lot of information on the build, but I'm told that a sister ship



Left, the Herreshoff 28 *Barbarian* and her smaller companion *Pleiades* moored together at a park dock in British Columbia.

Right, the J/32 *Sirius* runs north under spinnaker along the east coast of Moresby Island in Haida Gwaii.



The majority of those miles have been along the northern coast of British Columbia and down the west coast of Vancouver Island. Now that we are in our early

came off the same molds and is still sailing in the Gulf Islands somewhere.

—Dan Razzell
Sturt Bay, British Columbia

Depowering Revisited

When reading the May *Dogwatch*, we were surprised and delighted to see the two of us and our well-loved J/32, *Sirius*, included. We now have more than 24,000 miles under the keel since relocating to Sequim Bay on the Olympic Peninsula in 2001.

80s, we cruise closer to home, but we still see *Sirius* as exactly the right boat for us.

The only thing I would change in the boat review is how we depower the rig as winds build. At the time that review was written, we would begin by reducing the jib area — either by partially furling the genoa or changing down to a smaller jib. Since getting to know the boat better through club racing, we now start with the main.

It is a multistep process: Increase backstay tension with the hydraulic backstay adjuster; this increases mast bend and flattens the upper portion of the main. Flatten the foot with the outhaul. Lower the traveler. Set in the first reef (we use single-line reefing, so no one needs to leave the cockpit). Set in the second reef (also single-line reefing). Then it is time to reduce the jib area.

Our compliments to the *Good Old Boat* team for continuing to publish an excellent magazine.

—Durkee and Mary Richards
Sequim, Washington

Ratio Clarification

Love all the issues and articles, even though at times I have a good chuckle, for many reasons. The July/August issue was the same, and in particular, the graphic at the bottom of page 13 associated with Dan Spurr's article "Understanding the Ratios in Specs."

My wife, Amy, and I came across this buoy while van camping on the beach on Cape Lookout Island, North Carolina. We couldn't believe how big it was!

We sail a Catalina 22 on lakes near our home and have a YouTube channel called *Odyssey of Jason*, where I share videos of our various sailing adventures.

—Jason Strickland
Icard, North Carolina



continued on page 56

Vancouver 27

A bluewater cruiser in a small package

BY BERT VERMEER

I was singlehanded on our Islander Bahama 30 on a spectacular fall afternoon, whitecaps dancing on the blue waters of Plumper Sound in the Canadian Gulf Islands, slowly gaining on a light blue sailboat on a converging course. I quickly identified the pretty boat as a Vancouver 27 and took a series of photographs of the beautiful scene. Through binoculars I caught the name, *Ultima Thule*, and called up the skipper on my VHF. We cordially exchanged email addresses and I promised to forward some of the photos I had taken. The moment soon passed, and we sailed on to our individual destinations.

Email exchanges with Renee Wissink, the skipper and proud custodian of *Ultima Thule*, soon led to a road trip to Pender Island to have a closer look.

History

The Vancouver 27 was the first monohull from the drawing board of Robert Harris, a marine designer immersed in the world of multihulls in the early 1960s. He gained further experience with the design firm of Sparkman & Stephens before moving west to Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1972. Harris set up a small marine design practice and was commissioned to design a small oceangoing yacht for a local couple; that design became the Vancouver 27.

The wood boat was completed in 1972 and the owners sailed from Vancouver

to New Zealand and back, proving the design a success. A mold was created and fiberglass production started. Over the ensuing 16 years, numerous local companies constructed the Vancouver 27, including Seair Marine in Vancouver and Philbrook's Boatyard in Sidney. In subsequent years, other models in the Vancouver line followed, including a 25-foot double-ender, a 32-footer with or without a pilothouse, a 36, and a 42. However, the 27 was by far the most popular, with more than 250 made in Canada and England. By 1988, the Canadian molds were getting on in age and were destroyed that year in a fierce winter storm. Canadian production ceased.

European interest in the design came from Pheon Yachts Ltd. of Newhaven in the U.K., which obtained a license and launched its first Vancouver 27 in 1976. A few modifications were made during the U.K. production. Adding 3 inches to the beam to provide more initial stability gave the hull a tumblehome appearance. Lengthening the deck aft of the cockpit created the Vancouver 28, and modifications to the cabin arrangements became the Vancouver 27F (for "family," with a quarter berth). U.K. production continued when Pheon Yachts was bought by Northshore Shipyard, a company still producing sail and power yachts. The U.K. modifications did not cross the Atlantic, and Canadian

production stayed true to the original design. U.K. production ended in 2007.

Ultima Thule

Although not looking specifically for a Vancouver 27, Renee and his wife, Nikki, found *Katepwa* in Campbell River, a fishing and logging town on Vancouver Island's east coast, in 2019. They learned that *Katepwa* had been sailed to the South Pacific and back by her original owners. There had been several intermediate owners before Renee and Nikki found her, purchasing the 1978 model soon after.

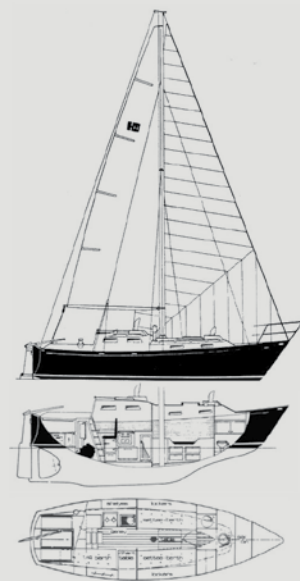
Interestingly, documentation shows that *Katepwa* was built by a single employee, Barrie Farrell, of Seair Marine in Vancouver in 1978. The only production employee of the

Next page, *Ultima Thule* heads upwind with her high-cut headsail sheeted well above the lifelines. Photo by Bert Vermeer.

company, Farrell constructed one boat at a time and built 12 Vancouver 27s before the company returned to building commercial fishing boats.

With proper regards to King Neptune, and with the eager assistance of grandchildren, Renee and Nikki changed their boat's name to *Ultima Thule*, a loose translation from Greek and Latin mythology meaning "quest for adventure." Necessary maintenance followed, with the repair of a few random bottom blisters and application of cobalt blue Concept DCC acrylic urethane topside paint. Installing a new diesel engine delayed

Vancouver 27	
Designer	Robert Harris
LOA	27'0"
LWL	22'11"
Beam	8'7"
Draft	4'6"
Displacement	8,960 lbs
Ballast	3,465 lbs
Sail Area	381 sq ft
Sail Area/Displ	14.2
Ballast/Displ	38.7%
Displ/LWL Ratio	332.2
Comfort Ratio	32.3
Capsize Screening No	1.7







Essential sail handling and ground tackle gear are all accommodated at the bow. Note the termination of the inner forestay. Photo by Bert Vermeer.

on year and manufacturer) with appropriate hard points for deck fittings. The 4,600-pound lead keel is encapsulated in fiberglass and forms part of the hull structure — no keel bolts to worry about. The hull-to-deck joint is an inward-turning flange, with the deck set on top of a sealer, through-bolted, and then topped with the teak toerail. Renee reports a complete absence of water leaks in the area.

Deck and Rigging

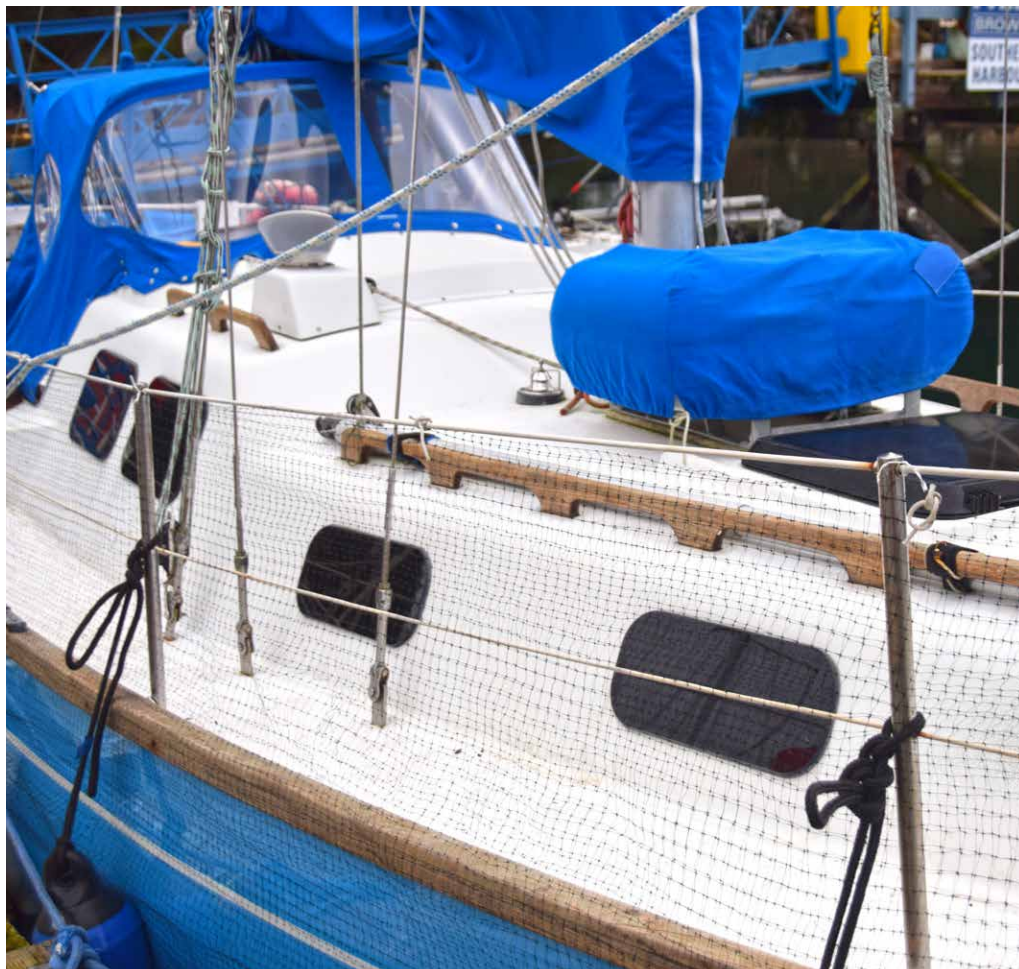
Ultima Thule's deck is original and looks to be in excellent condition after 45-plus years.

the couple's first summer on the water, but a cruise to the northern reaches of the Salish Sea and Desolation Sound followed.

Design and Construction

The Vancouver 27 was envisioned as an offshore cruising boat for a couple. The full keel incorporates a cutaway forefoot and a transom-hung rudder attached to the trailing edge of the keel — the epitome of a small, comfortable, long-distance cruiser. The narrow 8-foot 8-inch beam constricts interior space but provides for easy motion at sea. The cutter rig includes multiple sail options befitting an oceangoing boat.

The Vancouver 27 has a solid fiberglass hull with plenty of glass and resin, overbuilt by today's standards. The deck is foam-, balsa-, or plywood-cored (depending



Ultima Thule carries a life raft on deck, abaft the main cabin hatch. Photo by Bert Vermeer.



fiberglass. There is a single large opening aluminum deck hatch just forward of the mast that floods the interior with light. For ventilation, the hatch is accompanied by three Dorade boxes adorning the cabin top, two in the main cabin with one directly over the galley and the third at the forward edge of the coach roof. Interestingly, the forward Dorade box has a split interior that allows air circulation in both the forward cabin and head.

The bow has a dual anchor platform leading to a manual windlass. This could easily be upgraded to a powered windlass, but Renee likes the simplicity and reliability of the manual. There is no deck access to an anchor locker, but dual hawsepipes run the chains to a substantial locker low in the bow.

The mast is a deck-stepped aluminum extrusion with single spreaders, supported by a compression post at the midships bulkhead belowdecks. On *Ultima Thule* the aluminum mast steps are welded in place to allow for rigging inspection (or watching for coral heads from the spreaders while entering a tropical lagoon). The standing rigging is stainless steel wire. The stays are inboard against the cabin trunk, allowing easy access along the sidedecks. With the stays

On left, *Ultima Thule* is equipped with a self-steering wind-powered vane. Space is limited on a 27-foot boat, so in the absence of a ventilated locker, the propane tank is mounted to the stern pulpit. Photo by Renee Wissink.

inboard, the chainplates are secured to bulkheads below, with easy access for inspection. The entry point through the deck looks like it could be a troublesome spot for water intrusion. An inner forestay is permanently attached to the foredeck just aft of the hawsepipes, supported below by the anchor locker bulkhead. Running backstays, with adjustable tackle, are stored out of the way when not in use.

Working aft along the sidedeck, teak handrails along the cabin top offer secure handholds. On later model European versions, these are stainless steel. The cabin trunk steps up slightly to the sea hood covering the companionway hatch. A fabric dodger on *Ultima Thule* provides additional protection for the cockpit. And the cockpit is small! There is no other way to describe it. This is not your dockside party boat. But it was never designed to be. It's perfect for two people, perhaps three in a pinch. There are two large scuppers at the stern of the footwell. The tiller is the ultimate in steering simplicity, with no complicated mechanisms to maintain and worry about. Hung over the stern, it also allows for an economical addition of a windvane steering system. The tiller does, however, intrude on usable space in the cockpit when underway, further reducing available room for crew.

Jib and staysail sheets are led through blocks mounted on a track atop the toerail to four cockpit winches, all of which are within easy reach

No gelcoat stress fractures are evident.

The cockpit is small for a 28-foot boat, as should be expected on an oceangoing vessel on which storm waves could flood the footwell. The raised bridge deck, small companionway, and large scuppers minimize the chances of seas flooding the cabin. There is good back support, with foot bracing on the opposite seat, making for secure seating for a helmsperson, particularly

when the boat is heeled. Unfortunately, the cockpit coamings are near vertical and not really conducive to long-term comfort.

All cockpit and deck fittings are of a high standard and oversized. The cabin has four portlights on each side, all fixed. Photographs of the original boats show what appear to be framed windows, probably in aluminum. On *Ultima Thule* the portlights are frameless acrylic nicely set into the



of the helmsperson. Although sheeting angles could be tighter with inboard tracks, remember that this is a narrow boat with a full keel, not designed to win races to windward. The sheeting angles are appropriate. The mainsheet is off the end of the boom to blocks at either corner of the cockpit, completely out of the way and yet within easy reach.

Sails

Renee still has documents from the boatbuilder listing the original extensive sail inventory. Currently, Renee has a single main with two reefs, two high-cut jibs (100% and 120%), a staysail, and a storm jib. A spinnaker in a sock completes the inventory. The forestay has Harken roller furling, while the staysail is hanked on.

Mechanical

Construction literature indicates that most Vancouver 27s produced in Canada left the factory with a two-cylinder 12-hp Yanmar diesel engine; a Bukh 20 was also available. Renee deemed his Yanmar in debatable condition, and with plans for a future cruise up the Inside Passage to Alaska, reliability was important. A new 2YM15 Yanmar is now under the cockpit sole. Removing the companionway steps and, if necessary, the floor panel of the storage locker just above the engine, allows for unfettered access to all service points. Fuel and oil filters, along with the raw water pump and strainer, are all readily accessible at the front of the engine. Access to the back of the engine, through the large cockpit

lockers, is problematic. A 26-gallon fiberglass fuel tank provides plenty of range.

Accommodations

Heading through the narrow companionway and down four steps into a very deep cabin, I anticipated the cabin would be narrow, but wasn't prepared for how long it appeared. Headroom is a good 6½ feet all the way forward to the head.

Immediately to starboard is a forward-facing nav station with a substantial chart table that has plenty of storage underneath. There is limited room for electronics, and Renee has fashioned a swing arm for the radar display, allowing for viewing from the helm. The seat swings up for access to a huge, well-insulated icebox next to the galley. The seat cushion

The view forward from the main cabin shows berths port and starboard and the head in the forepeak. Photo by Andrew Dandridge.

can be removed to provide more counter space. A deep sink has both saltwater and freshwater original hand pumps. The single 26-gallon water tank is located under the cabin sole amidships. The Force 10 propane range is a recent addition, replacing the original diesel-fired range. Nikki was very pleased to not have to preheat the burners to boil water for a cup of coffee.

On the starboard side of the main cabin is a long settee facing the galley. A small cabinet against the partial bulkhead supports a small dining table. You won't be entertaining four for dinner

at this table, which is removable and fits into a holder at the foot of the settee. At the aft end of the settee is a wet hanging locker and general storage area. There are multiple drawers tucked under the sidedecks above the seatback. The seatback folds up on a long hinge, increasing shoulder room when the settee is used as a berth. When the seatback cushion is removed, the surface becomes a massive plywood workspace running the length of the main cabin.

Moving forward through the partial bulkhead leads to the sleeping cabin with single berths to port and starboard. Although there is no door between the main and sleeping cabins, a privacy curtain could easily be installed. Against the starboard side of the bulkhead, Renee has mounted a propane-fueled Force 10 Cozy Cabin Heater, replacing the diesel-fueled heater that came with the boat. The two long berths have storage underneath and leecloths for security.

Forward of the sleeping cabin is the head, with a manual toilet to port and vanity cabinet to starboard. A small holding tank sits against the chain locker bulkhead. Although exposed in *Ultima Thule*, the tank could easily be covered with a board to provide a countertop.

Underway

On the ferry ride to *Ultima Thule's* home port of Port Browning on Pender Island, the

weather forecast called for light winds and clear skies. It was going to be a perfect day. Upon arrival, however, the water was like glass and thick, low clouds and fog rolled in. So much for a test sail. Before I could return

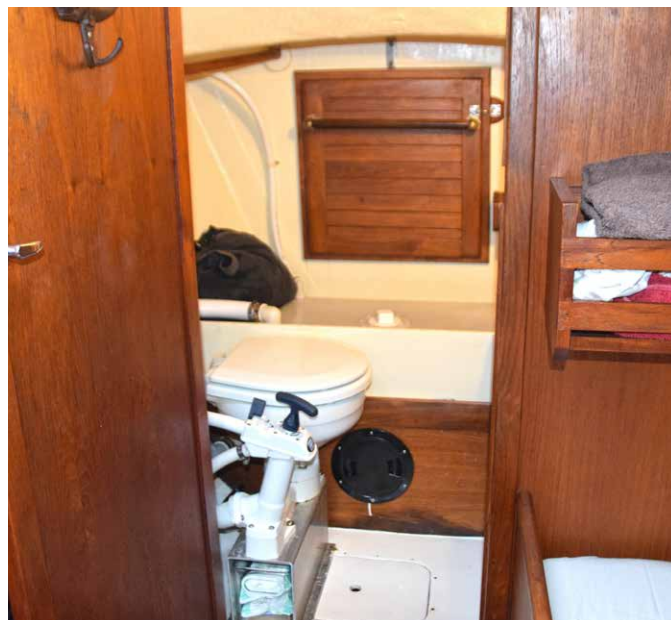
for a follow-up sail, Renee and Nikki headed north along the British Columbia coast on a two-year journey to Alaska. The performance portion of this review will rely on Renee's opinion:

"Under power, the 2-cylinder Yanmar is surprisingly quiet. *Ultima Thule* moves nicely at about 2,500 rpm, making 5 knots at 1.5 liters per hour. With maximum continuous RPM of 3,600, the



Above right, the compact galley features a two-burner stove and oven, a small sink, and limited stowage.

At right, a small navigation station is located in the port quarter area, adjacent to the companionway. Photos by Andrew Dandridge.



Top left, a small icebox is cleverly located underneath the nav seat.

Top right, the head is in the forepeak, where headroom is limited, but it's seamanlike for boys to also sit to pee. Photos by Bert Vermeer.

At left, the settee to starboard, with stowage behind. Photo by Andrew Dandridge.

tracking without effort.”

Conclusion

While not a perfect design for coastal cruising in light winds, the Vancouver 27 is the ideal little boat for crossing oceans on a budget, with minimal crew. Designed for singlehanding or

Yanmar can most certainly provide more speed should the need arise against current or wind.

“Its full-keel maneuverability under power or sail should not be compared to modern fin-keel and spade-rudder configurations. But

with careful planning and use of prop walk, the full keel can get into tight marinas and channels without incident.

“Broad reaching is her strong suit under sail, but she also goes to windward well, although not quickly. Pointed into the wind and

sea, her 27-foot length pounds somewhat, but it takes a lot of sea to get spray over the bow and rarely all the way back to the cockpit. Her happiest point of sail is a broad reach with 6-foot or better seas running. Then she settles into a comfortable motion,

a cruising couple, she accomplishes that purpose with solid construction and comfort. Simplicity in maintenance and repair ensures that more time can be spent underway than in the boatyard. Kudos to Bob Harris for a design that performs as intended. 🌊

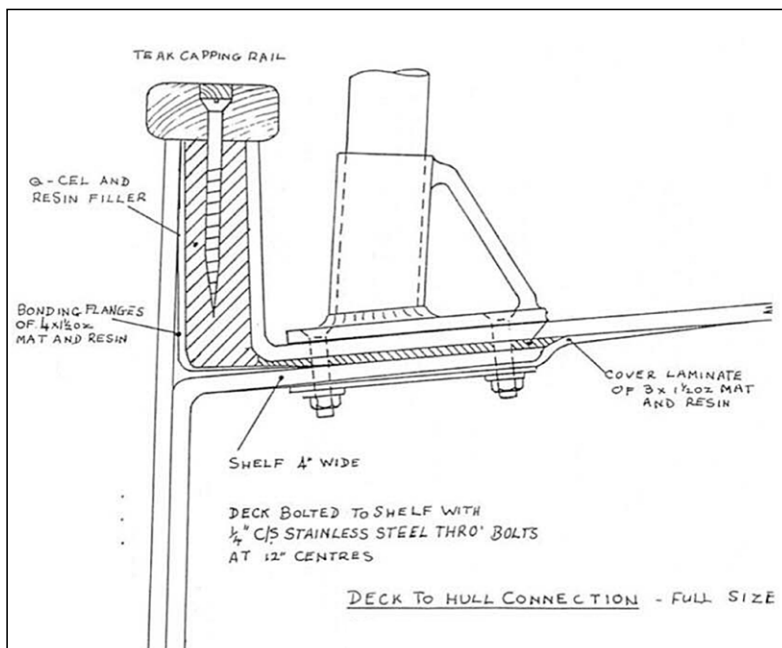
Owners' Comments

The philosophy behind the Vancouver 27 was that it should be, above all, a good sea boat — easy to handle, tough enough to stand up to the worst the ocean could throw at it, and comfortable to live aboard for lengthy voyages out of sight of land. Therefore, the rigging would be oversized, with plenty of it. Twin backstays and runners, cutter-rigged with two headsails, four lowers, oversized cap shrouds. Long keel and relatively shallow draft with encapsulated ballast. Rather than lots of sleeping berths, there are only three (one layout only had two), the emphasis being on living space and storage rather than catering for lots of crew. There is a proper navigation station with a large chart table, a wet locker, and a decent-sized galley.

The construction of the V27 is rugged, with a heavy GRP layup such that at the turn of the bilge, the hull is

almost an inch thick. Elsewhere it is at least half an inch thick, with two longitudinal stringers running the length of the boat. The hull-to-deck joint could be said to be the strongest part of the boat. The two main $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch marine plywood bulkheads are fully bonded to the hull and the deck using a combination of polyester resin and glass fiber, as well as epoxy resin fillets. We constructed the interiors in wood for most of the time we built Vancouvers, though later on we introduced GRP substructures.

Regarding potential issues, the main one would be ingress of water into the foam-cored skeg. A few boats have had that, though not many. All European Vancouver 27s were Pheon Yachts-built, along with the first Vancouver 28. After that, Vancouvers were built by Northshore.



—Andrew Dandridge,
Chichester Harbour,
United Kingdom
Chairman, Vancouver Yachts
Association
former production director,
Pheon Yachts

A diagram showing the rugged hull-to-deck joint of the Vancouver 27.

This photo of a Pheon-built Vancouver 27 on the hard shows the full keel with cutaway forefoot, transom-hung rudder, and trim tab for the windvane steering gear.



The Vancouver 27 is heavy for its size (twice the displacement of the Albin Vega 27 aboard which we circumnavigated). That weight, combined with robust rigging (including an inner forestay), makes for stability and reassurance in heavy weather. We have run steadily but surely before the wind, bare poles, in 50-plus knots off Patagonia, and spent 24 hours hove to in similar conditions north of New Zealand; we never had the slightest doubt that the boat would stand up to it.

Heaving to is best done with three (or even four) reefs in the main, with the main sheeted to the center, hard, and the tiller lashed to leeward. With this arrangement, in 50 knots, she bobs forward at maybe 1 knot, leaving a calming slick to windward. No need for a trysail. Trade wind sailing: a steady 100-120 miles a day. She self-steers very nicely.

Structure: Our Vancouver 27 spent its first 10 years in tropical waters. This may have contributed to a case of light osmosis, with very small dime-size, acne-like surface bubbles. They are tedious to grind and fill, but not structurally significant. She is unabashedly a two-person cruiser. If you want a double bunk — not possible! The mast step precludes this.

***Bosun Bird* running before the wind with reefed main and staysail.**

The cutter rig gives a great deal of flexibility. The disadvantage of the inner forestay is that it complicates tacking, especially upwind. Knots on the clew tend to get hung up on the forestay, necessitating a trip forward to free the sheet. The full keel makes for a slow turning circle, notably when docking.

For modifications we made, see my book *Winter in Fireland*.

—Nick and Jenny Coghlan,
Salt Spring Island,
British Columbia

Shamaya is one of the best-built boats that we had! Cutter rig, long-keel, bluewater sailing boat. She sailed best with her full set of sails. She was built in Chichester by Northshore. She went to the Caribbean islands and back. She was with us for 15 years, then we went for more comfort and maneuverability.

—Ivan Nesic,
Portsmouth, United Kingdom

Since the boat has a heavy displacement hull design and long keel, she is quite stable and quite easy to sail singlehanded. The propeller is well protected in an aperture. The hull is high-sided, and the cockpit, even though large enough to seat four adults, is small enough to limit the risk of flooding in heavy seas. She certainly is designed to sail across any ocean in the world in a safe and comfortable manner. I would say that this boat is ideal for a couple and has ample living and storage capabilities for an extended cruise.

— Carl Blohmke,
Center Moriches,
Long Island, New York

***Martha Maria*, built by Pheon Yachts, works her way to windward in a good breeze.** Photo courtesy of Andrew Dandridge.



Dry Erase Magic

A novel use of Formica makes a convenient place for to-do lists.

BY MARISSA NEELY

Creating project lists is a common tactic among boat owners. Some sailors scribble their to-dos on the backs of random receipts, others have spiral-bound notebooks, and some even keep spreadsheets tucked away on their computers. As techie as I like to think we are, my husband, Chris, and I agree that there is no better feeling than physically crossing an item off your project list when it's finished — or in our case, erasing it entirely.

Back in 2019, we had just accomplished a major varnishing project inside our 1979 Cheoy Lee 41, *Avocet*, and rolled right into our next project to restore the portlights, which, as usual, turned into an entirely different project. One of the many reasons we fell in love with our boat was her teak interior. But her cabin sides had suffered water damage, and we decided that a nice pop of white would go far to brighten up the interior. However, instead of painting the cabin sides white, we decided to install Formica, a tough countertop laminate that was not only easy to clean, but also gave us a new place to write our endless to-do lists with dry erase markers.

With the paper-thin and damaged teak veneer peeled away from the cabin sides, we sanded and prepped the fiberglass for the new Formica, which we had carefully measured and cut to the necessary lengths. We attached the Formica with contact cement,

Top to bottom, **peeling off the veneer was a relatively easy process.**

The finished product looks better and is a handy place to make lists.

The cabin sides are now a great place for lists and small daily reminders.

the preferred applicator for it, and applied manual pressure until the product was cured, about 15 minutes later.

We love teak as much as anyone, but the newly white surfaces better reflect light and make our living space feel more like a home and less like a cave. With the cabin sides finished and looking bright, we tested our work by grabbing a red dry erase pen and scribbling down our next few projects on the Formica, which is also used as whiteboards.

It's been four years since we accomplished that project, and we have written down and erased many things from our cabin side to-do list. We are happy to say that lately, the dry erase pens have been tucked away in the nav desk and our cabin sides have remained white — but we know a list will find its way onto them soon enough. 🌊

*Marissa and her husband, Chris, have lived aboard their 1979 Cheoy Lee 41, Avocet, since 2018, preparing to sail the world. They recently cast off their docklines and have been cruising the Pacific coast since 2022. You can follow their adventures on www.svavocet.com and on their YouTube channel, *Sailing Avocet*.*



Hard-Earned Wisdom

A sailor learns some painful lessons after buying his first cruising boat.

BY MARK BARRETT

It was 1996 and the sailboat was a 1972 Hughes 25. It was my first sailboat bigger than a Sunfish. My wife, Lisa, a landlubber from central Connecticut who had never even been on a sailboat of any kind, was not as thrilled as I was about the purchase.

We had just moved to Cape Cod, where she was starting her first job out of law school, and our finances were tight. She thought we needed a new car more than we needed a boat, even if it was only \$3,500, and she was probably right: Who really *needs* an old sailboat? But she could see that I really wanted it, so she went along.

The boat was named *Camelot*. She had been stored in the water all winter way up in the Parkers River at a place called Skippy's Pier Restaurant & Marina in Yarmouth, Massachusetts. I called about the ad in the paper in mid-March, and there was still snow on the ground when I arranged to meet the owner. *Camelot* wasn't hard to find, considering that it was the only vessel in the water there. When I asked the owner, an older gentleman named Bill, if the price was really \$3,500, he became incredulous.

"What?" he exclaimed. "You think that's too much?"

"No, no," I said. I thought there was a typo in the ad, and it should have read \$35,000. I couldn't believe you could buy a beautiful sailboat like that for so little money. I agreed to his asking price with no questions asked, and we bought the boat.

The first order of business was to figure out where we were going to keep her, because Bill's slip in the marina would not be available. Having never owned a "big" sailboat, I wasn't sure what to do. Somehow, I got advice that a mooring off Englewood Beach in Lewis Bay would be the best option, since it was the closest body of water to the condo we were

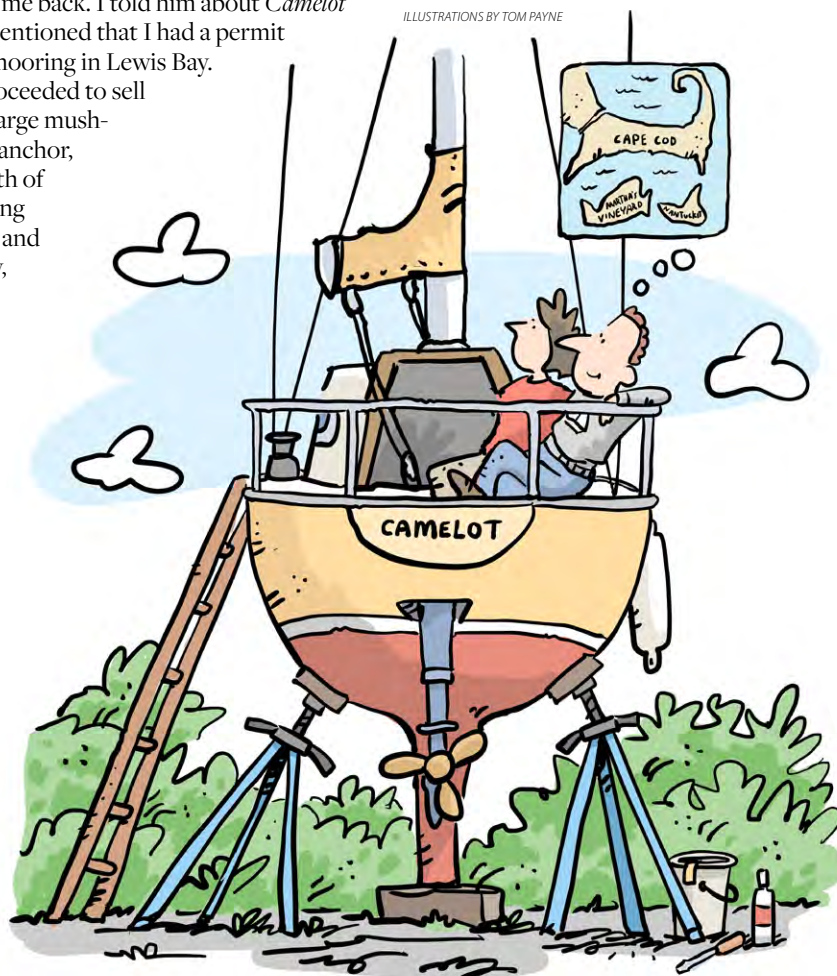
renting in West Yarmouth. I went to town hall and applied for a mooring permit; one was issued to me right away, something unheard of in today's world of decades-long waiting lists on Cape Cod.

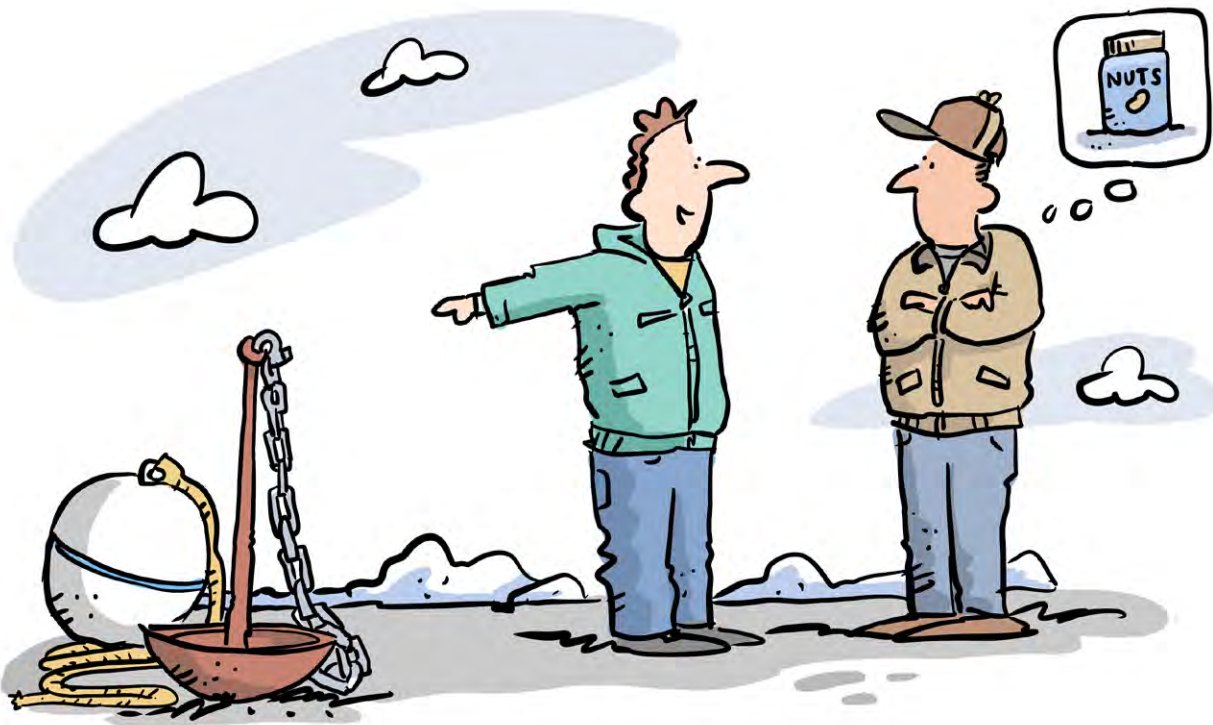
After that, the procedure became somewhat vague. I was given a piece of paper with the phone numbers of three local men who dealt with moorings. I called repeatedly and left messages, with no responses. Finally, a week or so later, one of them, a taciturn man named Dick, called me back. I told him about *Camelot* and mentioned that I had a permit for a mooring in Lewis Bay. He proceeded to sell me a large mushroom anchor, a length of mooring chain, and a buoy, all of

which he promised to put into the water in the correct spot in Lewis Bay when the time came. I sent him a check.

The next thing we needed was a dinghy to get to and from the mooring, and luckily, Bill knew where we might be able to get one. A friend of his owned a motel right down the street from Skippy's on Route 28, and Bill thought his friend had a dinghy he wasn't using, so one day we went over there together.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM PAYNE





The guy did indeed have an old fiberglass dinghy lying upside down in the woods behind his motel. It had the name *Some Day* stenciled on the transom, and he told us the story behind it. He had owned a cabin cruiser, which he reluctantly sold after he bought the motel since he never had time to go out in it anymore, but he kept the dinghy and gave it that name because he dreamed of someday owning another cabin cruiser to go with it. He sold *Some Day* to me for \$50, giving up on his dream, I guess.

By this time, it was late April and the weather was getting warm. Lisa and I were going over to Skippy's Marina every chance we got to clean the boat or just sit in the cockpit or cabin and fantasize about sailing to Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. I called Dick daily to ask if our mooring was in the water yet. Most of the time I left messages on his answering machine, but one time I did get through to him.

"You realize it's still early in the season, right?" he said. "Nobody puts their boats out on the moorings over there this early."

But the weather seemed fine to me, so I kept bugging him. My relentless pestering finally wore Dick down, and he put the mooring in. He described where it was in the bay and told me the number on the buoy so we could identify

it. I called Bill and arranged for Lisa and me to meet him over at *Camelot*. Bill had graciously offered to sail the boat over to the mooring with us when the time came and we were glad to get the help, because we didn't know what we were doing or where we were going.

The weather was perfect for our maiden voyage, with clear skies and light wind. The engine, an old Johnson two-stroke outboard that sat in a well behind the tiller, started right up and ran like a top as we motored down the winding river and out into Nantucket Sound. We raised the mainsail and hanked-on jib, and tacked our way around Point Gammon before sailing downwind into Lewis Bay. It was a magical day. Our mooring was right where Dick said it would be, and he was right — there were no other boats out there yet, only Dick's little work barge on a mooring close to shore.

This is the point at which I began to learn my first big lesson: *Pay attention to what the locals do.*

The next day, the weather took a turn for the worse. I woke up in the morning with the wind whipping tree branches against the side of our condo. The skies had turned dark and ominous. I grabbed binoculars and hurried down to Englewood Beach to check on *Camelot*. I was alarmed by what I saw.

Huge, white-capped waves were rolling down the length of the bay into the mooring field. *Camelot* was out there all by herself, bucking and plunging and weaving side to side like crazy. The mainsail cover, which I had not secured very well, was partially blown open. I had left the jib attached to the headstay up on the foredeck, stuffed in a sail bag, and now the waves were washing over it. The tiller, which I had neglected to tie off, was slamming back and forth violently. Worst of all was the line connecting the boat to the mooring ball. It was an old piece of scrap rope that I already knew was way too short and needed to be replaced as soon as possible. There was no way around it — I had to get out there!

I dragged *Some Day* into the water and managed to get in, but couldn't row off the beach. The wind and the waves were just too strong. I tried several times but kept getting turned sideways in the waves and blown up onto the sand before I could make any headway. It was a miracle I didn't flip over. *Camelot's* mooring was not close to shore, either. There was no way I was going to be able to row all the way out there in those conditions in a tiny, tippy dinghy like *Some Day*.

I dragged the dinghy back up the beach and called Dick, but he didn't answer. I was distraught and frustrated. After pacing around on the beach for a while and



watching *Camelot* through binoculars, I eventually gave up and went home. It blew hard through the night. I didn't sleep well, worrying about our boat out there taking a beating. By morning, it was blowing even harder. It had turned into a genuine gale. I finally got through to Dick.

"Dick, it's blowing like crazy down here and I'm worried about my boat!" I said.

"I know," he replied. "Went down to check on my barge, didn't even get out of my car. Haven't seen waves in the bay like that since Hurricane Bob."

"But what do I do? I need to get out there! What if she breaks loose?"

"Nuthin' you can do," he said. "If she ends up on the beach, we'll figure out a way to get her off."

I went to look at her again and took a picture, resigned that there was nothing I could do. Then I had a thought. There was an old windsurfing board out behind our condo building in the bushes. I borrowed it, tied it to the roof of our car, and drove to the closest point on the beach to the stern of the boat, which,

because of the way the wind was blowing, was in a private gated community. But there was nobody in the gatehouse, and the gate was open. It was overcast and cold. There were several people in winter



coats down on the beach for the sole purpose of gazing in wonder at the size of the waves. They must have thought I was nuts when they saw me put that board in the water and start paddling out toward *Camelot*.

Much to my surprise, it wasn't that difficult to paddle out. I got up onto *Camelot* and scurried up to the bow to find that the mooring line had chafed through and was down to a single strand. I put on a better line, secured the mainsail cover, tied off the tiller, and took the jib bag off the bow and stowed it below.

The gale blew for another full day and night, yet *Camelot* weathered the storm. I couldn't help

but think all that stress could have been avoided if I had only listened to Dick and waited even just a week or two before putting the boat out on the mooring.

Of course, this is where I learned my second lesson: *Always leave your boat secured well enough to survive a three-day gale*. I never left her that vulnerable again. To this day, I follow this rule religiously, always checking and double-checking mooring lines and hatches and securing sails any time — and I mean any time — we get off our boat. Diana, who is my first mate and cruising partner these days, often thinks I'm going way overboard and might even be slightly paranoid.

"Jeez, we're only going to shore for a quick lunch and coming right back out," she says. "Look, there isn't a cloud in the sky! What are you so worried about?"

"You never know," I say, shaking my head. "You never know."

The next lesson came very soon after, and it's a fundamental one, but many boat owners don't learn it until they learn it exactly the way I did — the hard way: *Pay close attention to nautical charts*.

It was Memorial Day weekend, only a few weeks after the three-day gale. We had been sailing a few times already and had some confidence, and now Lisa wanted to take one of her friends from work out for a sail. Lauren had never been on a sailboat, so we were really looking forward to giving her a memorable experience on our beautiful "yacht."

The wind was brisk that day as it often is in Lewis Bay, blowing out of the southwest at 15 knots, and we were moving along under full sail. There is plenty of



room to sail inside the bay, and we were tacking back and forth and having a grand time. Those familiar with Lewis Bay know that there is one obstacle you have to look out for, which is named Fiddle Head Rock. It is clearly identified on the chart and there are now two buoys that mark its whereabouts. Back in 1996 there was only one buoy, but that's no excuse.

The problem was, I did not pay close enough attention to the chart to notice where the rock was in relation to the buoy. As we were passing by the buoy, I assumed that it was right over the rock and that we had plenty of clearance. But the buoy was not right over the rock. According to the chart, which I examined much more closely later, it was near the rock, but not directly over it. We hit Fiddle Head Rock at full speed, which might have been 5.5 or even 6 knots. BANG!

Even today, more than 25 years later, I remember that feeling as if it happened five minutes ago. The first thought that went through my mind as we came to a jarring stop was, "You idiot, you don't deserve to own a sailboat if you are going to hit a rock that is marked on the chart and has a buoy right next to it."

The second thought was, "Oh God, I hope we don't sink!"

Fortunately, the Hughes 25 was a solidly built boat. She didn't take on any water, and when I dove down later to look, I found that the extent of the damage was a chunk missing from the bottom front of the lead keel, which was not too difficult to repair later. But it was traumatic nonetheless, especially for Lauren, and I bet there isn't a boat owner anywhere who scrutinizes a chart more thoroughly before

sailing anywhere, or who checks the chart while underway more often than I do.

Camelot taught me one more basic lesson over the course of that first season, and she taught it to me in financially painful increments. Shortly after the grounding incident, the old outboard motor crapped out for good, and we had to buy a new one. Then on one windy day, the mainsail, which was original, developed a tear, and before I could do anything, it literally ripped itself into shreds beyond all repair. We had to buy a new mainsail. A little later in the season, two of the stainless steel shrouds in the standing rigging, which was also original, developed broken strands, so we had to replace all of it. We considered ourselves fortunate that we didn't lose the mast.

Those were just a few of the things that went wrong. In other words, Bill had unloaded *Camelot* at the right time. When I went to sell the boat several years later, after I bought my second cruising sailboat — *Mary Winds*, a 1977 Morgan Out Island

30 — the very first potential buyers that looked at her discovered that *Camelot's* cored decks were completely saturated with moisture. She needed extensive repairs that would cost more than she was worth.

In the end, I gave the boat away for free and was glad that somebody took her. That final lesson? *Get a professional survey before buying an old sailboat.* 🦋

Mark Barrett sails his current and seventh sailboat, a 1988 Freedom 30 named Scout, out of Red Brook Harbor on Buzzards Bay. He and his first mate, Diana Donahue, spend as much time as possible each summer cruising along the New England coast in search of adventure, or at least the next waterfront eating and drinking establishment.



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Bronze Beauties

A timely prompt leads a DIYer to create new chainplates.

BY DAMIEN CONTANDRIOPOULOS

It all started because of a sailor named Ed, which is somewhat odd since I don't even know Ed.

But maybe I should backtrack a bit here. The story actually starts in June 2021, when we bought a 1984 Alberg 29. Those boats were built with stainless steel chainplates embedded in the hull's fiberglass. The only visible bits are the tangs where the chainplates exit through the deck. It wasn't a bad system — after all, those boats are turning 40 and I haven't heard any story of failed plates.

On the other hand, these boats are indeed turning 40. Since there is no way to inspect or test the chainplates, that leaves two options: Wait for their eventual

failure — which could be tomorrow or in another 40 years — or replace them before that happens. And no matter how much Sikaflex sealant I used, a constant trickle of rusty-looking water from a small hole in the fiberglass inside the hull near the plate assembly kept whispering to me that one day I should do something.

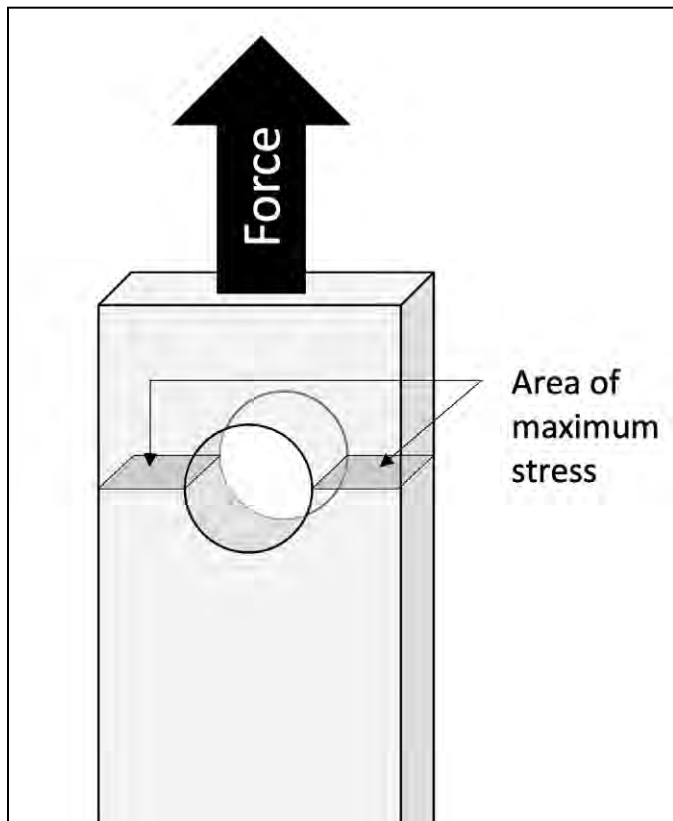
Which brings me back to Ed. In the January/February 2023 issue of *Good Old Boat*, there is a very good article by Ed Zacko on chainplate inspection and metallurgy. The article is instructive, but it doesn't necessarily help the owners of boats with old, hidden, stainless steel chainplates to sleep soundly. The close-up pictures of cracked stainless in Ed's story

convinced me to replace our chainplates with new, externally bolted ones.

From a DIY machining perspective, chainplates pose two main challenges. First, there are a lot of holes to drill, and ideally, they either need to be filed square for carriage bolts or countersunk for machine screws. It's not impossible to do this in stainless with commonly available tools, but it sure is a lot of work. Second,

Below left, **how to compute the theoretical tensile strength of a chainplate.**

Below right, **the original embedded chainplates with Merriman logos on the hardware, suggesting they are likely original to the boat.**



the chainplates need to be bent to shape, and this is tricky if one wants to make sure not to cause stress that would affect the mechanical properties of the metal.

After talking it over with a few people, it dawned on me that the solution might be to use bronze. Our boat has classic lines and lots of bronze, including portholes, winches, cleats, and more — so externally bolted bronze chainplates would fit right in. Bronze is also easier to drill than stainless and can, with some caution, be cold- or heat-bent without problems.

Once that decision was made, the next step was to figure out the sizing and design of the new plates. The main force exerted on a stay chainplate is upward through the stay cable. Design-wise, the plate needs to resist being stretched or ruptured by that tension and remain safely connected to the hull. The first part relates to the plate's tensile strength, and the second to shearing stresses.

To figure out the theoretical tensile strength of a metal part, you first need to compute the area where there is the least amount of metal exposed to the full tension forces. In a chainplate, this weak point is likely at the tang hole or at the topmost bolt hole. To estimate its strength, you should measure the area of the weakest point in square inches and multiply it by the average tensile strength of the metal used in pounds per square inch.

Tensile strength also comes in two flavors — the yield strength and the breaking strength. The meaning of the latter is easy to figure out, but the former is the most important to consider. The yield strength is the stress at which a metal part will start to permanently deform. A metal part repeatedly exposed to forces close to or exceeding its yield tensile strength will fail relatively

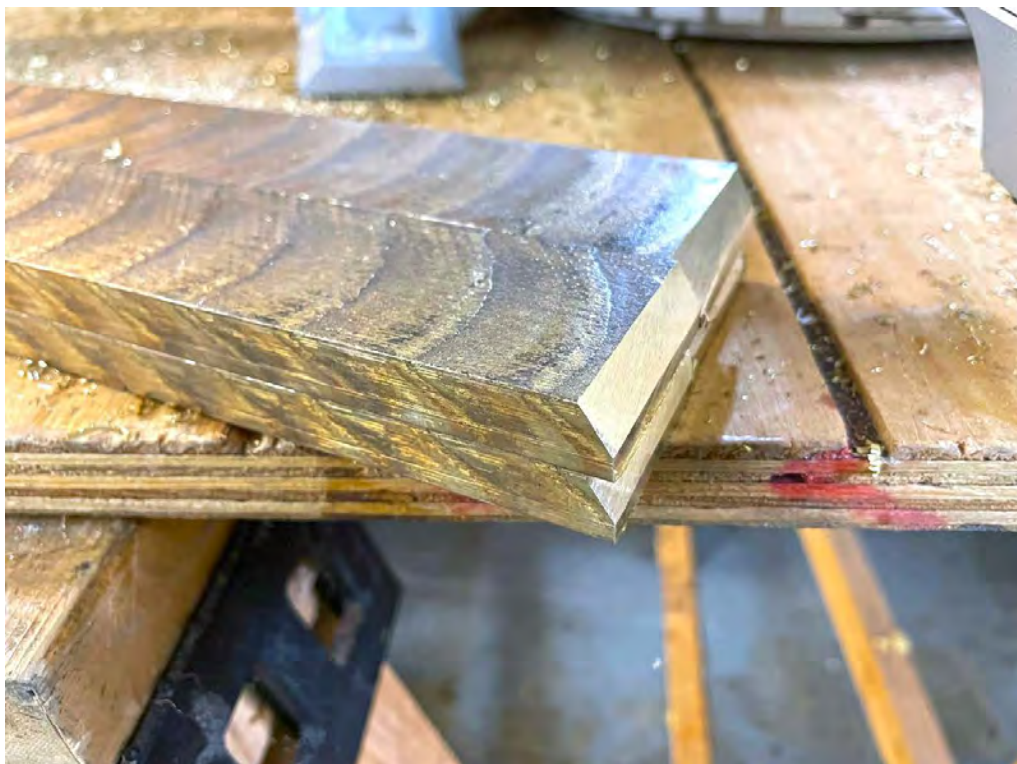
rapidly through metal fatigue, so the goal is to keep the stress on chainplates far below their yield strength.

The other force at play is shearing. This is about keeping the chainplates firmly attached to the hull and is what will drive decisions regarding the number of bolts and their size. Think of it this way: If the



Top, a view inside the port bulkhead before the work started shows a rusty drip at the corner of the embedded chainplate assembly.

Above, the same port bulkhead after sanding and laying fiberglass reinforcements. The new chainplates alignments are drawn and the G10 backplates are ready to be glued in.



The bronze bars were cut to length. Note the rough cast finish.

bolts were made of a soft material, as the stays pull upward, the bolts would be cleanly cut at the hull-chainplate junction, as by scissors. Precisely computing shearing forces implies many parameters, such as friction between parts, that are hard to estimate. One often quoted rule is to use 60% of a part's tensile strength as an estimate of its shearing strength.

In reality, however, the bolts aren't really exposed to the full shearing stress of the rigging, since the chainplates are pressed hard against the hull and are actually glued to it, which considerably increases the friction.

Despite all the jargon in the previous paragraphs, computing theoretical properties of metal parts isn't that hard. However, the other side of the equation, which involves some seriously sophisticated engineering skills that I don't have, is to figure out what forces are exerted in real conditions on a given boat. To circumvent my ignorance, I designed the chainplates so that their tensile yield strength and the bolts' shearing resistance would both exceed the breaking strength of the stay cables. In other words, if the rigging were to be exposed to a degree of stress that the stays would

break, the chainplates would still not have yielded or sheared.

For my project, I decided to go with $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch thick and $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch wide rectangle bars in 954 bronze, each with a bolt pattern of four $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch bronze machine screws. The shroud chainplates would be 20 inches long and the backstay ones 18

inches. If my computations aren't too far off, the new system should be way stronger than the shroud cable breaking strength.

After comparing local prices with online suppliers, I ordered the bronze online. Rectangle bronze bars are cast and sold as is. This means that they are far from smooth and quite a bit larger than their nominal size to allow for finishing. Out of the box, the nominal $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch bars were closer to $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick, with some significant surface irregularities and pitting.

As a side note, bronze has the reputation of being a soft metal, and it is indeed easier to work with than stainless or hardened steel. However, after many hours spent working on the chainplates, I have a new respect for 954 bronze. It might be softer than some metals, but my pile of burned-out jigsaw blades and sanding discs is testament to the fallacy that bronze is soft. Bronze is



The author cold-bent the shroud chainplates on a simple homemade jig.

also naturally somewhat self-lubricating, and this makes it quite resistant to cutting and sanding.

Machining-wise, the first step was to cut the plates to length. Straight cuts and bevels are easy with a circular miter saw and a good non-ferrous metal blade. Then I rounded the tang ends of the plates with a jigsaw. That part of the work was slow and somewhat frustrating. I then gave the plates a first rough polishing and deburring using a grinder and a hard disc.

Initially, my plan was to taper the plates' thickness from $\frac{3}{8}$ inch to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch downward. However, some pretests on leftover bits quickly made me realize that this would be a monster task with the tools at hand. I often use an electric wood planer to cut aluminum, and it works surprisingly well, but that's a no-go with bronze (ask me how I know). And even using a grinder with good discs would make it a colossal task.

What took up a large amount of time were the innumerable trips back and forth to the marina, which is luckily just a 15-minute bike ride from home. The design stage required triple-checking and measuring alignments and fit, both on

the outside and the inside of the hull. For example, the chainplates need to align with the angle of the stays and this, in turn, slightly changes the curve of the hull that they need to adapt to. In the same way, the ideal bolt pattern would look nice from the outside and also clear obstacles

was needed, and used one vise to push the bronze just past its elasticity point. Then I unclamped the plate, checked it against the template, and repeated the operation over and over. When everything looked fine, I did a real-life tryout against the hull and made some final adjustments on the jig.

The backstay chainplates, however, needed one sharp bend of 30-odd degrees. This required heat-bending. If internet resources are to be trusted, the metallurgical properties of bronze aren't too affected by heat if the

part isn't heated past a dull red. Having used bronze brazing extensively on bicycle frame building, I felt confident that it would be fine. I drew the desired bend as a chalk line on the plates and applied heat along the line with a propane torch. When the first traces of a reddish heat coloration showed, I rapidly aligned the chalk line

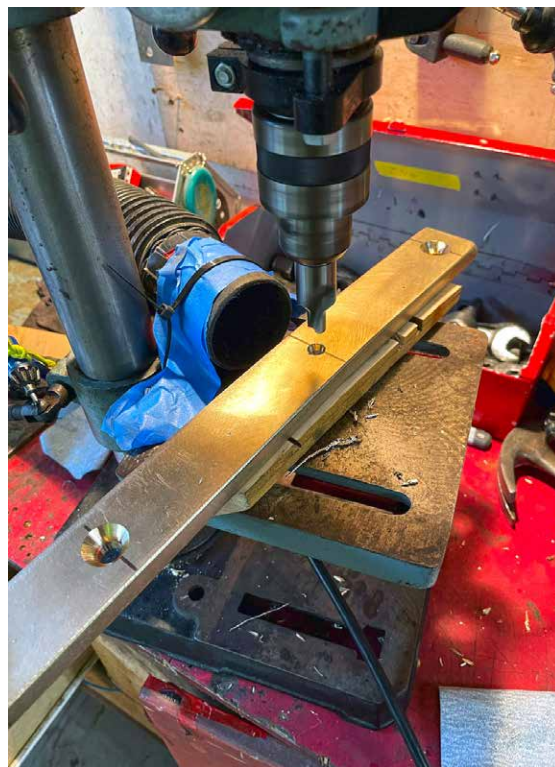
These boats are indeed turning 40.

on the inside. After clocking about a Tour de France equivalent in miles biked to and fro, and drawing and erasing a ton of pencil lines, I finally brought home some cardboard templates of the bends and hole pattern.

There are six shroud chainplates and two backstay chainplates on our boat. The shroud plates only needed a shallow bend to fit the shape of the hull and were cold-bent to shape. To do this, I built a jig out of a sturdy steel corner, some bronze leftovers used as chocks, and two large vises. The name of the game was patience. I clamped the parts, moved the chocks where it looked like some more bending

Below left, the author heats the backstay chainplates before heat-bending. The orientation of the future bend can be seen as a chalk line under the flame.

Below, drilling the holes and countersinks in the bent chainplates. The vacuum tube taped to the drill press worked well to keep bronze shards in check.





Left, **installation day.** The top shroud chainplate is fully installed and the lower shroud ones are almost ready to be glued.

Below left, **the shroud chainplates are fully installed and under tension.**



with the vise jaws and clamped firmly before hand-bending it. As the plates were clamped in colder steel, the bronze was soft enough only for a few seconds at a time, so the final bend was achieved by multiple increments of about 10 degrees each.

At that point, I gave the plates a more careful multistep sanding and started drilling. I bought a good quality drill bit that drills the hole and countersink in one step for flat head machine screws, something I definitely don't regret. Eight chainplates with four bolts each make for long sessions with the drill press. Speaking of the drill press — a basic 8-inch Delta — it barely survived. Bronze isn't that easy to drill. I had to limit myself to three or four holes before the motor started to smell funky and needed a long cooldown. Another tip I learned the hard way is that drill bits churn out an impressive amount of dangerously sharp bronze shards that will eventually end up everywhere. After a few sessions with my glasses and a pair of tweezers pulling shards from my hands, I finally figured out I should attach the vacuum tube to the drill press.

While the machining process went its slow, cautious way, I spent time preparing to install the plates on the boat. I decided to add a few layers of thick, woven fiberglass mat on the inside of the bulkheads where the bolts would be. The fiberglass was shaped to overlap about 6 inches on the central partition wall in front of the mast.

The plan was also to have G10 fiberglass backplates behind the nuts. However, with the embedded stainless of the existing chainplate system, somewhat rough handlaid original fiberglass, and my own additional layers, the challenge was that the hull's inside was not flat. I thus had to individually carve and shape the backplates to fit their spots, and glue them with thickened epoxy.

Then the big day came. We hauled the boat for some antifouling work and the chainplate installation. Drilling the pilot

holes through the hull was stressful. Now that the backplates were glued in place, what if my alignments were off? There is no way those backplates would come off without grinding them down. I had tried multiple things to double-check the alignments. Strong magnets on both sides of the hull didn't work because the hull is too thick. A small laser beam through the fiberglass didn't work either, because the gelcoat is too opaque.

So I went with levels, rulers, and silent prayers, but my heart was racing when I climbed aboard to check the pilot hole exits. They were fine. The backplates are 3 inches by 4 inches, and all the holes were reasonably centered.

I then slackened the two top shrouds and installed their chainplates, leaving the lower shrouds in place to make sure the mast would stay positioned. Drilling the hull's fiberglass was easy work. Drilling through the embedded stainless within the hull, however, wasn't; I discovered new shoulder muscles I didn't even know I had before they started to ache.

I installed the plates for a dry run, then removed them. We added a generous amount of 3M 5200 adhesive sealant underneath and installed them for real after I sourced longer bolts, since the reinforced hull is over an inch thick at some places and my 2-inch bolts proved too short. We were lucky that a local shop had a few bronze screws — which aren't that common — in stock.

We then retightened the top shrouds and installed the four lower shroud plates. Once all the shroud cables were tightened and the mast alignment double-checked, we moved to the backstay plates. Access to the inside of the hull was through two new round access hatches that I had to cut, which made the work a bit more challenging. I could either look inside the hatches or have one arm inside, but not both.

Overall, we're really pleased with the look of the new chainplates and with the feeling we can trust them to keep our mast upright. The satisfaction of planning and executing a project on the boat is also always a reward, especially once the new bruises and scratches start to heal and the moments of rage and despair blur in one's memory.

We will never know for sure if all that work was necessary. But I still think we owe Ed a sincere thank-you. 🍷

Astrid Brousselle and Damien Contandriopoulos sail from Victoria, British Columbia, usually with some or all of their three kids. Allamanda is Astrid's second boat. The first was a 1975 Nordic Folkboat. There is a certain affection for old-school, long-keel boats that won't ever back up where you want them to. But forward they're fine. Really fine.

Below, the backstay's chainplates are installed. The degree of bend would not have been possible without heating the bronze.

Bottom, Allamanda is back in the water, with a plan to let the chainplate oxidize and turn the same green as the portholes.



Tales of the Tape

Tape can provide a quick fix for torn or cracked vinyl windows.

BY DREW FRYE

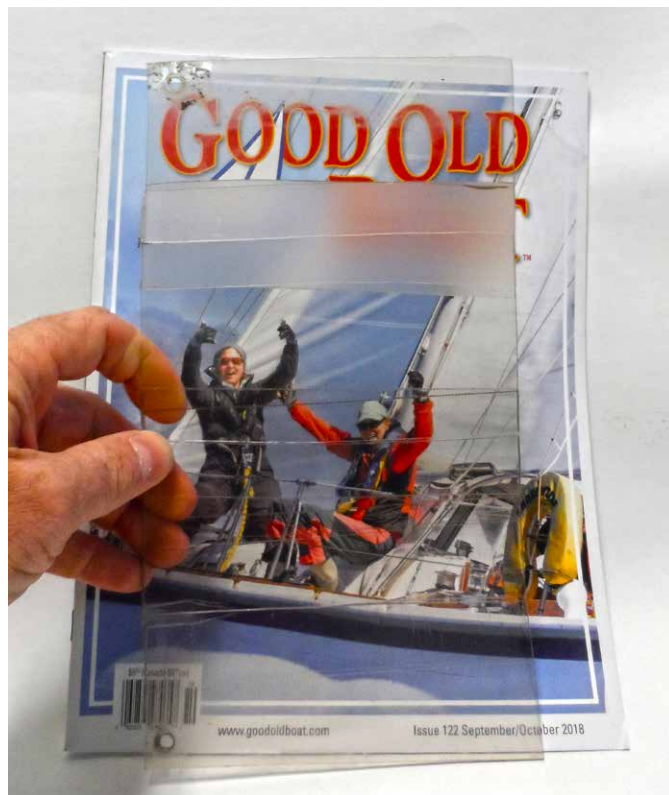
Eventually a vinyl window will crack, either because of extreme age or extreme cold. The right fix is new vinyl, but in the meantime, we need a quick fix — something fast, easy, and good enough to get us to the end of the cruise or season. If the repair could last a few seasons, that would be grand. Canvas work is expensive and sewing machines hate me. Semiflexible solar

The author holds a section of repaired vinyl that has spent a year in the sun. The Tear-Aid tape (top), is nearly opaque and not very strong. The Gorilla tape (middle) is clear and a little stronger, but is still weak and has a visible pinked edge, while the Scotch Book Tape (bottom) became stronger over time, did not yellow, and is nearly invisible.

panels get scratched. The damage is usually very localized, but unless you seal any cracks, and quick, moisture will enter, ruining the whole panel.

I got my first vinyl window crack about nine years ago. As I rolled down a yellowed window on my boat's cockpit dodger, it snapped halfway across. Packing tape, carefully applied to both sides, lasted through the cruise and the following winter. At considerable expense (\$1,500), I had new windows made in the spring, just as the tape began to fail. The tape was some cheap off-brand

The author puts Gorilla tape through a stretch test.



stuff we had on the boat, and I wondered if the right tape might last years.

I set about testing a variety of methods, including Scotch Heavy Duty Packaging Tape, Scotch Book Tape, and Crystal Clear Gorilla Tape, as well as some specialty repair products. Those included Tear-Aid Type B, a specialized repair tape for soft vinyl, and ISC Racers Tape, a tough polyurethane tape used to protect automotive paint and aircraft edges from dings. Finally, I tried gluing on patches with West System G/flex Epoxy and Loctite vinyl

repair glue. I tested these using aged vinyl sections from the local canvas shop.

I tested each repair three ways. First, I made up long 2-inch-wide strips of vinyl so that I could compare visibility and flexibility. Then I made a series of test coupons with the various materials, which were slowly pulled in a test rig to determine creep resistance at several temperatures and ultimate strength. Finally, I made 8 x 10 panels with each material for our aging rig and left them in the sun for a year, after which they were observed and retested.



At first, I assumed clarity would be a major factor, but most window cracks happen down low, near the deck and below the view line. Reflection off the deck doubles UV exposure, and there is often additional stress from rolling down the window, the wind, and dodger fit/shrinkage issues. Patches in the bottom few inches or corners are not very noticeable in most cases, so I gave clarity less weight than durability.

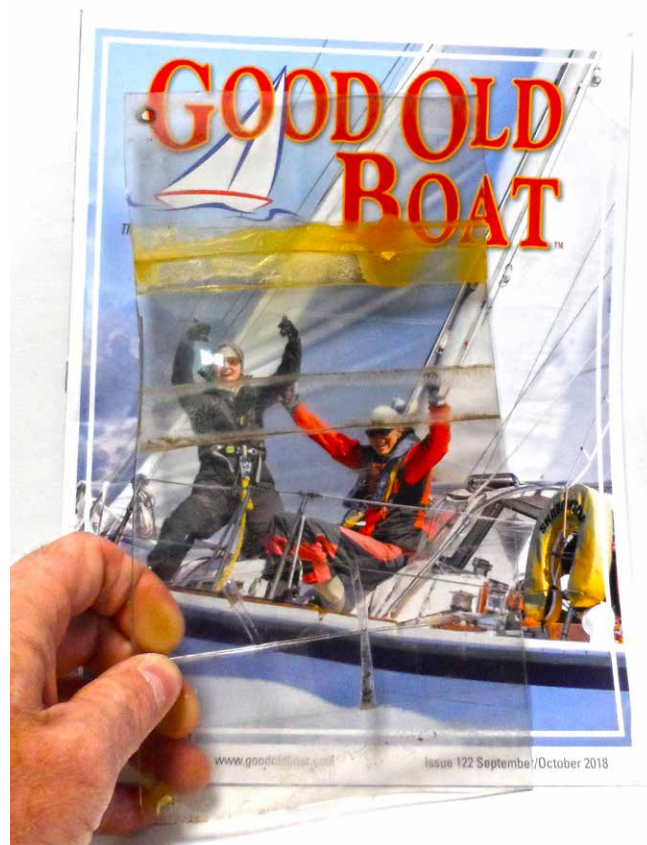
Glued patches held the promise of durability, but ease of use and results were disappointing. Epoxies simply would not bond, peeling with the slightest flexing. Vinyl glues were better, but there was still the problem of applying the patch. Even if clamping is not required, the patch must lie flat, and if the window is already cracking, taking it off may ruin it. On the boat, the best I could do was mask all around the test area, attach the patch with masking tape, and hold it with my fingers or tape until the glue grabbed. Glued patches always contained bubbles, resulted in poor visibility, and created a hard spot, encouraging new cracks. The glued patches also fared poorly in the sun, yellowing and cracking after a year. Since most cracks are

The author holds another section of repaired vinyl that has spent a year in the sun. The G/flex tape (top) is yellowed and peels easily if flexed. The Loctite tape (middle) is stronger, but difficult to apply and quite visible. The Scotch Heavy Duty Packaging Tape (bottom) became more visible with time and is not as strong as Scotch Book Tape.

the result of age-induced brittleness, this seemed bad. Glue was out.

Tapes, on the other hand, were easy to apply, relatively inconspicuous (Tear-Aid Type B is translucent; others are clear), and nearly as strong as the vinyl if carefully applied from both sides. If the result is not perfect or does not last long enough, it's easy to do it over — just peel off the tape, clean the surface with mineral spirits, follow with a soap and water rinse, and try again.

Heat can reveal weakness. Gorilla tape, Tear-Aid Type B, and ISC Racers Tape all stretched out of shape when constant stress was applied in warm weather. Scotch Heavy Duty Packaging Tape was better, but the real winner for vinyl windows was Scotch Book Tape. Designed for long-term restoration of damaged books, it did not creep in the heat, handled UV for years, and was nearly as strong as the vinyl (38 pounds/



inch). Its appearance depends on controlled bubble- and wrinkle-free installation, but that is a matter of patience.

The semiflexible solar panel on my Corsair F-24 trimaran has taken some licks. Over 10 years it has been nicked by winch handles, scratched by the gooseneck while lowering the mast, and received a few more insults I can't remember. A neat Scotch Book Tape repair patch is nearly invisible and lasts about two years, after which you can peel it off (light application of heat and a dull drywall knife help) or just apply another layer. Even better, ISC Racers Tape holds up for more than three years while staying clear and resisting impact, but it is harder to remove and replace. It's a toss-up, and ISC Racers Tape is considerably more expensive. But the patches are working, and my 10-year-old, 50-watt, \$100 semiflexible solar panel is still putting out respectable amps with

no visible bad areas six years after the first serious damage occurred.

Scotch Book Tape is the big winner. It's easy to find on Amazon, simple to apply, strong, and most importantly, durable. If it's carefully applied on both sides of a vinyl dodger window, you should get two or three years from a repair that will take only minutes. For solar panels, ISC Racers Tape is the more durable option, but I've also been happy with the book tape. 🍃

Good Old Boat Technical Editor Drew Frye draws on his training as a chemical engineer and pastimes of climbing and sailing to solve boat problems. He cruises Chesapeake Bay and the mid-Atlantic coast in his Corsair F-24 trimaran, Fast and Furry-ous, using its shoal draft to venture into less-explored waters. He is most recently author of Rigging Modern Anchors (2018, Seaworthy Publications).

A Boat to Grow With

A young couple finds a boat to call a home, from San Francisco Bay to the Chesapeake Bay.

BY ASHLEY GREMEL

The idea of buying a boat came about one afternoon in my apartment off Mission Street in San Francisco. I was working my first job and had fallen for sailing and a sailor the previous summer. Increasingly, Wednesdays and Fridays were for beer can racing and weekends were for raft-ups and longer races. My internet browser tabs were filled with sail tactics, liveaboard tips, and boat listings. I gobbled up interviews and books by those who had wandered farther offshore and wondered if we could do the same.

I had sketched out a budget and realized how much money we were spending on rent as we dawdled and worked up the gumption to buy a boat and live aboard. My future husband, Scott, and I were newly dating, and sinking hard-won savings into a good old boat seemed illogical at first, but also pragmatic and fun. Scott had been scouring lists of bluewater cruisers for a few years, and time together on other people's boats helped us refine a list of desired creature comforts — a U-shaped galley, a separate standing shower, and a wraparound cockpit unseparated by winches or a wheel. Our price range necessitated a “plastic classic,” and we also preferred them stylistically. A sloop seemed sensible, although Scott dreamed of cutter rigs. For a while, we were keen on Tartan 34s and even considered trucking one to the Bay Area from Montana.

Our search slowed while Scott prepared and delivered an Express 37 back



Above, *Azimuth*, then named *Panache*, soon after purchase.

At right, Ashley and Scott spend Christmas 2017 aboard *Azimuth* in Berkeley, California.



***Azimuth* all dressed up in lights for the Lighted Yacht Parade at Oakland's Jack London Square.**

to the San Francisco Bay from Hawaii. For the two weeks or so he was out of contact, aside from a Garmin tracker link, I wondered if he would still like sailing after a few thousand miles upwind on a lightweight displacement hull. While offshore, he considered boat designs, and the name *Azimuth* came to him one night in the Pacific when the closest humans aside from his crew were up above on the

International Space Station. An azimuth is the horizontal angle from a cardinal direction, typically north, and a celestial body. He loved the notion that with an azimuth and few other inputs, one can plot their place in the world.

A day or two after Scott returned from Hawaii, we spotted a YachtWorld listing for a Pearson 365 sloop in nearby Emeryville. The Pearson designer, Bill

Shaw, once said, "The 365 is my personal idea of what a boat should be. At that size I can put absolutely everything in the boat that I want and not get into a this or that situation." The 365 has a V-berth for the main cabin, followed by the head to starboard, a closet, a large saloon including a pilot berth, a U-shaped galley to port, and a navigation desk to starboard. There is no quarter berth, which means the

lazarettes are open for systems installs and gear storage. Most of the 365s are ketches, so the sloop cockpit felt like something from a larger vessel. The engine's V-drive provides a few more feet for the interior, and the only trade-off is cramped access to the original Westerbeke 40 diesel engine.

The design passed our seaworthiness requirements and desired creature comforts. The photos showed a bright interior that was livable without us having to undertake any major projects, and the "as is" condition required only a new battery charger and sump pump for the shower. We had mapped out a plan to achieve boat ownership the previous summer and had made progress on pinching pennies, moving from San Francisco to more affordable Oakland, and acquiring a car to make marina living easier. Here was our next step — a boat that we couldn't stop looking at and timing that seemed as good as any. I called the broker the next day.

We tried our best to keep expectations low, but we were practically buzzing when we arrived at the marina to look at the boat, named *Panache*. We walked the decks, stood behind the wheel, looked up at the rigging, and headed down below. This boat was larger than we had been targeting, but we figured that it would leave some room to grow. The broker could see he had us hook, line, and sinker, and still managed to help us get a good deal after the sea trial. We got a small loan and moved aboard the following week. Stars aligned to grant us a liveaboard slip in Oakland, an exit or two down the highway from the desirable Jack London Square. From there, I could bike, walk, or even kayak to work. We settled into life aboard, which included getting out of our slip most every weekend.

For the first few years, we were beyond content to be bay sailors. The 365 can technically sleep six, and we were continually piling friends aboard to explore the various anchorages of San Francisco Bay. I doubt I need to explain the appeal of getting on the water to the readers of this magazine, and perhaps the delight of sharing it with others goes without saying. We felt ridiculously lucky that our paths had crossed with



Friends make even the most mundane boat projects easier and more fun.

each other and this vessel. Friends came over constantly to help us figure out the latest project, have a meal, or complete a seasonal craft like pumpkin carving or gingerbread boat decorating. We strung up lights for the Oakland Lighted Yacht Parade and attended monthly raft-ups with the Washed Up Yacht Club, an informal group of sailors, artists, and other DIYers. There was something so magical about that time, getting to know *Azimuth* alongside others who had similar means and skills to maintain and enjoy their ships of choice.

In those early days, we kept two lists: what was needed to go sailing next and what was needed to head out cruising; the former was our priority. We aimed to get out of the marina as much as possible, and our time on the water informed the upgrades we made incrementally over the years, either as things broke or we had time and money to tackle improvements.

Over time, our weekends shifted more toward offshore racing to gain the experience necessary for the nebulous cruise that inspired our boat purchase. *Azimuth* became more of a crash pad as we worked in office buildings and spent time at the gym to prepare for racing, and at the yacht club before and after races and practices. At the height of our racing frenzy, we enjoyed hosting crew members overnight before and after races, and took our dinghy to the yacht club to step aboard lighter, newer vessels. Sailing on various teams improved our sail-handling skills and informed our running rigging, sail purchases, and other nuances of our boat.

We enjoyed the mix of racing and living aboard in San Francisco Bay and wanted to spread the fun to others, so we started an informal liveaboard race. It was open to all, but Scott required those who didn't live aboard full time to have an unsecured potted plant along for the ride. The winner received a nice bottle of rum and second-to-last place got a bottom-shelf bottle. The debriefs on the docks in Jack London Square were always a delight, as folks figured out some new way to get their boat to go faster or discovered a new feature of the



Above, center, and at right, **Ashley captains *Azimuth* and crew through a particularly serene sunset in the San Francisco Bay in the spring of 2019.**



***Azimuth* running down wind in the 4th annual Liveaboard Race series.**

winds and currents of the bay. The race continues in the hands of friends.

When Covid-19 put a halt to racing, rafting up, and gatherings of all kinds, we found ourselves working office jobs from the confines of *Azimuth*. This prompted a few projects such as upgrading to an electric toilet and a larger sink to help with the endless parade of dishes. At first, we made the most of things by having a festive midday teatime and learning recipes that had long been dog-eared in our cookbooks. Eventually, the thrill of being in our favorite place together wore off and we began asking ourselves, what are we doing here?

Since buying the boat in 2016, we had consistently said we would go cruising in three years' time. This interval required no immediate action toward the goal but kept us aligned with the dream. We were nearing our 30th birthdays and were tired of cramming our workdays, hobbies, and relationship into a small space, tied to a dock. Renting a shipping container at the nearby Bay Area Makerfarm, a junkyard turned workshop and farm, alleviated some of the pressure and gave us space for various boat and hobby projects. We felt far from family, and the bay lost some of its appeal without fun gatherings, collaborating with coworkers in person, and sailing alongside others. One day, Scott said, "What if we sail to the East Coast?"

The plan resonated right away. By sailing *Azimuth* to the Chesapeake Bay, we'd be closer to family, living in a place with more affordable housing and marinas, and have a transitional adventure along the way. To borrow the phrasing of a friend, we would be sailing around a

marathon haulout. On April 30, 2021, we sailed out under the Golden Gate Bridge for the last time.

Heading down the coast in the spring was chilly and challenging as we balanced working and weather windows. We waited for the seasons to turn in San Diego and joined the Baja Ha-Ha cruising rally for some company. Our boat felt packed to the gills with supplies and spares when we first left, but gradually rose on its waterline as we gained experience. Every hundred miles or so, we bested notorious features including Point Conception, Cabo Corrientes, the Gulf of Tehuantepec, Papagayo winds, and Punta Mala. Each felt difficult but doable as we broke down every challenge into smaller next steps.

By the time we arrived at the Panama Canal, *Azimuth* had transitioned to a performance cruiser, oscillating between sailing and anchoring. We were moving quickly because of our budget and desire to get to the other side, a point that confounded many we met along the way. But there were highlights, too — the time spent offshore, the victories of fixing problems in remote places, and the simplicity of our priorities. We were granted many incredible experiences because we had the courage to leave our dock in Alameda and every dock after that. We observed nature at the pace of 5 knots (or less!) in that soothing silence of being under sail.

On the Caribbean side of Panama, we were given the chance to exchange our maintenance skills learned from the boat for room and board at an off-grid nature retreat, enabling an extra year on our planned one-year voyage. This extra time meant we could hone our language skills,

continent to start a new life, just like people centuries prior.

We threw ourselves into doing the remaining projects to prepare *Azimuth*, a process that took almost a year of nights and weekends and a

explore Bocas del Toro and the San Blas Islands, and head over to the urban center of Cartagena, Colombia, to get some eastward progress while waiting for the trade winds to die down for safe passage north. We crossed the Caribbean to Isla Mujeres, Mexico, in March 2023, a 980-mile passage that was mostly uneventful aside from an extra tack or two to avoid a northerly cold front.

We crossed back into the United States in Florida in April and sailed offshore up to Charleston, South Carolina, where we were trapped for a few weeks of unseasonal northerly weather. Once in Southport, North Carolina, we dipped into the Intracoastal Waterway for the final 365 miles of the trip. We enjoyed the many free docks in North Carolina and chose the scenic Great Dismal Swamp route to round out this transitional cruise. Relying on our old motor was a test, but we made it to our new marina in Virginia without incident on June 15.

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Ashley and Scott, midway through a new dodger project, catching a nice day on the Bay in the early months of 2021.

After almost seven years of living aboard *Azimuth*, the hull has dropped on its waterline with the addition of solar, extra anchors, a life raft, a desalinator, storm sails, a dinghy, and an outboard. The bulkheads have been filled with tiny trinkets and other artwork. We move about our vessel with a fluidity that feels akin to playing an instrument. *Azimuth* feels like a member of the family and a connection to our past.

Now that we have stepped off the boat to live in a city again, I have a greater appreciation of how efficiently we lived within our boat's design and the connection to nature it provided simply by floating on the waterways we sailed. *Azimuth* taught me what we needed and what we didn't, and because of that boat, I live frugally and question the accumulation of stuff that seems so prevalent. Our time on board was significantly less expensive than a Bay Area apartment, and yet it unlocked the riches of the ocean and time together.

Azimuth is rising on its waterline as we move our



We broke down every challenge into smaller next steps.

possessions offboard and head into a new chapter as weekend sailors, exploring the many coves and creeks on our new coast. We are unfurling from the pace and priorities of this voyage and enjoying new possibilities and the solidity of land. It seems this boat will continue to grow with us. 🌊

Ashley Gremel is a writer, maker, and problem-solver. She recently completed a sail from San Francisco to the Chesapeake Bay via the Panama Canal with her husband, Scott Racette, and their salty cat, Cypress. Ashley writes weekly at cloudsformoverland.substack.com.



Left, *Azimuth* rafted up with 40 other boats as part of the Washed Up Yacht Club's annual Summer Sailstice event.

Following page:

Above left, Scott raises *Azimuth*'s mainsail as they're swept under the Golden Gate Bridge on a 5-knot ebb.

Above right, Ashley and Scott's going away party at the docks of Encinal Yacht Club preceding the start of their journey to the Chesapeake.

Below, *Azimuth* heading south and leaving San Francisco Bay.



Family Room

A second head is transformed into a cozy cabin for a blended family of five.

BY SAMANTHA MCLENACHEN

Sailors are no strangers to tight spaces, but when two die-hard liveaboards find love and decide to blend families, their newly shared floating home might need a few adjustments to make room for each person. And make room is exactly what my husband and I did — or rather, *a* room.

We adore our 1992 Hunter Legend 43, *Muse*, and we're grateful for the thoughtful layout she was built with, but blended family dynamics being what they are, it was very important for each of our three kids to have their own cabin. It's hard enough to share your parent with a new child in the family, so it was the least we could do to make sure they didn't have to share their bedrooms as well.

Muse originally came with two heads, and we found that the forward head was only ever used for the kids to brush their teeth. A previous owner had taken out the electric flush marine toilet and replaced it with a composting head that we all avoided using. Not to knock composting toilets, but having to clean up after kids when they miss the correct hole is not pretty.

That forward head was the perfect candidate for demolition and repurposing into a fourth cabin. Clad in Tyvek, safety glasses, and a respirator, my husband, Andrew, shut himself in the bathroom and took the cutoff wheel to the fiberglass, cabinets, and sink, salvaging pieces we might reuse later. To minimize fiberglass dust, he kept the



Andrew dons a Tyvek suit and protective gear before removing the wet head enclosure with a cutoff wheel.

At right, above, *Muse's* forward head before demolition.

Below, the new cabin is gutted to bare hull and bulkheads, with a foot box cut into the neighboring cabin's hanging locker.

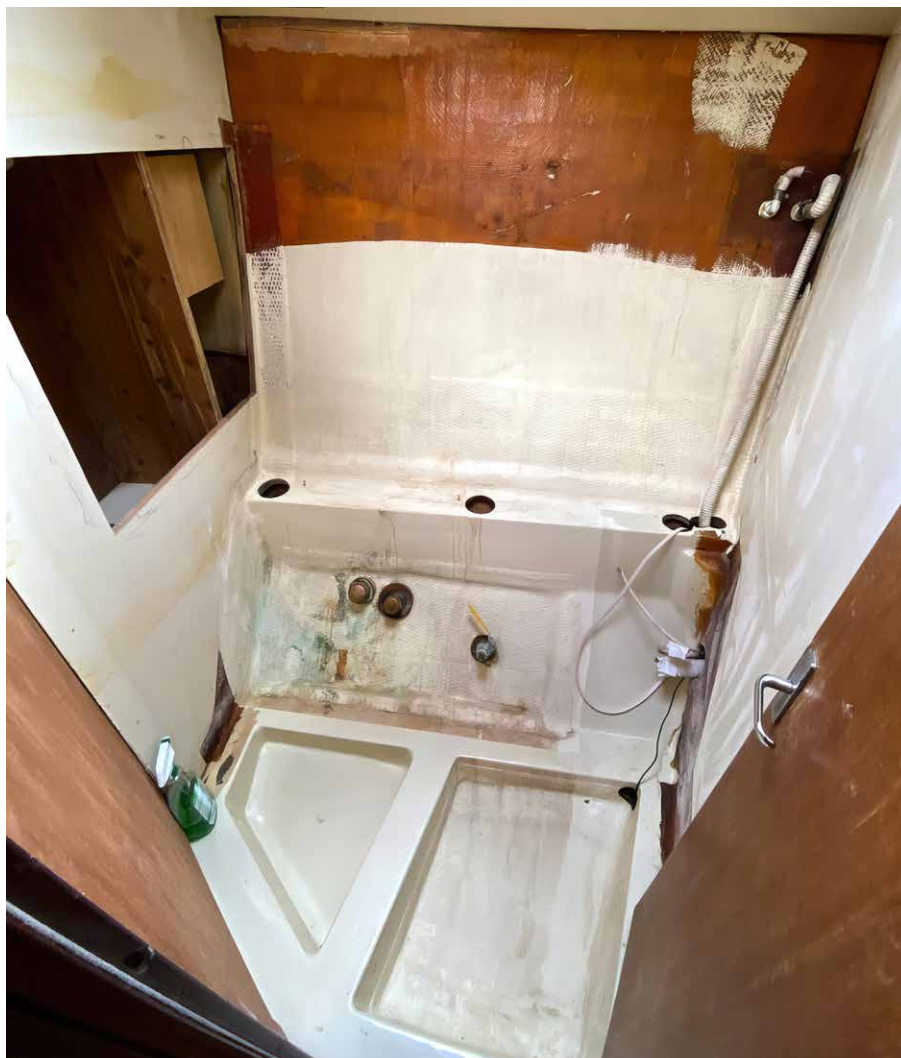
Shop-Vac up on deck and draped the hose down through the small hatch into the head.

One issue with the space is that the berth needed to be at least 6 feet long to accommodate a growing kid or possible future crew members, and the room wasn't wide enough. Luckily, there was a hanging locker on the other side of the forward bulkhead that we were able to build out into a foot box for the berth. But that meant that the child in the V-berth next to the room lost most of her closet and will now need more storage built into her room. It was a real two-steps-forward and one-step-back scenario shuffling things around for our new, expanded family. But we always get a deep sense of satisfaction from upgrading *Muse* to fit our needs.

With everything removed down to bare hull and bulkheads, we gave the room a thorough cleaning and painted it all with a mold- and mildew-resistant primer. It felt good to start completely fresh.

Using Sande marine plywood and Douglas fir lumber ripped down to the right dimensions, Andrew began framing the cabin's furniture. He built a berth, a toy storage area, drawer space, and a step up to the berth that will eventually hide a vent and ducting for reverse cycle heating and cooling. The old shower pan became storage space under a new PlasTEAK floor, and during the demolition process we found another large, molded fiberglass cavity.

The Hunter Legend 43 is full of excellent storage spaces like these under all the floor panels. Whoever designed these boats clearly squeezed in every last cubic inch of storage they possibly could. Using more marine plywood, we cut the floor panels and adhered the faux sole to match the striping in the rest of the boat. Perhaps one day we'll put a real holly and teak sole in this cabin, but I'm sure the





Bathroom remnants up on deck, with the vacuum hose hanging down through the hatch to minimize fiberglass dust.

current flooring will hold up to years of rough kid treatment.

We did, however, want to use wood for slats against the hull to match the aesthetic in the saloon. We were given a large pile of reclaimed lumber — old-growth Douglas fir that was once the flooring for a piston factory in Tacoma, Washington. After we planed off a layer of nasty grime and oil-soaked wood, it was truly beautiful underneath, perfect for cutting into thin slats to give the hull a touch of classic boat style. Not only does it look gorgeous, but we love incorporating our local history into *Muse* wherever we can.

Overall, though, this renovation wasn't just about looks. Gutting this space also gave us an opportunity to improve the insulation, which is sadly nonexistent in many places throughout the boat. We mounted furring strips at 18-inch intervals with short screws and epoxy and laid sheets of ArmaFlex insulation between them with Gorilla Spray Adhesive. With the much-improved insulation in place, we were then able to secure the beautiful slats to the furring strips. The room was really coming together.

The drawers were a particularly puzzling bit. We wanted to match the hull shape as much as possible to maximize storage capacity, so they ended up being parallelogram in shape. Thankfully, we only had to make two of them. Andrew says next time he would build a jig for the table saw to ensure the correct angles were cut. A CNC (computer numerical control) router would have worked better to prevent slight human errors. Being off

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Next page, top, the built-out foot box extended the berth to a full 6 feet.

Below left, the flooring, mattress, wallpaper, and shelf are installed in the new cabin.

Center right, peel-and-stick wallpaper covers the forward and aft bulkheads.

Bottom right, there's ample room on the shelf for books and treasures.



From top to bottom, a Sailrite tutorial helped the author sew a blackout curtain to cover the hatch.

A new shelf above the berth has a fiddle that matches the rest of *Muse's* interior woodwork.

Deep drawers were designed to fit all the way back to the hull, leaving no negative space and maximizing clothing storage.

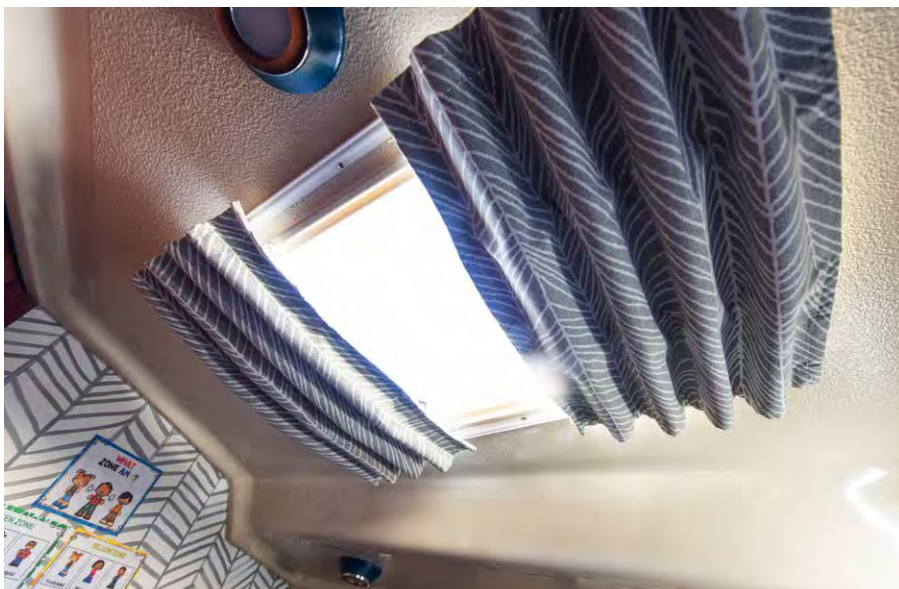
by just a fraction of a degree can — and did — cause the drawers to slide in improperly. Some wonky sanding was necessary on the sides, but no one really sees that part, and by this point we were feeling pretty desperate to just be done with the project. Our youngest needed a functional bedroom space.

Finally, it was time for some finishing touches. While I was busy hanging peel-and-stick wallpaper on the fore and aft bulkheads, Andrew was out on the dock working sorcery with a table saw, an oscillating tool, and a power file to turn a pile of old scrap teak and mahogany into gorgeous trim for every corner and exposed plywood edge. He made a fiddle for the shelf above the berth that perfectly matches the woodwork throughout the boat. It looks like this cabin was always meant to be here, only better.

Only a few final additions were needed to make the cabin officially ready for my toddler stepson to move into. We cut foam for the bed; Andrew installed new, 3D printed lights and a switch; and I sewed a blackout curtain for the hatch.

Having an additional cabin for our blended kid crew has made a substantial improvement in our quality of life and the peace we feel in our home. Finding creative solutions to make liveaboard life work well for a family is very rewarding. Plus, think of all the storage and workshop space we'll have when the kids leave the nest! 🛶

Samantha lives aboard her 1992 Hunter Legend 43, Muse, with her blended family of five and two cats in Tacoma, Washington. As much as she loves her home marina, she always enjoys getting away from the dock and sailing to local destinations in the Salish Sea and looks forward to exploring farther-off destinations when the nest is empty one day.



All Wrapped Up

A momentary mistake with a jib changes a family's summer sailing plans.

BY ALLIE HOOGERWERF

There comes a point in every adventure aboard our boat when my husband and I ask ourselves, “Why are we doing this?” This question usually arises as the toddler has a tantrum because we said no to a third lollipop, or as the baby cries and refuses to nap on a passage, or in stressful moments of docking while the children wreak havoc in the cabin below.

Undeniably, though, we find that when all is said and done, when the boat is tucked into her cradle and wrapped snugly in her cover for the winter, we say resoundingly, “I’m so glad we did that.”

While the tears and tantrums can overshadow a moment, there is nothing we would rather do than show our boys the beauty of the world — to help them slow down and appreciate the magnitude of a starry night or the sound of the water lapping against the hull. And amidst the complaining about long passages, being hot or cold, upset tummies, or any other myriad reasons to complain, our young boys crave the boat. They spend the winter making sailboats from our couch cushions, wearing life jackets in the house, using ropes to tether each other to certain pieces of furniture as they pretend

we are underway. There is magic that happens on the boat together when the whole family is snugly in our berths, able to talk to each other until we drift off to sleep.

With our 1978 C&C 30, *Juniper*, provisioned and the weather conditions looking favorable, our crew of four set out for a 10-day trip up and down the eastern shore of Lake Michigan in July 2022.

We had no solid plans, just hopes of hopping from port to port and making memories along the way. Through the seasons, we have learned that with a 1- and 4-year-old as our crew, we are mostly fair-weather sailors. It is most important to us that they grow up loving the boat instead of resenting it. For now, that means minimal waves and plenty of sunshine.

But as we sailed into our first port on that trip, I made a mistake that altered the rest of our vacation and the remainder of our summer sailing season.

The sun was high as we sailed past the Holland Harbor Lighthouse. We were feeling pretty accomplished that the kids were in great spirits after a lengthy day on the water. My husband was down in the cabin preparing dinner, and as I navigated toward the marina, I decided to pull the headsail in so I could see a bit better on a busy and shallow lake. I was met with a lot of resistance and figured that I was just weak. Rather than calling for muscle from my husband, I thought I’d use my creativity to solve the problem.

I wrapped the furling line around the winch and started to crank the headsail in — I know, I know, many of you are rolling your eyes and thinking it is common sailing knowledge that you never, ever winch your roller-furling line. Much like a horror movie when the audience can see what the characters cannot, I was unaware that this was something I should refrain from doing at all costs. It was an ordeal to get the jib in. Even with the line on the winch, I had to call my husband. We spun into the wind and cranked and pulled and grunted and pulled, and eventually we got it in.



Elliot smiles into the wind with Colin.



Sailing *Juniper* past the Holland Harbor Lighthouse, with the headsail out.

We spun our wheels debating if it was safe to motor farther south to continue with our vacation or if we needed to get home as soon as possible. We wondered if it was safe to even motor home with the kids on board. We wondered, “Why are we doing this?”

There are times when I’m struck by worry about what other people think of our life. Beyond my internal question of why we are doing this, I fear that those around us look at us and wonder why on earth we are out on the water with our young family. I wonder if mistakes like these make highly skilled sailors laugh at us just learning as we go. I question if we should put the boat up for sale and shift toward easier land-based adventures.

As I can spin down this rabbit hole of what other people think, I can also see what others can’t. I can see the sheer glee on my boys’ faces as they smile into the wind. I hear their laughter as they play in the V-berth. I see what they are learning as they watch their parents learn. There is beauty in the hardship. There

At the dock, my kids were clamoring to go to the pool and the playground. I let the headsail drama go and set out to explore with our boys. Colin, our captain, wanted to check things out with the sail before he settled into vacation mode. In the moment, I was annoyed that he couldn’t just let it go and enjoy family time. In hindsight, I am beyond glad that he knew not to give it up.

While the boys and I played and swam, Colin spent time taking photos of the standing rigging through the lens of our binoculars. This allowed him to get a close look at what was happening. He discovered that the jib halyard was wrapped around the forestay and had frayed some of its wires. It was hard to tell in the pictures just

how bad the damage was, but we knew it wasn’t good. The mood on the boat turned from a joy-filled start of a vacation to some very real fears about just how close we were to the potential of our mast coming down without notice.

Colin and I spent the evening in the cockpit devising plans. When something goes awry on the water, there are more issues at stake than just what is broken. When things go wrong, we are faced with the challenge of being the people we want to be in hard situations; what does it look like to be creative and resilient and joyful in the face of a massive setback? How do we channel our inner Lin and Larry Pardey? How do we hone our ability to

research and fix the problem, salvage the precious vacation days, and keep the family’s spirits high as we change the plan?

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Above, the top of *Juniper's* mast showing the halyard wrap.

Above right, broken wires at the top of the forestay.

are lessons I can't teach them but by example. For as much as I want to be the best version of myself in a challenging situation, I also want them to see the best version of me.

As every sailor does, we recalibrated. We formed a plan. We connected our spinnaker halyard to the bow pulpit and used it as a stabilizer. Next, we took the foresail down and used the halyard as a second reinforcement. Colin read nearly every article on the internet about halyard wrap, what to do about it, and how to prevent it. We went to sleep feeling nervous but certain that we were safe. While we do almost all the maintenance and repairs on *Juniper* ourselves, replacing the standing rigging was a task we deemed worthy of professional help. The next morning,

we called Torresen Marine in Muskegon, Michigan. They assured us they could replace the forestay and get us back on the water within a few days.

As the pieces fell into place, we turned to figuring out how to enjoy our vacation. We spent a few days in Holland and then motored up to Grand Haven for a few more days. As the forecast shifted and the wave predictions got larger, we knew it was time to run home to get *Juniper* fixed. We returned home a bit deflated. Our summer was altered that day. Some of our worries and fears were heightened by this event, and it has slowed us down and caused us to be a little more prudent. We are still coming to trust ourselves and our boat again. 🌊

Allie is a dreamer and adventure enthusiast who spends her summers sailing the coast of Lake Michigan with her husband, Colin, and their two young boys. She spends her winters working on boat projects at home and dreaming of warmer weather.



The Takeaway—AH

The struggle that we met pulling the headsail in on our vacation was not the first time we had ever felt resistance. It seemed to be getting harder and harder to pull the sail in throughout the summer. Looking back, we absolutely should have done more digging to figure out what was happening before it was too late. We should have remembered the age-old wisdom that you never winch a furling line. While we are still annoyed that we caused a costly repair and put a damper on our vacation,

we know that these are the experiences that make a sailor. We learned from the mistakes we made, and we hope you'll also learn from them. Anyone who spends a considerable amount of time on boats knows that things are bound to go wrong. Whether the boat is big or small, there are a lot of moving parts, and it will never be smooth sailing all the time. What we hope is that in the midst of these challenges we keep smiling, growing, and chasing the days of jubilation on the water.



Cruising Small and Simple

The challenges and rewards of 48 days sailing the Florida Keys

BY ROBERT VAN PUTTEN

It took hours to rig, pack, and launch the boat. We suffered in the heat and humidity, sweating through our too-heavy northern clothes. Finally, we motored out to raise the sails, only to realize that the centerboard was stuck. We had to get it down before we could sail, otherwise this was going to be a very short cruise. I swam under the boat, wrapped myself around the 400-pound keel, braced

against the hull, and tried tugging it down. No luck. Back aboard, I tried hammering it down through the cockpit scupper.

Giving up, we motored back to the launch ramp, put the boat on the trailer, and bounced it up and down the rough incline until the keel fell. On the water again, we sailed north in a dying breeze as the sun set, finally cooling off and starting to enjoy life.

We anchored near the north shore of Florida's Blackwater Sound, dropped our sails, and were instantly savaged by hordes of ravaging mosquitoes. So much for our dreams of sleeping under the stars out in the cockpit. By the time we'd made it below we were blotched and swollen from dozens of bites and spent the next hour swatting the mosquitoes trapped in the cabin with us.



Loaded up and rolling south with *Intrepid* in tow and the canoe on the roof.

What the heck were we doing here? Twenty-odd years prior, my wife, Heidi, and I built a straw-bale cottage in Washington's Selkirk Mountains and have lived there happily ever since. We have a trickle of electricity from solar panels and no indoor plumbing, and the long, dark winters can bring as much as 10 feet of snow. So perhaps it is understandable why one day last winter Heidi said, "I'd like to spend next winter on a sailboat somewhere warm."

Magic words! But where and what boat? Lake Powell, straddling the border between Utah and Arizona, would be great, only it's dried up. The Sea of Cortez might do, but we don't speak Spanish and weren't sure it was entirely safe. The Bahamas is fantastic, but we're not ready to cross the Gulf Stream. That left Florida.

Now for a boat. We're somewhat new to sailing, starting in 2016 when I built

a little flatiron skiff. Bitten by the boat-building bug, I'd followed with a bigger skiff, then a 15-foot cat yawl with a cabin, and most recently, an outrigger canoe. The cat yawl comes close and would do for one person, but not a couple.

Given one summer to build a suitable boat, what would you choose? I decided

were far too heavy.

Then along came a 44-year-old San Juan 21 MKII. It was not on my preferred list, but it was light enough, so I emailed the owner, then noticed the ad dated from 2015. Surely it was long gone. Amazingly, I got a reply. It was in their barn, and we could see her when the snow melted.



Previous page, *Intrepid* on her trailer, heading for warmer weather.

At right, the first day on the water in the Florida Keys, and Heidi is all smiles.

Heidi took an instant liking to it (this is the most important factor when buying a boat), so we sold our tractor and paid them \$3,500.

The boat was ready to sail, but we spent all summer turning the spartan racer into a comfortable cruiser. I cut away part

of a quarter berth for more legroom and space to stow a portable toilet under the cockpit. Next came insulating and lining the cabin with cedar, then installing a

galley counter with a two-burner stove. To finish off the interior, I made a medicine cabinet, storage lockers, and shelves of all kinds while Heidi reupholstered cushions and sewed hanging pouches.

Outside I added toerails, replaced the companionway slider with doors, made stern rails of galvanized pipe, and made two anchor roller platforms. Last, we sewed two lines of reef points into the mainsail. The work seemed endless, but if we were going to live in a space the size of a refrigerator box, it had better be a *nice* refrigerator box. Finally, we painted on her new name, *Intrepid*.

Now it was time to learn how to sail the boat. I knew nothing of sloops and was aghast at all the ropes and wires. We were able to spend five nights aboard that fall on Lake Roosevelt, where we learned the basics before it started snowing. We left in early December and took our time going south.

I'd found a marina near Key Largo on Blackwater Sound that would store our car and trailer for two months for \$550, and we launched *Intrepid* on Dec. 21. The first day had been hectic and the night muggy, so we started the second day with a relaxing swim to cool down. Heidi jumped in first, and standing on deck, I saw a plume of silt as something big swam out from under the boat. Not just big — it was almost as long as our canoe! I thought something was about to eat my wife for breakfast, then noticed how slowly it was moving and

the horizontal tail. Belatedly, I realized it was a manatee, huge but lazy, and a herbivore. Phew! Welcome to the Florida Keys, I thought.

We took life easy, swimming and canoeing, resting up from the long drive, and acclimating to the unaccustomed heat

on all points under just a reefed main. As we approached the marina, five dolphins frolicked around and escorted us in while people on the docks took pictures.

Upon our return to the marina, we realized that we'd been pretty ignorant about the whole venture and quickly

learned a few key lessons: Storing a vehicle at a marina doesn't mean you can leave your boat tied to the dock there all day while you go to town.

Marinas in the Keys

charge by the length of the boat *and* the towed dinghy. At the local rate of \$4 per foot, it would cost us \$150 to tie our boat and canoe up for the night, so we never did.

Like many naive Northerners, we had visions of palm trees and endless sandy beaches. Why not? I grew up on Long Island and now sail on Lake Roosevelt, and both have many perfect sandy beaches. Instead, we found endless sulfur-smelling mangroves. In the Keys, you pay to visit

Navigation in the Keys was simply, "Let's go thataway."

and humidity. The next day a short, violent squall hit while we were having lunch, and we dragged anchor. Then a cold, wild northerly passed through, and we spent two days tied to the mangroves to keep from blowing away. The wind howled in the rigging and the mast vibrated, shaking the whole boat. We wore down jackets and huddled below by the propane heater wondering if we'd lose the mast. Christmas dinner featured Spam.

Despite squally weather, we sailed back to the marina on Dec. 26 to resupply. This was the first time we'd ever reefed the mainsail, and it was good to see how handy the SJ 21 is as we scooted along

Heidi warms her hands by the propane heater on Christmas Day.





the best beaches and most of the others are private or have signs posted saying, “Protected Area, No Landing, Wading or Shell Collecting.” Also, January is the windiest month of the year down there, and if you can’t happily sail in 20-plus knots of wind, you’ll spend much of your time at anchor.

Along with lessons learned, we made all the noob mistakes: Lost the end of the halyard and watched it zip up the mast. Raised the jib upside down. Dragged improperly set anchors. Raised the tiller to open the lazarette, then lowered the tiller against the open lid, neatly prying the rudder off the pintles while sailing briskly along. Our canoe got away from us, and I had to swim for it. The second time we sailed in high winds, we ripped a line of reef points out of the mainsail. But we never made the same mistake twice and noticed we were usually the only sailboat actually sailing.

We used the motor sparingly, burning only two and a half gallons of gas in 48 days, preferring to move the sloop by sail, paddle, and kedge. This is partly because in the past, our \$200 Chinese Hangkai 3.5-hp outboard has been singularly unreliable,

and partly because it’s so noisy. On this voyage it always started, sputtered, and hiccupped right along. I love my Hangkai because it has made me a better sailor.

The Florida Keys are shallow, and running aground was common. Most cruisers didn’t dare leave the Intracoastal Waterway, but we sailed everywhere. I learned to sail with one hand on the tiller while swinging the boathook with the other to take soundings. *Intrepid* draws about 3.5 feet with the keel in the “mostly down” position and we often anchored in 45 inches, which is marked on the boathook as our minimum depth.

The first time we touched bottom was a panic party — drop sails, anchor, haul up the keel and rudder, start the motor. Soon it became routine. Heidi would hold on to the mast and rock the boat vigorously, stirring up clouds of mud as the keel swept side to side, which occasionally let us sail off. Often, she’d get into the canoe and just that much less weight would free us. Sometimes we’d paddle an anchor out and kedge off. As a last resort, we’d unbolt and crank up the keel. It helped that I was rereading *The Riddle of the Sands* by Erskine Childers at the time.

The couple’s canoe served as a trusty tender for resupplying and exploring.

Friends encouraged us to cross the Gulf Stream or set a course for Dry Tortugas National Park. I listened to reports of 6-foot seas and said, “No thanks! Maybe in a few years when I know more about this game.” For now, we were content to stay in sheltered waters. As it was, we endured five wild northerlies and once saw the telltale streaks of a Force 7 wind form around us as we sailed along. This was exciting enough for us.

We intimately explored from Card Sound down to Plantation Key and into Florida Bay. It seemed we were the only cruisers to spend time in Long Sound and similar shallow places. We usually found more water than the charts indicated and had these areas all to ourselves, seeing only small fishing boats now and then.

Our goal was not some epic voyage, but simply to spend the winter on a sailboat someplace warm. We enjoyed sailing a nimble boat all over, explored at will, beachcombed, canoed, swam in secluded spots, and slept onboard in our

cozy den instead of in some overpriced motel. Once every five to seven days, we'd grant ourselves "shore leave" not only to resupply and do laundry, but also to sightsee by car and buy a fancy meal.

Often, we swam or floated about the boat in the afternoon. Diving under the sloop to scrub its bottom became a game. We got good at it, had fun, and the hull stayed clean. After swimming we'd rinse off in the cockpit with a solar shower hanging from the boom. We carried 17 gallons of water in recycled plastic bottles. We washed our dishes one at a time over the side and gave them a skimpy freshwater rinse. Our electrical system was a folding solar panel and a few rechargeable lights.

Navigation in the Keys was simply, "Let's go thataway." We had a pocket weather radio, 30-year-old Kmart binoculars, a chartbook, a good lensatic compass, and a borrowed GPS we used only once to check our coordinates and four times to see how fast we were going for the fun of

it. The one thing we lacked was a proper boom tent for shade. We improvised with a small tarp and umbrellas. I'll make a good one before our next cruise.

We chose a canoe for a dingy because my wife hates rowing and would rather mess about in a canoe than most anything else, and the light canoe car-tops well. It was perfect for exploring and tows effortlessly, though it always swamps when towed downwind in anything but a gentle breeze.

We paddled endless shallows and tiny mangrove channels, drifting silently over manatee, rays, baby sharks, blue crabs, and all manner of fish. Its impressive turn of speed and effortless glide made paddling a couple of miles for resupply easy, so we could anchor away from marinas — good thing, since its length almost doubled what it would have cost us to stay at one. When we went ashore, we'd pick up the canoe and stash it behind a dumpster or along the wayside, and it was never disturbed.

All good things come to an end, and eventually we tired of too much sun and sultry nights trapped in the cabin by mosquitoes, and started to fondly remember the refreshing chill of the north. Then the worst storm we'd experienced hit with violently shifting Force 7 winds and torrential rains. We had to move anchorages several times during the storm and the normally dry cabin leaked, soaking our mattress. It had been an amazing adventure, but after 48 days on the water, we were done for now. The next day, we hauled the boat out and started on the long trail home. But we'll be back. We're hooked and are already planning our next voyage.

We snowshoed back to our home on Feb. 19. Inside it was 34 degrees. The cottage was spotlessly clean and seemed pleasantly spartan to me with its brick floor, whitewashed walls, and minimal

Drying out bedding on *Intrepid's* boom after a rainstorm.





The author peers through binoculars while sailing through the Keys.

furnishings. I built a roaring fire and went out to shovel off the porch and hack a trail through frozen drifts past the woodshed to the outhouse. While working, I paused and marveled at how bright and beautiful the snowy forest around us was, how fresh the clean, cold air was. I remembered how wonderful living here is, something I'd forgotten.

Over the next few days, I found myself enjoying little things like cooking standing up, drinking tea from a ceramic mug instead of plastic, and most of all, sleeping in our own bed and staying in one place for a while.

I go sailing for the fun of it. It forces me to live in the moment and provides dynamic engagement with the real, natural world, which renews my interest in life. Equally important

is coming home with fresh eyes and once again appreciating all that we have.

We can hardly wait to go cruising again. 🚤

Robert grew up on Long Island Sound, where he and a buddy sailed a Super Snark to destruction. Eventually he moved to the Pacific

Northwest, where he canoed happily for decades. One day on Ross Lake in Washington state, he and his wife were hammering the water as if killing snakes, trying to round a point in a canoe in high wind and waves, when it occurred to him that it might be nice to once again have a boat that could harness the wind.

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Kestrel Magic

A winged visitor catches a ride on a glorious late summer sail.

BY DAVID POPKEN

Early on a brisk September morning, as we motored out past the Absecon Inlet jetties on our way offshore and left Atlantic City, New Jersey, behind, the sky held my attention. It was a riveting crystalline blue, almost electric. The dry air that comes with northern fronts seems to produce this amazing atmospheric clarity. Where we live, near Houston, Texas, and the Gulf Coast, there's typically enough humidity that the sky is muted in comparison.

Our timing was especially good, as the remnants of the front gave us winds out of the northwest at a steady 15 to 18 knots. We motored well clear of the jetties and the coastline and rounded up into the wind to hoist the mainsail. After turning southward, we unfurled the jib and off we went. We were beam reaching in 3- to 5-foot seas, consistently making more than 7 knots and occasionally touching 9, with both the seas and current in our favor. Our course to Cape May was roughly due south and about 40 miles, jetty to jetty.

With only the Atlantic Ocean between us and the two inlets, it promised to be a glorious day. As a bonus, the surrounding ocean was a deep, inky blue, more steeped in color than the blue sky above. Also aboard our 1987 Sabre 38 MKI, *Orion*, was my wife, Kris, and

a good sailor and friend, Nick Stepp, from Houston. Nick and his wife, Laura, co-own with another couple a Nonsuch 30 that they keep on Clear Lake, south of Houston. While Kris and I are comfortable sailing doublehanded, we were grateful for Nick's presence, as another person onboard can be positive in so many ways.

Just before noon, a winged visitor showed up unannounced. It is not uncommon for birds, usually small birds such as swallows or wrens, to land on offshore boats for a brief rest. Amazingly, these birds are typically so unafraid

of the boat that they will land on the people who are sailing it. You can often get very close to them without any reaction from the birds, and on occasion, they will perch on a knee or a shoulder. This has happened to me several times on sailboats, and I can only imagine the need for rest overcomes their well-founded fear of humans.

This bird appeared to be a juvenile kestrel, also known as a sparrow hawk. It is the smallest and most common falcon in North America — not something you see every day offshore. It was obviously

very tired and must have been inadvertently blown offshore by the front. The wayward kestrel landed near the stern and was struggling to stay attached to the boat, as the fiberglass was much slicker than any tree branch. The wind was gusting and ruffling the bird's feathers.

Suddenly, it flew back into the air and turned toward shore, but soon faltered and dipped low to the water, then wheeled around and attempted to fly back to *Orion*. Alternating between flapping its wings and coasting with the wind to save energy, it seemed to want to come back to the boat, but the distance was not closing. It looked as if the effort to regain contact was going to be too much. We were all riveted on the scene and rooting for the bird to make a successful return.

At last, the kestrel landed again on a spot near the stern. Everyone, including the bird, breathed a sigh of relief. Then, as if realizing its position was tenuous and it needed to find something less slippery to hang onto, it flew up under the dodger and settled onto a coil of line. It stayed there for the better part of an hour, keeping a careful watch on the three of us in the cockpit. We were thrilled that it was momentarily safe, and wanted to do all that we could to help this young bird survive. We kept our movements to a minimum and did not even



The feathered passenger rests on a spare line under the dodger.



venture belowdecks, since the companionway hatch was so close to the bird's perch.

Suddenly, the kestrel took flight again, heading on a diagonal course toward land. As it did before, whether by design or just due to sheer exhaustion, it flew very close to the tops of the waves. We tracked its progress until the waves finally blocked it from our view. It was a bittersweet moment, knowing we probably helped save its life once, but also fearing the worst.

Our glorious day of sailing continued until it was time to jibe toward the Cape May jetties. Once inside, we furled the sails and motored west a mile or so to a popular anchorage in Cape May Harbor adjacent to the Coast Guard station. There were already a dozen or more boats in the anchorage, and we found a spot near the back of the fleet to drop the hook.

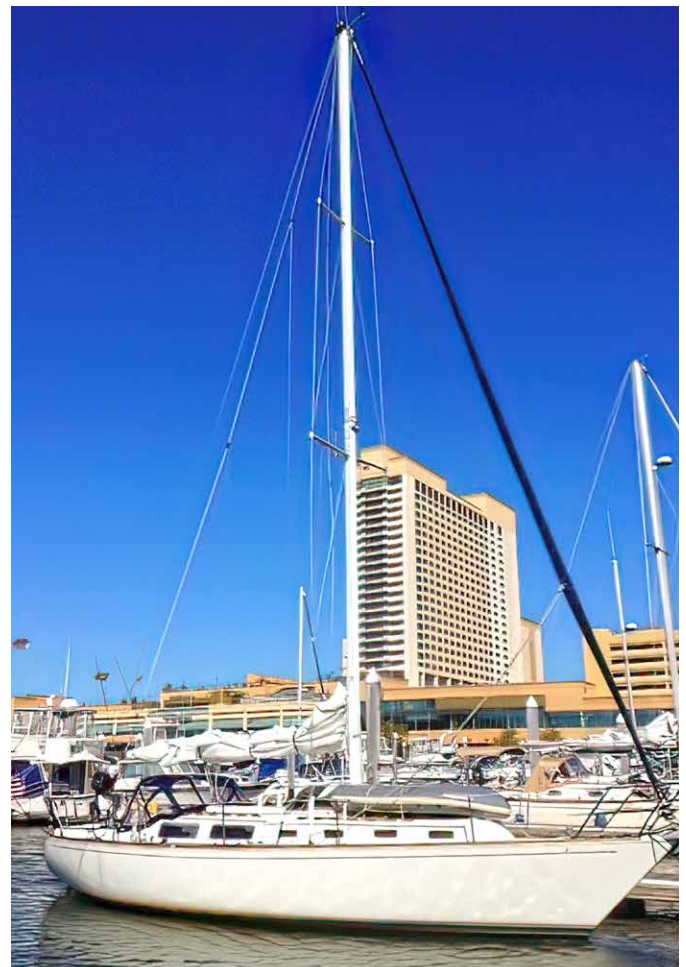
As the day neared its end, the sun was a brilliant orange-hued ball hanging near the horizon. A band of low clouds

stretched across the sky and picked up the colors from the setting sun. A gentle breeze rippled the darkened water. There were sundowners and dinner to look forward to, along with the warm feelings that come from an exhilarating day on big water. We would most certainly talk about that beautiful kestrel who shared a part of our wonderful day and fervently hope that it was safely back on land. 🦅

David Popken and his wife, Kris, have owned two good old boats since purchasing a 1978 Hunter 30 in 2002. They bought their Sabre 38MKI in 2012 and have cruised the Gulf of Mexico and Eastern Seaboard extensively, with side trips to the Bahamas. Their home port is Seabrook, Texas, but Orion is a wanderer and is currently berthed on the Back River in Hampton, Virginia.

Above, the popular anchorage near the Coast Guard Station in Cape May Harbor.

At right, Orion at her berth in Atlantic City just before departure.



The Red Queen Problem

Why taking care of things big and small on your boat makes a difference.

BY BRANDON FORD

Perusing a Craigslist ad for a 40-year-old, 40-foot sailboat, I laughed out loud when I read, “Everything works!” I said to myself, “I want that boat!”

Being the owner of a 50-year-old sailboat, I know how rare and wonderful it can be to have everything work.

Currently I have a leak in my fuel line, one LED light doesn’t work even though the ones before and after it in the electrical daisy chain light up just fine, a dimmer switch has packed it in, and there’s a leak around the mast collar and another small one in a deadlight. And that’s just the stuff down below that’s on my list. On deck there is even more to attend to. My wife has a list of her own.

Five years ago, almost everything on our 1971 Columbia 43, *Oceanus*, was brand new. A previous owner gutted the old girl and started an ambitious rebuild and refit that he pursued for three years before a bout with cancer caused him to sell the boat. After we

bought it, I thought it would take another 18 months to get her ready to cruise. It took twice that.

When we bought any piece of gear, it was the best we could find and usually brand new. Even then, a shocking percentage of the gear didn’t work right out of the box. But finally, we declared

Oceanus finished, which was more a decision than an actual state of being. The truth is, a cruising sailboat with all of her complicated systems — propulsion, steering, sailing, electrical generation and storage, electronics, navigation, plumbing, waste management, the list goes on — is never really finished.



Then comes the real mother: Mother Nature. And entropy — or what scientists call “The Red Queen Problem.” The name comes from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, when the Queen of Hearts says to Alice, “... we must run as fast as we can, just to stay in place. And if you wish to go anywhere you must run twice as fast as that.”

A more sinister and humorous take is resistentialism, a theory positing that inanimate objects exhibit hostile behavior toward humans. Coined by British humorist Paul Jennings, the term blends the Latin *res* (thing) and French *résister*, (to resist) with existentialism. The slogan of resistentialism is “Les choses sont contre nous”

approach, however, is one I learned from my grandfather.

My grandfather kept a small herd of cattle, rising every day before dawn to

with the boys or take us kids out to the flat to see the cattle.

My grandpa was a good husbandman to his cattle. He did something every

day so things didn’t get out of hand. If I am to have any hope of getting ahead of the Red Queen Problem, or at least keeping up, I need to follow

The truth is, a cruising sailboat is never really finished.

his example and do something daily to improve the boat — not just to repair it, but also to prevent problems. I tried to do that during our two-year voyage from Oregon to Southern California, Mexico, and Hawaii. We were pretty successful at it. *Oceanus* looked good and most things worked most of the time.

It was fun, too. About once a week, my wife and I would grab a rag and a blue scrubby (Pro tip: the blue ones don’t leave scratches like the green ones). We would jump into the warm, clear water of the Pacific and give the old girl a scrub. We called it our yard work. It kept our boot stripe from looking scummy and prevented grass and other growth from fouling her

bottom. Looking down, we watched spotted eagle rays and schools of jacks swimming by, or goatfish and puffers nibbling at tasty crustaceans uncovered by our anchor chain.

Sunny mornings were best for getting something done on deck or working on the rig. Even crawling into the engine room wasn’t so bad before the day got too hot. Following up with a soak and a snorkel mitigated even a dirty, nasty job.

Keeping the Red Queen at bay is more challenging now that we are

feed them. He counted the cows as they gathered around the bales of hay. With a practiced eye, he would check each cow and calf. Then he would feed the bull and the steers, watching as they walked and ate. If he saw a problem, he attended to it as soon as he could. After feeding the herd, he did something to improve his pastureland, fence line, or stackyard, or attended to the hundred other things that needed doing on his land.

At the only cafe in the town where my grandfather lived, one old boy told me he wished he could get as much done in a day as my grandpa. Yet grandpa always had time to have coffee



or “Things are against us.”

While it often seems that way to me, especially with electrical and plumbing issues, there’s nothing to do but surrender and fix the darn problems when things break, leak, or simply don’t work. A better





living the easy life as liveaboards in a nice marina in Washington state. We don't take the boat out as much and we don't have to be constantly on guard, ready to move anchorages if a Kona wind blows up. I confess, I've let things slip.

To make matters worse, my wife and I recently finished building a small apartment above my son's garage. It's a refuge for us during the worst of the dark, cold, "North-wet" winters. It's only about an hour away from the boat, but the distance does limit our boat work during the winter. We visit *Oceanus* at least once a week and work on our list. Still, not living aboard full time does make it easy to let the Red Queen have her way.

A few years back, a Jeanneau 42 moored a few slips down from us in an Oregon marina had seagulls nesting on its radar arch. You would need a snow shovel to clean out the guano, feathers, and shells in the cockpit. The seagull couple raised three chicks on the boat

one summer, and the Portland attorney who owned the boat — and whom we never saw — was none the wiser.

I joked with my wife that I should mock up some U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service stationery and notify the owner that his boat had been declared a seagull sanctuary and he was not allowed aboard until the chicks fledged. That would get him down to his neglected boat, I thought.

As much as we joked about it, my heart hurt for the Jeanneau. Under all that guano was a beautiful boat that someone, at one time, loved. Boats are about as close to a living thing as any inanimate object can get. They move, groan, are temperamental at times, and have unique personalities. They also need to be cared for.

It's easy for me to believe that boats have a soul or spirit. Even when singlehanded, I never feel alone. I hear the boat conversing with me. I hear or feel what she needs through the nudge of the tiller or the rustle of a sail. Boats,

more than almost anything else made by man, are infused with, as D.H. Lawrence wrote, "Soft life ... (and) are awake through years with transferred touch, and go on glowing ... with the life of forgotten men who made them."

I often think about those men who built my boat half a century ago. I would like them to see it now — still sailing, still a comfortable home, well loved, and ready for another 50 years, despite the Red Queen. ▲

Brandon Ford, a former reporter, editor, and public information officer, and his wife, Virginia, a registered nurse, sailed from Newport, Oregon, to California and Mexico, and then spent 13 months cruising seven of the eight main Hawaiian Islands during 2016 and 2017. Before their cruise they spent three years refitting their 1971 Columbia 43, Oceanus. Lifelong sailors, they continue to live aboard Oceanus part time and cruise the Salish Sea from their moorage in Olympia, Washington.



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Y-Valve Win

Creating an engine water bypass for easy winterization

BY LEE MUELLER

Our 1978 Tartan 27-2, *Dawn*, has a single-cylinder Farymann engine that is direct-cooled by lake water. The engine has its quirks but has treated us well. As with most boats that sail on Lake Michigan, we need to haul out each fall and winterize the engine to avoid freeze damage.

To winterize, I leave the engine in the haulout well until the last possible moment to ensure the engine is nice and warm. Immediately before the boat is lifted out of the water, I shut everything down and open several small valves on the engine to drain as much water as possible.

Theoretically, I would then remove the engine water hose from the through-hull, place it in a bucket of antifreeze, and run the engine to pump the antifreeze throughout the cooling system as quickly as I can once I'm out of the water. Like many "simple" projects, removing the engine water hose is an exercise in frustration, at best. Most years, I end up rage-cutting the hose, completing my winterization, and leaving it for future Lee to deal with.

Unfortunately, each year the hose gets shorter and shorter, until eventually it must be replaced — at which point I'm stuck taking the flywheel off the engine, removing the water pump, and going through the not-so-enjoyable exercise of replacing the full hose on a mostly uncooperative water pump.

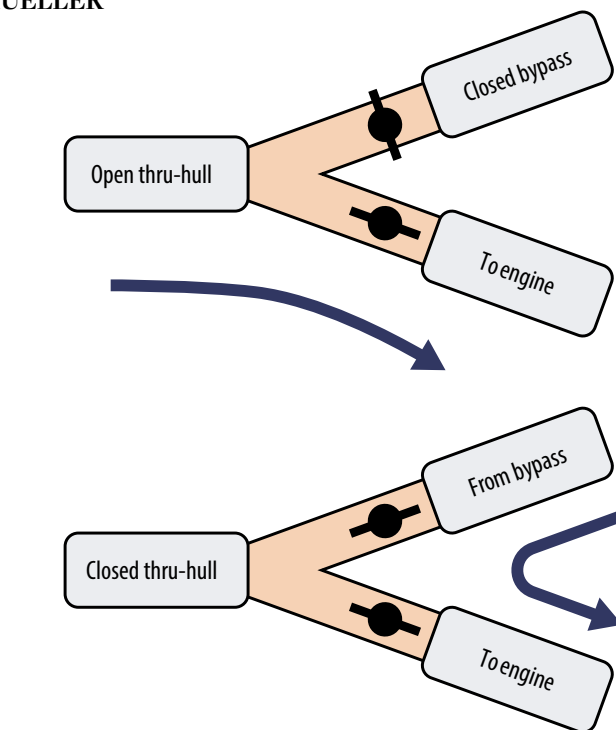
Accordingly, I started dreaming of a solution that would improve the winterization process and prevent having

to reattach hoses each spring. I recalled reading about an approach that involved adding a bypass to the engine water hose to allow for easy winterization. It seemed like a reasonable solution, and I was willing to give it a try.

In preparation, I bought a simple, sturdily built, brass three-way shut-off valve for less than \$20 on Amazon. It even came with hose clamps! The valve is shaped like a Y, with valves on both arms of the Y, which allows you to direct water flow in one of two directions. I already had additional hose in the boat project scrap pile that I could use.

Dawn's engine water through-hull is located beneath the galley sink and is fairly easy to access. I mounted the three-way valve to the side of the cabinet wall with a mounting hook and zip tie. I made sure the valves would either go to the engine or a new length of hose, enabling the option to use either source for water (or antifreeze) passage to the engine. I attached a length of hose from the top of the three-way valve to the engine water pump. Then I attached another length from one end of the valve to the through-hull, and another length from the opposite side of the valve to a long pigtail of hose.

Now, by choosing which valves I open or close, I can either have the engine draw water from the through-hull, or I can place the excess hose in a bucket of antifreeze, open and close the appropriate valves, and easily draw antifreeze from a bucket.



I installed the three-way valve so the valve connections were on the hose leading to the water pump and the bypass hose. I figured I could already control flow from the through-hull via the seacock, so I did not need another valve there. In the future, I will probably rotate these connections so that there is no valve on the hose leading to the engine, but rather, the valve is on the hoses leading to the bypass and the seacock. Ultimately, I have been unable to determine a circumstance in which I would want to shut off flow entirely to the engine, so a valve is not needed on that connection.

Last fall, I was able to use this approach when winterizing the engine, and it worked beautifully. There was no rage-cutting of hoses or scraping of elbows to reattach a short hose to the

Above, set for normal operation, pulling water from the lake to the engine.

Below, set for winterization, pulling water from the bypass (in a bucket of antifreeze) to the engine.

through-hull, only amazement at how well a job I had done. And for less than \$20 in materials and 30 minutes of work, future Lee is now thankful for past Lee, rather than cursing his name. I'll buy myself a beer for that. 🍷

Lee Mueller and Traci Montgomery sail their 1978 Tartan 27-2, Dawn, out of Whitehall, Michigan. Over the last six seasons, they've been slowly restoring and improving her. Each summer, they can be found sailing around Lake Michigan. Their projects can be followed on Instagram at @SV_Dawn.

Hatboxes For Hoses

Taming the lazarette mess with easy-to-make mesh bags

BY ASHLEY GREMEL

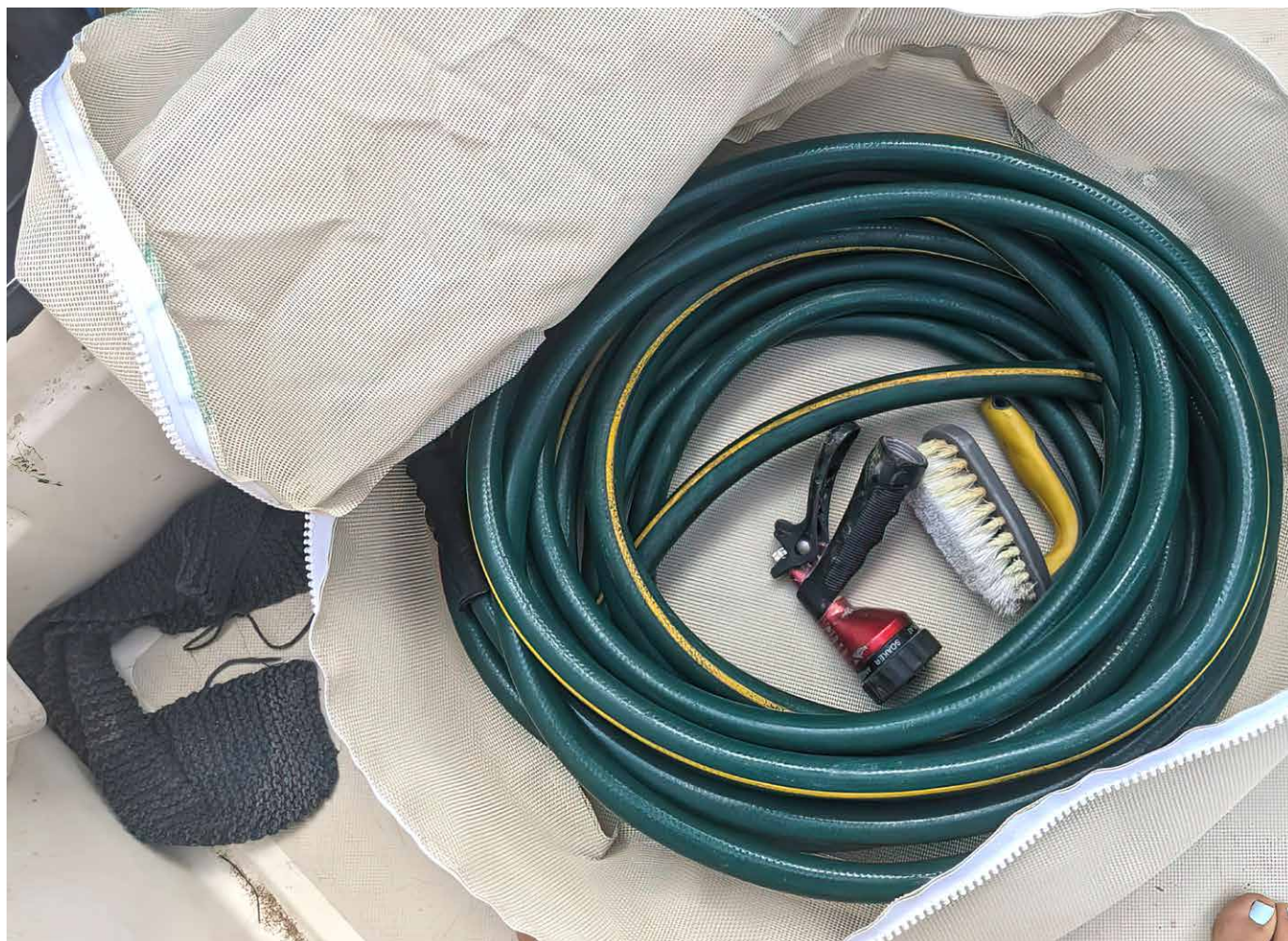
Having a home base in a marina allows a sailor to spread out a bit. Lesser used items can go in a dock box or garage, dinghies park in a special space, and hoses and shore-power cords can hang near the slip. Dock steps can be modified to shelter additional things, and the store is never far away for resupplying.

When a boat makes the shift from dock life to transience, all important items need to be taken aboard and tucked away. On our Pearson 365, *Azimuth*, we have a technique we call “massaging things into the boat,” and it just might be a form of art. We aim to store safety-related items like storm sails, fire extinguishers, and personal

flotation devices in the easiest-to-grab areas. Tools, regularly used supplies, and important spares get the next best storage areas. Spares of spares, keepsakes, and the few unused items go to the least accessible spots. When out cruising, we often shift modes between anchorages, marinas, ocean sailing, and protected waterways. Each of these

conditions drastically changes which items should be on top. I enjoy the shuffle as a way to get us situated.

When we gave up our slip in Alameda, California, for a long voyage to the East Coast of the United States, our shorepower cord and freshwater hose seemed to constantly get tangled or buried, or simply be in



the way. We occasionally dragged our feet on plugging in and filling up while images of wrestling with the lazarettes danced in our heads.

Inspiration hit in San Diego as we did a final round of preparation before leaving the country. I am an avid sewist and wanted to use up some of the Sunbrella and Phifertex mesh pieces squirreled away in storage under our V-berth. While we still lived in San Francisco Bay, I had received a carload of remnants when Hogin Sails moved to a new loft. Most had been gobbled up by other projects and friends, but a few quality pieces remained.

I had made small bags to manage smaller power cords in the past and decided to try my hand at a hatbox style design for these larger hoses and cords. This would keep them coiled without tying them up and make them easier to spot in our deep lazarettes.

The pattern came together fairly quickly, aided by dock space at Seaforth Marina. I laid out the hose and power cords and measured their diameter and height. I added 4 inches for seam allowance and some slack and cut out two circles and one rectangle per bag. I pulled out two leftover heavy duty plastic zippers from another project and got to sewing.

First, I seamed the short ends of the rectangle together, then sewed one side of the zipper onto the long edge. I sewed the other side of the zipper to one of the circle pieces. I recommend a zipper length of at least three-quarters of the circumference to allow the bag's top to flop open. Next, I seamed the other

Previous page, **the bags provide handy storage for nozzles, brushes, and more.**

Right, **the newly made bags for water and power cords are ready to be tucked into the large lazarettes of the author's Pearson 365, Azimuth.**

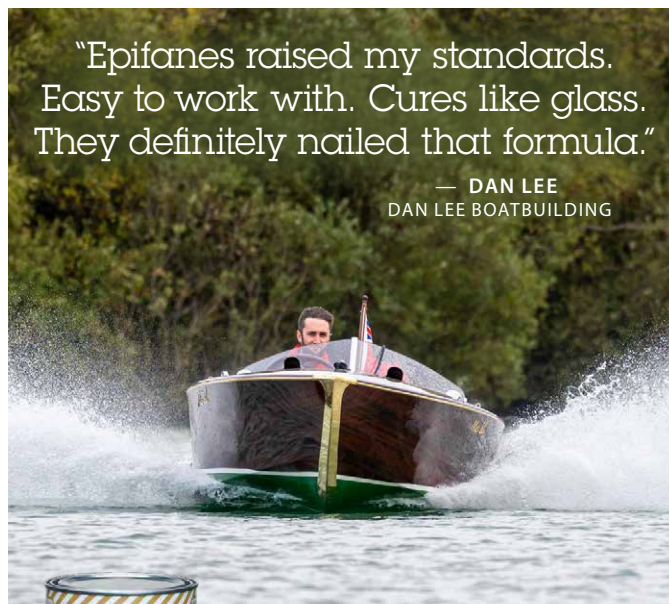
circle piece to the non-zipped long edge to create the base.

Then I zipped up the bag and added a short seam to close the gap between the two zippered ends.

For a finishing touch, I cut out appliques of a water droplet and power plug from a contrasting color of Sunbrella and zigzag-stitched them to the bags to easily tell the difference.

This simple solution has served us well in countless stops along the way. Even if the hose or cord gets buried, it is still easily spotted and wrestled out of the lazarette. We also store accompanying items in the space left in the middle of the coiled hose and cord. The water droplet bag includes a hose sprayer attachment, boat soap, and rags, while the power bag holds shorepower cable adapters and an extension cord. 🐟

Ashley Gremel is a writer, maker, and problem-solver. She recently completed a sailing journey from San Francisco to the Chesapeake Bay with her husband, Scott Racette, and their salty cat, Cypress. The trio plans to settle down in Richmond, Virginia. Ashley writes weekly at cloudsformoverland.substack.com.



nothing else like it, really, and that makes it easier for less experienced applicators, too. It is the user-friendly varnish."

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Continued from page 5



Smooth and fast, the Luders 33 Crow goes to weather much better than her Disp/Length and SA/Disp numbers would suggest.

I own a 1966 Luders 33, *Crow*, hull number 10, which I bought in 2017 and cruise locally here in Maine, and also race. The boat has been across the Atlantic, to the Caribbean, around Newfoundland twice that I know of, and on many other adventures.

Though it was designed to meet the CCA (Cruising Club of America) rule, as are many others of that vintage, it sails easily, is safe and sea-kindly, is solid, can survive incidents many newer boats cannot, and races very well. A 24-foot waterline and her heavy displacement are disadvantages downwind in light air, but when the boat heels where she likes it, that effective waterline grows, and so does the speed. A 35-degree heel is perfect and comfortable.

The wording accompanying the graphic with Dan Spurr's piece reads "400: Poor sailing but excellent motoring,

sea-kindliness and livability," with the implication I have read all too often that you can be a "race boat" only if you're under 200. I can attest that my boat does not sail poorly!

My 413 Disp/Length and 15.38 SA/Disp will tell you something different, and yes, I do use the PHRF handicap when racing here, as does everyone else. I can get to and exceed my hull speed at under 15 knots of wind and match boats upwind that are far lighter and sailed by those more "qualified," for lack of a better word. I also race the boat singlehanded.

Bill Luders designed this 413 boat to race and cruise, and it has done both very well for the last 57 years, with many more to go. See www.luders33.com.

Note that the photo was taken at the perfect time for the bow wave, which didn't impact the boat speed at all.

—Butler Smythe
Blue Hill, Maine

Freshwater Ratio

Great article on ratios and specs! One very small notation that Great Lakes

rating groups get wrong is the sail area/displacement ratio: "Displacement in pounds is divided by 64 to determine cubic feet" of displacement. To note, the ratio displacement is in cubic feet; therefore, in fresh water, we need to divide by 62.4, the density of fresh water! The density of salt water is 64 pounds per cubic foot.

—Howard Riley
Detroit, Michigan

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Boats for Sale

**Tartan 27**

1968. Hull #374. Great design. Loves a stiff breeze. Many upgrades: sails, roller furling, traveler, cushions, electronic ignition, electric fuel pump, exhaust manifold and starter, all since 2000. Late version Atomic 4. In water and ready to go sailing. Located in Metedeconk River, Brick, NJ. \$5,000.

Robert A Riker
908-370-2019
briker1518@yahoo.com

**Atkin Gaff Schooner 33**

1957. Fully restored '12-18. Ready to cruise again to Maine. White oak sawn frames replaced and 3" floor timbers all fastened with bronze bolts. Lower planks replaced w/Atlantic white cedar. Lead keel with bronze bolts. All planks refastened with silicon bronze screws. New cypress deck beams. New deck: two 1/2" layers of mahogany marine plywood and epoxied fiberglass cloth. Mast steps reinforced w/3/8" stainless plates. Diesel engine rebuilt '12. Survey from Gray and Gray yacht brokerage. Westerly, RI. Reduced \$25,500.

Jim De Reynier
860-305-1582
Jimder40@Gmail.com

**Vineyard Vixen 34**

1984. Diesel auxiliary sloop, Martha's Vineyard shipyard. Traditional beauty, strong, seaworthy, and in excellent condition. See Jan/Feb 15 *GOB* issue feature boat article. Accommodates 4/5 in 2 cabins. Lottsburg, VA. \$22,900.

Broker Chris Barton
508-452-6068
scyacht11@gmail.com

**Catalina 25**

1986. Fixed keel, standard rig, inboard diesel, port and starboard settees. Need to sell due to family obligations. Please contact me if you would be interested in looking at her or getting additional information. No trailer. Everything you need to sail away. She's ready to go. List of items and additional photos available upon request. On St. Johns River, Astor, FL. \$7,000.

Douglas Day
352-213-1155
dougladayfl@yahoo.com

**Hunter 28.5**

1987. Designed and created with space, speed, and comfort in mind. Boat handles well with its shoal draft keel and is a pleasure to sail. All original sails and spin-

aker. 150% genoa added in '18. Yanmar 16-hp diesel, upgraded Raymarine electronics, standing headroom cabin, head with shower. Lease of current slip at the marina is transferable to new buyer. Located on Lake Ouachita, AR. \$9,500.

Dean Morton
515-238-4467
Deanmorton9@gmail.com

**Bayliner Buccaneer 27**

1976. Twin-engine sailboat w/ trailer. Extras and inventions! If you're a Gideon sailor, it's equipped for you. If you leave a message, speak loudly and slowly. Milton-Freewater, OR. \$15,000.

Stephen Strickland
541-938-3226

**Bristol 29.9**

1978 Sloop. Very good cond. LOA 29'11", beam 10'2", draft 4'4". Yanmar SB12 1-cyl diesel, runs exc. Newer standing rigging, backstay tensioner. Wheel steering, GPS plotter, AIS rec, VHS w/remote mic. Newer main/dutchman, roller furler, spinnaker. Efficient galley, head, shower, etc. Lots of storage and extras. Herreshoff design; well-built and maintained cruiser. South NH. Motivated owner. \$13,750 or best reasonable offer.

Jim Grenier
603-689-5129
jim@jimgrenier.com

**Grampian 30**

1974 classic sloop for sale by owner. In excellent condition. A "lot of boat for the money," according to *Cruising World*. A good cruising boat, sleeps 6 with quarter berth, 6'4" headroom, two-burner propane stove, bow and stern pulpits with lifelines, twin track roller furling with genoa, refurbished main, tiller pilot self-steering, depth sounder, GPS, magnetic compass, Atomic 4 gas engine. North Channel Yacht Club in Spragge, Ontario. Includes cradle and mooring at the club. Spragge, ON. \$7,500.

Aubrey Millard
647-985-1949, 705-849-3836
svveledaiv@hotmail.com

**C&C Landfall 35**

1981. S/N 003. An ideal couple's cruiser. Single owner, professionally maintained. Always a freshwater boat. New main, asymmetric spinnaker, electric windlass, 500AH house battery, 1kW inverter, Garmin GPS map and radar, autopilot, refrigerator-freezer. Signet instrumentation found nowhere else. Steel cradle, ShipShape custom cover, Avon dinghy, Honda 4-cycle outboard. Docked in northern Wisconsin. \$40,000.

Dean Hedstrom
651-490-0109
dean@dkhedstrom.com

Continued on next page

Boats for Sale

**Pearson 30**

1977. Owned by the boatyard owner. Beautiful condition. Custom dodger. Latest version A4 FWC. PerTronix ignition. Starts instantly. SS shaft, spurs, PSS shaft seal. Rewired and replumbed 12 years ago. Raytheon radar, Raymarine C80 plotter/color sounder, SH VHF. 5-year-old 130% genoa on Harken furler. Mainsail maintained in good condition. Water heater, battery charger, 2 group 27 deep cycle batteries. Edson steering, upgraded Moyer Marine water pump on freshwater side. New LED spreader lights, ground tackle fenders, jack stands. Edgecomb, ME. \$9,500.

John Traina
207-380-6725
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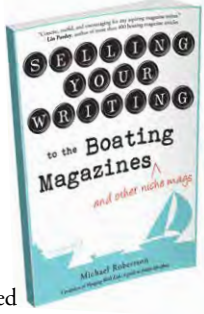


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Sailor's Block

A mariner grapples with an unfamiliar reluctance — and finds the cure.

BY CRAIG MOODIE

The grayer I get, the more of a serenity-seeking sailor I become. Or is “serenity-seeking” another way of saying “fearful”? That might explain my reluctance to head out to our 12-foot catboat for the first sail of the season.

We put *Finn* in the water later than usual: Our son's wedding in Chicago consumed the early summer, along with most of the year. Through it all, I itched to grip our boat's lines and tiller, feel the pulse of the water beneath the hull, hear the sail thrum on a reach. Not until mid-July could we find the time to sail.

We arrived at my mother-in-law's shingled cottage, “The Fisherman's Shack,” in Megansett on Cape Cod the night before I planned to take the boat out, and rose early to a gem of a morning — sun-dazzled waters, skies flecked with a fleet of silver and cream cloud hulls, and light airs.

In the decade-plus that we've owned *Finn*, such an ideal morning would have spurred me to vault out of bed, throw on swimming trunks and sailing cap, and dash down to the beach. Once there, I'd plunge into the water and swim out to the boat. I'd sail for as long as my arms and knees and coccyx could take the punishment *Finn's* wooden cockpit and coaming could dish out. Coffee? Breakfast? Sunscreen? Why waste time? As the bumper sticker says, I'd rather be sailing.

But now I sat on the porch nursing a cup of coffee, eyeing

Buzzards Bay. A queasiness crept into my stomach. Out in the mooring field, our boat pranced as if to say, “What's the holdup?”

Indeed, what was wrong? “Better go now,” my wife, Ellen, exhorted me. “You know it'll blow later.”

I balked. I drank another cup of coffee. Then another. I made breakfast for her. I made breakfast for myself. I shaved.

Go, I told myself. Already I could see the once sheet-metal-slick water crawling with cat's-paws. A Buzzards Bay version of a trade wind, the summertime sou'westers around here build as the sun climbs, often puffing so hard that sailing in our yachtlet becomes a fool's errand. Putting on sunscreen was my last act of procrastination. I had no excuse left. What was this knot of reluctance tightening within me? Why was I quailing?

I was suffering from sailor's block, that's why — nervousness that I would bungle the handling of the boat even after sailing her hundreds of times over the years. Other aging mariners I've talked to say they've become more cautious with age, too. My sister, who sails a Rhodes 19 with my brother-in-law, confesses to having grown less willing to push the boat in the challenging conditions she used to embrace.

But I frog-marched myself down to the beach, my heart pistoning within my chest in anticipation and trepidation. I knew I had to go, and the

moment I surfaced with a gasp in the clear sun-rippled water, my reluctance ebbed. I stroked out to the boat, gagged on a mouthful of seawater courtesy of a frisky wave, shrugged off the sight of the shivers on the building chop, hoisted the sail with trembling hands, and dropped away from the mooring.

For three hours I horsed *Finn* around in a breeze that built from 12 to 15 to 20 knots. On one tack I saw a Cape Cod Knockabout, a reef in her main, leaving the inner harbor to join a race off Scraggy Neck. A reef — now that would have been a good idea. But I became so absorbed in the act of keeping my small craft trim in the heaves of wind, so exhilarated at my success, that I forgot about my case of nerves.

No matter that I got set into the shallows and bumped a submerged rock, weathered an unintentional jibe, and suffered a bruised elbow and bloodied knees. With my sailor's block shattered, my sailing ardor returned. The cure for sailor's block? Go sailing.

I put *Finn* back on the mooring and buttoned her up. Then I went

to the foredeck, now reluctant to leave. Salt-encrusted, sunbaked, sore ... I bounded with *Finn* in a state of bliss as the Knockabouts bashed through the whitecaps. Finally, I let myself over the side to backstroke sea-otter fashion so I could watch her yaw and pitch on the foaming chop. Relief buoyed me. My lust for sailing had returned.

A serenity-seeking sailor I might be, but when I venture out in boisterous conditions again, I'll remind myself: Reef the sail, skipper. 🍃

Craig Moodie lives with his wife, Ellen, in Massachusetts. His work includes A Sailor's Valentine and Other Stories and, under the name John Macfarlane, the middle-grade novel Stormstruck!, a Kirkus Best Book.





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