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Issue 146: September/October 2022

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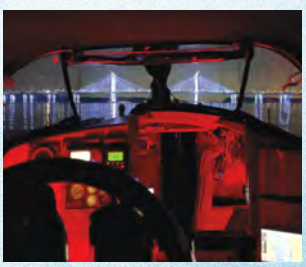
Good Old Boat

Issue 146: September/October 2022

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS



On the Cover

The Tappan Zee Bridge over the Hudson River takes on a surreal glow as Tom Alley and his crew aboard the Alberg 35 *Tomfoolery* approach New York City in the early-morning hours. Now officially called the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge, the twin spans were formerly named for the river crossing denoted by 17th-century Dutch settlers. Read Tom's story about the journey on page 34. Photo by Mike Crouse.

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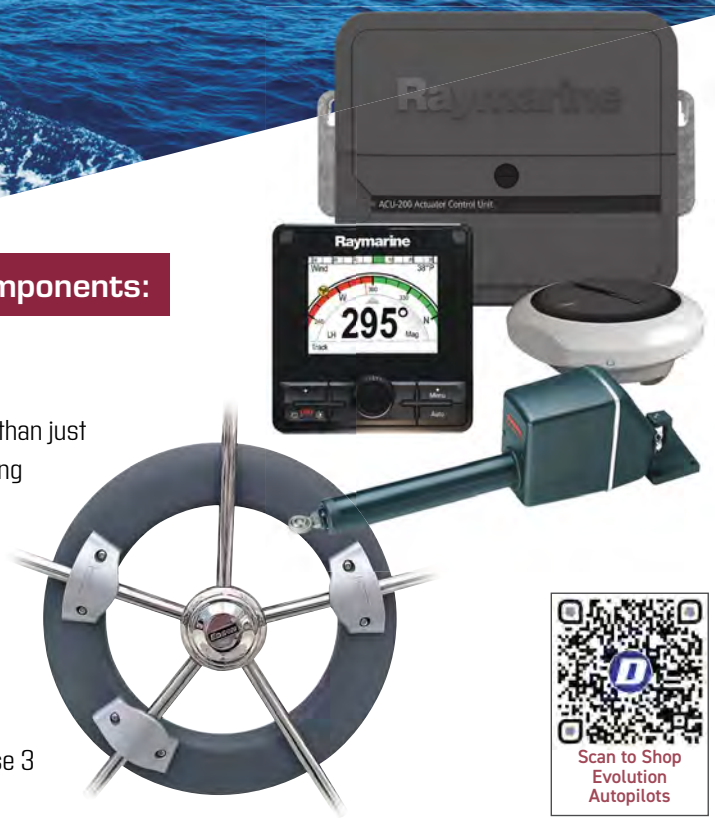

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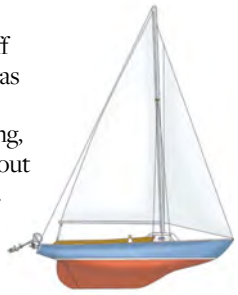
The sailing magazine for the rest of us.

Contributing Boats

A few boats behind the stories in this issue.

***Leota*, 1971 Pearson Ensign**



"The Ensign has brought me back to my early days of sailing for the pure fun of it. Just this afternoon, my partner, Nancy, and I had her off the mooring in five minutes, and in a perfect southwest breeze she was strutting her stuff as we had a great sail through Newport Harbor to some appreciative nods. We had a leisurely lunch back on the mooring, and when I looked back as we rowed ashore, I felt pride and joy without running through a list of maintenance tasks I should be doing on her. That's a good day of sailing!"

Designer: Carl Alberg
Owner: David Sharp
Home Port: Newport, Rhode Island
Fun Fact: The Ensign was based on an Alberg-designed, MORC-class 22-footer called the Electra.
Read about the restoration on page 18.

***Juniata Lily*, 1979 Gulfstar 37**

"We upsized from a 27-footer. The first time we got to experience her handling big air and a long swell was broad to deep reaching across the Chesapeake Bay with 18-22 knots blowing up the Bay. Really feeling the power and balance of this boat in comparison to a 27-footer that weighed 5,000 pounds was pretty exhilarating."

Designer: Vince Lazarra
Owners: Bob and Laura Taylor
Home Port: Worton, Maryland
Fun Fact: Bob's natal waterway is Pennsylvania's Juniata River, where tiny trout lilies grow.
Catch the hardware rebed hack on page 16.

***Cheechako*, 1981 Catalina 22**

"Designed for recreational sailors, the boat was towable and two people could easily step the mast. It was also easy for an amateur to maintain and repair. I experimented with virtually every type of repair technique on this boat, and it usually forgave me. It really is the Volkswagen of sailboats, and you can still get virtually any part ever made for it."

Designer: Frank Butler
Owner: Brad Stevens
Home Port: Mattapoisett, Massachusetts
Fun Fact: Brad has since upgraded to a Catalina 36 MkII.
Wondering how long to let bottom paint cure? Learn one answer on page 48.

***La Senda*, 1983 Cape Dory 31**

"We love how well she tracks when sailing; on a beam reach she's quite a delight and steers herself effortlessly. She also keeps us super cozy when aboard...We left the name, as we believe it portrays her personality and our mission with the boat beautifully. *La Senda* translates to The Path in Spanish. So, she's our wonderful path."

Designer: Carl Alberg
Owners: Kirra and Nathan Davison-Lamb
Home Port: Ventura, California
Fun Fact: Kirra and Nathan eloped onboard.
Read about making a sailing dream reality on page 31.

Bits, Bobs, and Boat Shows

BY ANDY CROSS

Poking and picking at a corner of worn teak on the port seat behind *Yahtzee*'s helm, I slowly test the wood's integrity. Unexpectedly, a slightly upturned slat breaks free in a crack and a splinter.

"Well, looks like we'll be stripping all of this off far sooner than expected," I say to my wife, Jill, with a shrug and laugh.

In the moment, I'm not surprised. We both knew this day was coming. The question of when was answered: Now.

Built in 1984, our Grand Soleil 39 was, fortunately, one of several that did not receive a full teak deck. It did, however, come with a teak cockpit. According to documents I found on the boat after buying her a decade ago, I learned that the port and starboard seats forward of the helm and companionway entrance had been replaced a few years prior. But the helm seats and coaming had not, and now more than ever, it shows.

I say all this not to complain about the wood itself or the inevitably thankless task ahead of stripping it off and fairing the fiberglass underneath. Rather, my quandary is in finding a suitable replacement that will not only look smart but last for years to come.

Tired teak isn't the only thing on the list that needs a refresh (is it ever?).

After sailing *Yahtzee* hard from the high latitudes of Alaska south to the tropics, we can see that upgrade season is upon us. The reefer box and its components could use reinsulating or replacing. It might be time for new electronics. And the cushions in our saloon are far past their use-by date. But what components do we replace them with—which woods, fabrics, and foams?

To one extent or another, we've all been here before, haven't we? Some part of our beloved boat needs to be upgraded, and while we have a pretty good idea of what we want, at the same time, we don't.

That's just one of the reasons I'm looking forward to attending the U.S. Sailboat Show in Annapolis, Maryland, in October. What better place to look for gear, gadgets, and materials; to touch them, inspect their various qualities, and talk to actual humans face-to-face about what makes them the right choice for my boat—or not. Maybe there's something more suitable, and the boat show is a smorgasbord of possibilities and imagination.

At the show, you're likely to find me looking at electronics, teak replacements, and various rigging bits and bobs. I'll also be walking on boats of all types to get ideas and inspiration for my own.

Like me, most of you won't be attending the show to buy a brand-new boat. Far from it. We're there for the camaraderie and community. And we're there for the things that will make our boats more comfortable, beautiful, safe, and prepared to sail than they ever have been.

Senior Editor Wendy Mitman Clarke (far left) greets Marissa and Chris Neely of S/V *Avocet*, who stopped by the *Good Old Boat* booth during the U.S. Sailboat Show in 2021.

Small Boats Rule, 63 Blue Jays, and What Makes a Good Old Boat?

Swallows and Amazons

I was delighted to read Wendy Mitman Clarke's The View From Here column "In Praise of Small Wonders" (July/August 2022). It included a childhood memory for me. I also read the *Swallows and Amazons* series at about the same age as her son. I am convinced also that is when I was bitten by the sailing bug almost 50 years ago now. I have my grandparents to thank for starting that dream (since they gave me the books), something that continues long after their passing. I think that many of us are still imagining ourselves as youngsters on an adventure. I am now pursuing it in a 22-foot Nonsuch on the western coast of Florida, a much warmer spot than those lakes! I am curious if other readers/sailors also read those books?

—**Chris Jones**, *Cat-a-list*, Gulfport, Florida

Abandoned Boats and Insurance Perspectives

I am a longtime subscriber who recommends your magazine to all of my sailing acquaintances. I recently came across this BBC online article, *bbc.com/news/uk-wales-60375801*, and I thought that it might interest you and other readers. While I believe in good old boats, nonetheless for many of them there comes a time when a boat has to end its sailing life. Over the past few years, I have seen more and more old boats being forgotten or abandoned in our local yards. I have also seen an increasing number of news articles about communities facing a growing issue of abandoned boats, especially in more southern waterways of the United States.

This article makes a very cogent point that the people with the least amount of disposable income are the ones most likely to own very old boats and to be forced to abandon them because they can neither afford storage nor disposal fees. This is the tip of the iceberg, and if we as a boating community do not develop viable and practical disposal methodologies, then very expensive and arbitrary rules are likely to be forced upon us.

I am currently in the second year of fully refitting a 1975 Ontario 32, which is definitely a great old boat. Given the money that I am sinking into her and the anticipated replacement value of a fully refitted classic, the recent articles and attention to the issues of insurance have been of great interest ("Unsure About Insurance" and "Insurance 101," May/June 2022). However, I must also say that some of the issues I have uncovered and been forced to correct on my own boat have given me a much greater sympathy for the insurance companies' reluctance to insure older boats. Age and wear can take installations that were rock solid when new and turn them into dangerous liabilities. While I am fortunate enough to have the experience, ability, and resources (and a very patient spouse) to restore my aquatic mistress to better-than-new condition, I have also been forced to realize that our local harbors here on Lake Ontario are full of old boats whose owners may not have the practical knowledge, time, or resources to identify such problems and rectify them. Amid the sea of insurance complaints from frustrated boat owners, this perspective did not get much acknowledgment. We truly need a better method for evaluating and valuing good old boats.

—**Marcus Opitz**, *Everdina*, Oakville, Ontario

Reader Lee Cook, sailing his Shannon Shoalsailer 32, *Bay Breeze,* grabbed this image of the daymark at the junction of Sister Creek and the Atlantic Ocean in Marathon, Florida. Sister Creek is one of the entrances to the popular liveaboard harbor and cruising sailor hangout of Boot Key Harbor.

Keeping it Clean

Every month I read almost every English-language sailing magazine published. *Good Old Boat* always offers something practical I can use on my 1987 Beneteau First 405.

Homer Shannon's story called "Waste? Not." (March/April 2022) about a holding tank sensor was terrific. For less than $10 on eBay, I bought the sensor and indicator lights and solved a dark and disgusting issue that is always on the mind of any skipper with holding tanks. For those of us who have the option of pumping overboard when more than 3 miles offshore, I

Melissa Dixon, left, and her partner, Kailey Johnson—skipper and first mate, respectively, of S/V *Ruckus*, a 1983 Ericson 28—live aboard and spend their time off sailing and adventuring around the Salish Sea, in hopes of one day soon venturing both further north (into the Broughtons and Haida Gwaii), and then heading south (as soon as possible) to more tropical climates. This photo, taken in June 2022 in Maple Bay along the Vancouver Island coast, was captured with Melissa's cousin being towed while under sail in their homemade rowing dinghy; they assure us that no cameras were harmed in the making of this photograph. Melissa and Kailey enjoy sharing their adventures via photography, filmography, and writing, in hopes of bringing more young women the confidence to pursue sailing on their own, as well as encourage more representation for LGBTQ2+ folks on the water. You can follow them on Instagram at @ruckus.adrift. Photo by @vega.cos

added a sensor on the discharge line with a light near the pump switch. This lets me know when the tank is dry while underway and I cannot hear the pump over the engine and water noises.

—**Duncan Mathison**, *Mistral*, San Diego, California

What's a Good Old Boat?

I doubt any of your original subscribers own a Morris Justine. The article "River of Riches" (May/June 2022) was kind of interesting but more fit for a Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous-type of magazine, which I hope you're not becoming. The boat is not, and will never be, a good old boat.

—**David Seroy**, New York, New York

Andy Cross responds:

David, your email regarding the Morris Justine is intriguing because it made me think about my own experience with the boat and it brought up the question: Who's to say what constitutes a good old boat? I've sailed a 1985 Morris Justine, and it was a beautifully cared for, modestly outfitted older vessel that was pure joy under sail. At the time, I didn't think I needed to consider it a good old boat or not. It was a great sailing boat, and I was out enjoying a lively breeze with a good friend. That's what sailing is all about. If anything, what stood out to me was that Chuck Paine's design has stood the test of time.

We could define a "good old boat" by assigning a number of years to it—such as, a boat that is 20 years or older. But I'm guessing that some sailors would not consider a boat built in 2002 to be a good old boat. Others might.

Christopher Birch's 1991, 36-foot Morris Justine, *Sundance*, moored near Gagetown on the Saint John River in Canada.

And that's okay, we all have our opinions. Certainly, Good Old Boat *magazine is not about the newest, most expensive boats on the market and never will be. Rather, in my mind, what mostly defines good old boats has less to do with their manufacturer or the year they were built and more about the people who own them.*

I love getting submissions from our readers about their boats, how they work on them, and where they sail them. Christopher Birch, who wrote the story about sailing his 1991 Morris Justine, Sundance, *up the Saint John River, epitomizes this. He's a hands-on sailor who dotes on his boat, keeps it simple, and gets out on the water and sails it. Then, he is kind enough to share his stories and photos with our readers. (As an aside, the first Morris Justines hit the water in 1983, nearly 40 years ago.)*

Seems to me that Christopher and Sundance *sum up beautifully what good old boats are all about. But your letter opens the door for me to pose the question to our readers: What do* you *think qualifies as a "good old boat?"*

Bad Gas

I read the Mail Buoy in the latest edition with great interest, in particular the writer who swapped out his Honda 5 for an electric outboard. He noted that he had issues with his Honda 5, and one of them I had myself until I figured it out: It would start but would stop running, or it would run intermittently. This is an issue due to bad gas, and in particular, any gas with alcohol in it. I would suggest that anyone contemplating replacing a gas-powered outboard (or any gas-powered small appliance) should consider the fuel supply first. If your letter writer can find a source for alcohol-free gasoline, that problem would fix itself, as most of the small Hondas are remarkably reliable. The best source for finding an alcohol-free station is online at pure-gas.org.

—**Cliff Moore**, *Pelorus*

continued on page 55

Bristol Channel Cutter

A 28-Foot, Go-Anywhere Masterpiece

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BERT VERMEER

Like many sailors, Bill and Cathy Norrie had dreams of sailing the warm waters of the temperate oceans, particularly when winter snows beat against their prairie home. They made those dreams come true, purchasing *Terrwyn*, a Pacific Seacraft 37, and circumnavigating the world over five years.

Along the way, they befriended a fellow sailor who owned a Bristol Channel Cutter (BCC), who eventually needed to sell the 28-footer and was determined that the Norries should own her. For a time, they managed to keep both boats, but eventually they sold *Terrwyn*, renamed the BCC *Pixie*, and prepared her for what would become Bill's epic solo voyage.

Leaving from Victoria, British Columbia, in September 2019, he circumnavigated eastbound—"the wrong way"—around the five capes to complete the voyage a year later, in the middle of a pandemic. I was especially interested in this adventure, since I had helped Bill prepare *Pixie* as part of my winter hobby of working on and maintaining boats. We have become friends, and Bill was happy to provide the admirable *Pixie* as our review boat.

Modeled after traditional European sailing craft of the 19th century, the Bristol Channel Cutter is always an eye-catcher under sail. The bowsprit and boomkin help expand the sail area, despite the shortish rig.

Design

Lyle Hess designed the BCC based on the lines of his 24-foot *Seraffyn*, made legendary by Lin and Larry Pardey. The 28-foot BCC first came off the molds in 1976 at the Sam L. Morse Company in Costa Mesa, California, which built 127 of them.

Some were sold as bare hulls so that owners could finish the boats themselves, one reason why interior layouts are often different among boats. In 2007, the Sam L. Morse Company closed, and the molds went to Cape George Marine Works in Port Townsend, Washington.

The bridge deck is a critical safety feature for offshore work. Instruments are nicely arranged over the sea hood, another safety detail, at left.

The bowsprit accommodates both headsail furlers; loads, which are substantial, are taken up by a bobstay. Note the beefy samson post, the bulwarks that allow reinforcements of the stanchions, and the extra blocks of wood strengthening the hawse pipes, top left. Photo courtesy Bill Norrie.

Looking aft from the foredeck toward the twin Dorade vents, note the batwing opening hatch over the saloon and the traditional wood belaying pins used in place of cleats to tie off some of the running rigging or to hang coiled line, top right.

(Some were also built by Channel Cutter Yachts in Vancouver, British Columbia.)

The documented overall length of 28 feet is a bit of a misnomer; add 10 feet when including the bowsprit and boomkin. With a relatively short mast, these appendages stretch the feet of the sails, substantially expanding the boat's sail-carrying ability. The cutter rig allows for maximum flexibility in sail configuration, vital in ocean sailing. A typical total sail area of 673 square feet helps move the boat's heavy displacement (346 displacement/length overall ratio) in lighter air.

With just under a 5-foot draft, the BCC is not going into the thinnest waters, but stout construction brings peace of mind when the seafloor does come up unexpectedly. As can be expected from the full keel, maneuverability in tight quarters is not a strong point. However, minimal attention is required for sailing a straight course. The design is optimal for wind-powered self-steering devices.

Construction

The original hand-drawn and typed construction manual is still on the Sam L. Morse website at samlmorse.com/Bristol-channel-cutter/construction-manual (this site also provides access to the owners' forum, which is an excellent source of ongoing discussion and archival information on the boats). The company produced a fascinating promotional film detailing construction; you can watch it at youtube.com/watch?v=YXdcIEoKNuI.

The hull is hand-laid fiberglass with a fully enclosed, full-length keel. Lead ingots form fit the keel sump, secured with epoxy resin and then glassed into place with woven roving—no keel bolts to worry about. The rudder is transom hung and attached to the trailing edge of the keel, fully protected from debris or grounding.

The hull-to-deck joint is an inward-turned flange with the deck set on top. Plenty

(Top to bottom) **Despite being just 28 feet long, the BCC's main saloon is quite comfortable, including a settee to starboard with storage above and below and a cabin heater.**

In *Pixie*, there's no V-berth, so Bill sleeps in the port-side pilot berth in the main saloon. A quarter berth also provides a bunk, though Bill uses his primarily for storage. Note the drop-leaf table, which can sit a small army of guests for a comfortable dinner.

The galley is small but all business, with plenty of storage and a three-burner stove.

of 3M 5200 adhesive is used with bolts on 5-inch centers to complete the bond. The joint is then covered by a 1-inch x 6-inch teak plank that extends out to a 3-inch-thick teak rubrail to protect the fiberglass and support the bulwarks. This massively built joint is unlikely to fail. Internal bulkheads are glassed to the hull with five layers of mat for the full length of the joint, adding stiffness to the hull.

On Deck and Rigging

The deck has a stout, traditional workboat appearance. Solid teak bulwarks, oversized deck gear, and a small cockpit all point to a serious offshore vessel. The double-spreader aluminum mast is keel-stepped with room on deck to work around the base.

The cabin trunk is divided into a main and fore cabin. The sailor working at the mast does not have to climb onto the coachroof, a sensible precaution in heavy seas. Aboard *Pixie*, Bill has arranged all sail control lines back into the cockpit for additional singlehanded safety.

The aluminum boom rests on teak boom gallows mounted on bronze supports at the aft end of the cockpit, a convenient handhold. The boom-end mainsheet leads to

The distinctive forward scuttle hatch provides headroom in the forepeak below and possibly a deck seat at anchor or in mild weather.

traditional wooden blocks with cam cleats on the stern rail, all within easy reach for the helmsperson.

The cockpit stretches nearly gunnel to gunnel with wide seats. The view forward is excellent, even with a dodger. The footwell is relatively small with a seat-level bridge deck across the companionway. It's a bit of a stretch for foot bracing on the opposing seat while using the windward coaming as a comfortable backrest. Unfortunately, the teak backrest has a narrow top, which eliminates the option of sitting on the coaming with a tiller extender.

The teak tiller sweeps across the aft two-thirds of the footwell, so the crew better stay clear in tight quarters! I found that the aft rail prevented the tiller from being momentarily raised out of the way in the cockpit during a tack or jibe, a bit cumbersome with crew aboard.

Two rollers on the bowsprit and an ABI manual windlass handle the ground tackle, with the chain led below into the deep forepeak. A massive samson post that extends below deck to the keel completes the foredeck equipment.

In preparation for his circumnavigation, Bill replaced all the standing and running rigging. Low-friction rings on loops around the teak bulwarks served as very reliable, and infinitely adjustable, sheet leads, replacing the standard blocks.

Below Deck

Many of the BCCs were customized below, so stepping aboard one doesn't mean you'll see the same thing on another. Even the headroom can be different from boat to boat. This review focuses on *Pixie*'s layout and accommodations.

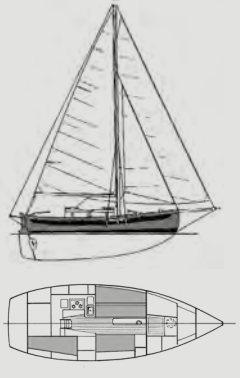
The Bristol Channel Cutter emerged from the factory with a Yanmar 3GM30F or, in later models, a 2002 Volvo Penta diesel, tucked under the cockpit. Aboard *Pixie*, the previous owner had replaced the Yanmar with a Beta 25, a Kubota-based diesel with parts readily available worldwide. The engine had 52 hours on the meter when Bill and Cathy bought the boat, and following a circumnavigation, it now has 350 hours.

Access to the diesel is under the companionway steps. The watermaker and Espar heater are also installed in this compartment and are difficult to reach. The aluminum fuel tank mounted directly behind the engine holds 32 gallons.

As mentioned earlier, the cockpit has a bridge deck at seat level, necessitating a step over into the companionway. Four steep steps descend into the cabin. Cream-colored paneling accented with teak trim greet the sailor in a compact but cozy interior. The cabin sole is solid fir planking.

Immediately to port is a U-shaped galley with a propane three-burner Force 10 range between a substantial storage cabinet and deep stainless steel sink. Keeping the boat simple, *Pixie* has neither refrigeration nor pressure water. The sink has salt and freshwater foot pumps. The freshwater tank holds 64 gallons.

Immediately to starboard is a good-size, stand-up navigation station with a substantial chart table and room for



LINE DRAWINGS BY ROB MAZZA

Bristol Channel Cutter

Designer	Lyle Hess
LOA	28'1"
LWL	26'4"
Beam	10'1"
Draft	4'10"
Displacement	14,000 lb
Ballast	4,600 lb
Displ./LOA	346
Sail Area	673 sq ft
Sail Area/Displ.	18.6

The well-equipped electrical panel is located behind the companionway steps, clearly visible and accessible with no chance of accidental contact, above.

electronics. Interestingly, under the chart table is a large top-opening ice box.

Astern of the nav station is somewhat restricted access to a full-length quarter berth that Bill uses mainly for stowage. Batteries are underneath.

Two settees in the saloon flank a permanently mounted, drop-leaf table attached to the bulkhead as well as the mast. The starboard settee has open storage against the hull; the port side settee has a generous berth, which can be pulled out into a double.

Three opening bronze portlights on each side of the main cabin trunk provide ventilation, along with a traditional teak butterfly hatch overhead accompanied by two bronze Dorade vents. Even with spray whipping over the cabin, ventilation shouldn't be a problem.

Due to the deck configuration that allows deck-level access at the mast, headroom stops short of the forward bulkhead. One must stoop to reach the door into the forward cabin, and then stoop even further to pass through the rounded door opening. The forward cabin houses a marine toilet in a small cupboard (but no other head accommodations) and an expansive workbench area and storage to port.

Underway

We sailed *Pixie* on a cloudy day with light winds. Powering out of the marina onto the rippled waters of Cadboro Bay near the Victoria waterfront, she showed a comfortable cruising speed of 5.5 knots at 2,500 rpm. The Beta 25 has a maximum continuous engine rpm of 3,600, plenty of power in reserve when required.

Considering that the engine compartment is mostly lacking in sound insulation, the engine noise in the cockpit was very reasonable. Vibration transmitted to the hull was minimal. Prop wash on the rudder was noticeable with a pull to starboard, but certainly not offensive. As anticipated, maneuverability with the full keel needed to be planned well in advance. Bill emphasized that there is no thought of directional control in reverse. However, the three-blade Max-Prop did function as an admirable brake.

Sailing to windward in 7-10 knots of true wind, *Pixie* heeled slightly and soon settled into a very solid 4-5 knots to windward. The tiller felt solid although somewhat heavy,

The transom-mounted rudder and tiller greatly simplify the steering gear. The sprocket on the backstay is a remnant of a self-steering system no longer in use. Photo courtesy Bill Norrie.

the design not allowing for a balanced rudder, so substantial effort is needed to change direction. An over-trimmed mainsail induced weather helm, as expected, and easing the main allowed for hands-free sailing.

Pixie was able to tack through 90 degrees, both headsails easily passing through the foretriangle. Reaching is the BBC's forte. Unfortunately, the light wind did not allow *Pixie* to demonstrate her full potential on that point of sail.

During his circumnavigation, Bill ran with twin poled-out headsails. As a longtime sailor of coastal cruisers and racing sailboats with fin keels and spade rudders, I was suitably impressed with the performance of a full keel in light air. I expected sluggish windward ability, yet *Pixie* surged along effortlessly.

Conclusion

The Bristol Channel Cutter is exactly what it was designed to be, a tough, ocean-crossing boat easily sailed by minimal crew or even singlehanded. Bill Norrie and *Pixie* are not the first to prove that.

She is not a dockside party boat, although she does tend to be somewhat of a dockside queen, as the traditional design garners plenty of attention. Robust construction and attention to detail place this Lyle Hess masterpiece at the forefront of small ocean-going sailboats.

A recent Internet search found four for sale, ranging from a 1985 model for $55,000 to a late model for $185,000.

Bert Vermeer and his wife, Carey, have been sailing the coast of British Columbia for more than 30 years. Natasha *is their fourth boat (following a Balboa 20, an O'Day 25, and another Islander Bahama 30). Bert tends to rebuild his boats from the keel up. A retired police officer, he also maintains and repairs boats for several non-resident owners.*

Comments from Owners

The boat really flies off the wind. She is not a performer to weather like a modern yacht. Doing 50 degrees to weather is max. Quite frankly, I have never experienced another boat built this well, and I was a pro sea captain for 15 years. Heavy solid fiberglass layup in the hull. Cored deck with high-grade marine ply. Have never had a leak or soft spots. I like the way she heaves to in the worst of weather and allows us a chance to take a break and rest. The height of the boom requires an average-sized person to scrunch down while helming the boat if there is a bimini or dodger installed. You can only fit a 7-foot Fatty Knees dinghy under the boom on the cabintop for offshore work. Get a good rigging survey. It's a bit of a complex rig, but very strong. Look for rot in the wood, particularly in the hatches; if they are not taken care of, the seams will leak eventually. Also check for rot in the bowsprit.

—Gary Felton,
St. Thomas, USVI

She is a small boat if you are over 6 feet tall, and there's generally not enough space for more than two people. She is cranky in short, choppy seas, which are common in New Zealand at times, when you double-reef on short sail and go below to let her sail herself better to windward than you can.

—Doug Schmuck,
Opua, Bay of Islands, New Zealand

Last year we entered her in an 80-mile race with winds blowing 25-30 knots and seas 7-8 feet. She was not fazed by the conditions. Her angle of vanishing stability is 133, motion comfort ratio is 37.20, and capsize screening formula is 1.68. All sleeping berths are 6 feet 4 inches in length and the ceiling is 6 feet 2 inches, giving the boat a larger feel.

—Peter Lawrence,
Rochester, New York

Very comfortable ride and good straightness. Faster sailboat than you think. For me personally, the mainsail is too big. Also, I think the boom should be a little shorter so the foot of the mainsail should be shorter, and the draft of the mainsail may be a little shallower.

—Sumio Oya,
Shinjuku, Tokyo, Japan

Weather helm combined with a large sail plan means you need to reef early. Tacking can be challenging if the jib hangs up on the staysail stay, requiring someone to go forward to help horse it around. We've found if we backwind the jib just a little it helps whoosh it through. Lack of headroom; my husband, Jeremy, is 6 feet 3 inches tall and can stand only where there are hatches.

—Nica Waters,
Chesapeake Bay

We had one day of 176 miles crossing the Atlantic (with a Gulf Stream boost.) Good directional stability, but slow to tack. The bowsprit was a real nuisance. The Pardeys wrote of the advantages of it, but it was a big negative in my mind. It is advertised as "reefable" in marinas, but that was not generally practical. Another objectionable thing is the long, sweeping keel design that leaves no flat section for her to "take the ground" or easily block level in the yard. Our boat had mahogany woodwork above decks rather than the more expensive teak option, which limited finish options.

—John and Robin Churchill,
Ocala, Florida

I enjoy trimming until she is self-steering. Best of all is her heaving to. I am a Pardey acolyte and hove to 18 times in gales in the Southern Ocean and never had a single boarding sea—simply amazing.

—Bill Norrie,
Victoria, British Columbia

Bristol Channel Cutter...

. . . and Two More Tradition-Inspired Cutters

STORY AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROB MAZZA

The Bristol Channel Cutter (BCC) is a classic example of the cutter type, which traditionally referred to the whole boat, not just the rig. This description harkened back to the late 19th century, when the British cutter and the American sloop vied for design supremacy.

When the George Lennox Watson-designed *Madge* arrived on Long Island Sound in 1881, she defeated every American sloop she encountered, confounding U.S. yachtsmen and establishing a new respect for the cutter type.

The cutter hull possessed a narrow beam, heavy displacement, deep draft, external ballast, and plumb stem. The rig was characterized by a mast stepped further aft to allow multiple headsails (a staysail, jib, and flying jib), a retractable bowsprit and topmast, and a smaller main combined with a gigantic jack yard topsail above the gaff. Sloops, on the other hand, were wider and shallower, with internal ballast and centerboard, and a mast stepped well forward carrying a large main, small topsail, and a single jib mounted on the end of a long bowsprit.

The two extremes eventually merged in the 1880s and 1890s with the development of the "compromise" cutter by Edward Burgess, with wider beam and less draft (often incorporating a centerboard), and lighter displacement, but generally retaining the cutter rig. The British cutter was an exceptional sea boat, incorporating a large range of positive stability, with the heavy-air performance of British pilot cutters and revenue cutters of particular note.

In recreational fiberglass sailing, the continuing evolution of the cutter concept is well displayed with the 1970s, Lyle Hess-designed BCC, the Bob Perry-designed Tashiba 31 of the 1980s, and Bob Johnson's Island Packet 29 of the 1990s. (My thanks to readers who responded to Dan Spurr's request for comparison boats, from which the Island Packet 29 was chosen. The other popular recommendation was the Pacific Seacraft 34, but that boat was deemed less suitable due to its separate keel and rudder configuration.)

All three retain the cutter characteristics of bowsprit with fixed staysail stay, full keels, and heavier displacement. All three are

	Bristol Channel Cutter	Tashiba 31	Island Packet 29
LOA	28'1"	31'2"	29'0"
LWL	26'3"	25'5"	25'7"
Beam	10'1"	10'8"	10'10"
Draft	4'10"	5'0"	4'9"
Displ. (lbs)	14,000	13,790	10,900
Ballast	4,600	4,705	4,800
LOA/LWL	1.07	1.23	1.13
Beam/LWL	.38	.42	.42
Displ./LWL	346	374.8	290.7
Bal./Displ.	33%	34%	44%
Sail Area (100%)	592	552	491
SA/Displ.	16.28	15.33	15.95
Capsize No.	1.68	1.78	1.96
Comfort Ratio	37.2	33.53	26.51
Year Introduced	1976	1986	1991
Designer	Lyle Hess	Robert Perry	Bob Johnson
Builder	Sam L Morse Co./ Cape George Marine	Ta Shing Yacht Building	Island Packet Yachts

within 7 inches of each other in waterline length, but vary in displacement. The BCC is the heaviest at 14,000 pounds, resulting in a displacement/length waterline ratio of 346. The Tashiba 31 is slightly lighter at 13,790 pounds, but due to its shorter waterline produces a very hefty displacement/length waterline ratio of 375. The Island Packet 29 is the lightest at 10,900 pounds, with the lightest displacement/length waterline ratio of 291.

When it comes to sail area, I have opted not to include the area of the staysail, but instead use only the measured sail area based on I, J, P, and E. (In my mind, for the sake of consistency, the staysail area should be treated the same as the area of the mainsail roach or the genoa overlap; that is, not included in the comparison of sail areas.) This reduces the BCC's sail area from the published figure of 691 square feet to 592 square feet, and produces sail area/displacement ratios in the low 16s for the BCC and the Island Packet, with the Tashiba coming in the lowest at 15.3.

Beams also expand with each decade, ranging from 10 feet 1 inch for the BCC to 10 feet 8 inches for the Tashiba, and 10 feet 10 inches for the Island Packet. This trend is also reflected in the beam/length waterline ratios, with the BCC at a relatively narrow .38, and the Tashiba and Island Packet both coming in at .42.

This narrower beam measurement, combined with the heaviest displacement, gives the BCC the lowest capsize number of 1.68 and the highest comfort ratio of 37.2, compared to the Tashiba 31 at 1.78 and 33.5, and the Island Packet at 1.96 and 26.5, respectively. In that regard, the BCC is certainly the better sea boat, as evidenced by its long-range cruising accomplishments.

Steering should also be noted; the BCC has a transom-hung rudder with tiller steering, while the Tashiba and Island Packet carry inboard rudders with wheel steering. The Tashiba's canoe stern also differs with the transom sterns on the BCC and the Island Packet. The canoe stern represents another element of classic British design harkening back to the work of Albert Strange and his canoe yawls. The Tashiba also has the more cutaway forefoot, which should result in a more maneuverable boat than the others with longer keels and deeper forefoots.

All three of these boats are based on a long cutter tradition, but to my eye it's hard to improve on the classic good looks of the BCC. That is truly a boat that would generate a fierce pride of ownership.

Good Old Boat *Technical Editor Rob Mazza is a mechanical engineer and naval architect. He began his career in the 1960s as a yacht designer with C&C Yachts and Mark Ellis Design in Canada, and later Hunter Marine in the U.S. He also worked in sales and marketing of structural cores and bonding compounds with ATC Chemicals in Ontario and Baltek in New Jersey.*

Hot Shot

Hot-melt glue solves a sticky situation when rebedding deck hardware.

BY BOB TAYLOR

Recently, we wanted to replace the Dorades on our 1979 Gulfstar 37 with lower-profile solar vents. An easy enough job, you'd think, but you know how it is with good old boats and project creep.

What started as a simple task turned into something much more involved—in short, recoring areas of wet balsa core in the deck around both Dorades, and then, after pulling down the headliner, deciding to replace much of the 43-year-old hardware that attached key items including winches, line clutch and turning block, the spray hood integrated with the traveler support, and several cleats.

In the process, I discovered a neat way to make this potentially messy job easier. After enlarging the fastener holes and raking out as much core material as possible, it's common practice to "pot" these holes with epoxy mixed with silica or a particulate of choice. But one sticky part of this process is consistently annoying: preventing the epoxy from draining out of the hole in the overhead until it cures.

An obvious option is tape of one sort or another, but the fiberglass behind the headliner in our boat is comprised of coarse roving and resin that makes taping the holes just about futile. Even if we could get tape to adhere, epoxy has the maddening ability to sneak out of most efforts to restrain it. This is exacerbated by the resin warming as it cures, lowering viscosity just when you think you've checked it for the final time necessary. Most often, it happens after you've packed up and gone home for the night, so when you return, you'll find a fully cured puddle on the cabin sole, table, or in your tool bag.

How to deal with the gravity of the situation?

As a cabinetmaker, I've used hot-melt glue that's quick to bond and just tough enough to hold parts in place for marking out spile points and scribed edges. I thought I could use this glue to attach small plywood squares over the holes to act as dams until the epoxy cured.

I gave it a try on the overhead and found that applying a thick bead around the holes was easy and quick. I also added a little smear to the face of each plywood square, which would prevent the epoxy from sticking to them.

The squares held so well that I was able to inject the filled epoxy from above using

(Left to right below) **A small plywood square hot-glued beneath the fastener holes prevented epoxy from dripping out of the holes into the cabin below. Once the epoxy cured, Bob could just tap the square off with a mallet and putty knife.**

A dab of hot glue on the plywood pieces prevented the epoxy from sticking to them as it hardened.

The backing plate for the clutch, hot-glued to the deck to provide a template for precise hole location, before and after drilling.

(Top to bottom) **To precisely locate where the epoxy-filled holes needed to be drilled for one of the winches, Bob hot-glued the pre-drilled G-10 backing plate to the deck and used its holes as a reference. He used this method for all of the hardware that required backing plates.**

The backing plate for the clutch, hot-glued to the deck to provide a template for precise hole location, before and after drilling.

a syringe, which forced in more of the epoxy and forced out more air than any other pouring-in method I've tried. None of the blocks fell off, and there was almost no bubble-induced settling of the resin mix in the holes.

When it came time to remove them, I tapped them off with a moderately sharp putty knife and a mallet. (Note that hot-melt glue comes in craft-store grade and a tougher construction grade; you'll want the latter for this application. The clearer the glue stick, the weaker the bond. Go for the yellowish, less transparent stuff.)

Next, I made new backing plates out of ¼-inch G-10 for the two winches, line clutch, cleats, and turning block. I had taken all the hardware home and laid it out on the G-10 to accurately mark the holes for the fasteners. Then I drilled them out on my drill press.

Back at the boat, the next challenge was locating the new bolt holes within the epoxy plugs. On deck, I marked the centers of the filled holes and hot-glued the new backing plates to the deck for each piece of hardware, so that the holes in the backing plates lined up over the epoxy-filled holes in the deck. This way, I could precisely drill the new holes through the deck.

I would brag that it all went together perfectly, but I found that a few of the holes in the backing plates needed to be enlarged by a 1/16 inch to accommodate minor alignment issues from drilling through the thick, curved cabin top. (You could use a round file to slightly enlarge the holes in the G-10 as needed, but best practice would be to redrill them oversize on a drill press with the material securely clamped, because the drill is sure to grab in the G-10 and twist it. Ask me how I know.)

Now I just need a few days without rain to install the companionway spray hood and new traveler, apply a fresh non-skid surface on the areas of the deck where I recored, regasket the hatches, and undoubtedly something else I haven't thought of yet. You know how it goes.

Bob Taylor began sailing as a young teen in a home-built, 8-foot pram kit from Butler Boats. Despite a long and interesting career as an architectural woodworker, he still enjoys working on his own house, boats, and guitars. He and his partner, Laura, sail their Gulfstar 37, Juniata Lily, *out of Worton Creek, Maryland.*

A Shipshape Ensign

After a winterlong refit, a 51-year-old daysailer looks sharp and sails like a dream.

BY DAVID SHARP

My partner, Nancy, and I are in our mid-70s and have enjoyed cruising in New England aboard *Pegasus*, our 1969 Tartan 34C, for many years. Eventually, though, we were doing more motoring than sailing, and we realized that if we were to continue enjoying cruising, we needed a boat more accommodating to our less-agile joints and with a few more creature comforts. So, we finally sold *Pegasus* and bought a 2001, 30-foot Cape Classic trawler.

Swapping the Tartan for the trawler solved the question of how to keep us cruising longer into our senior years, but we—especially I—knew all along that we couldn't do without a sailboat of some kind. And so the search began for a boat we could daysail.

Knowing that we wanted a boat with classic lines, I was at first tempted by some real bargains on small cruisers like a Pearson Triton, a Compac 23, Quicksteps, and Seawards. Fortunately, sanity prevailed; we already had a cruising boat, so our second boat did not need all the systems and gadgets that would make her capable of overnighting.

We refocused the search to daysailers, though we didn't limit it to trailerable boats. We planned to keep the sailboat on my mooring in Newport, Rhode Island, letting our marina handle the hauling, launching, and mast-stepping.

After a brief flirtation with a 19-foot catboat, we found a Pearson Ensign, hull #1424, called *Blue Dragon*, for sale. I have appreciated this Carl Alberg design over the years, and I knew its reputation for sailing performance.

Built by Pearson in Bristol, Rhode Island, *Blue Dragon* had been owned by Tom Crane and his brother, Charles, since she was new in 1971. She stayed on a mooring in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, where Tom and the nearby Quissett Boat Yard kept her well-maintained. Tom obviously loved sailing her; he had a big grin during our sea trial in a brisk breeze off Quissett Harbor.

After removing all the deck hardware, David enlarged the fastener holes and filled them with epoxy, then faired everything back in for recoating.

I saw some potential cosmetic improvements I would enjoy making, but the boat was basically sound. It was early spring during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, when any boat that could float was selling quickly. The thought of my mooring sitting empty all summer encouraged us to meet Tom's asking price pretty much on the spot.

We renamed her *Leota*, after my grandmother, and Nancy and I sailed her as we found her for that first summer. We loved the boat. She performed wonderfully, and she reminded me how much fun it is to sail a smaller, responsive boat that occasionally douses you with sea water.

With a huge cockpit for her size, she was perfect for daysailing with friends on Narragansett Bay or lounging with a book on the mooring after going for a swim. We could have *Leota* sailing off her mooring in a matter of minutes, and about the only thing aboard that might need attention over the years were the bilge pump and its battery.

Having decided that *Leota* was for us, I wanted to give her a refresh. So, during that first winter, we splurged and stored her in a heated shed, where working on her made for a perfect winter project for me. (I have restored boats outside under a cover in the New England winter, so being inside was a real treat.)

Leota was in good shape structurally—her wooden floors and bulkheads were solid, and Tom had stripped and epoxy-coated the bottom a few years earlier. The cockpit coamings and rigging were also in good shape, and she had a fairly new boom built by Ensign Spars.

So, restoring the 51-year-old boat mainly involved refreshing her paint and varnish finishes and replacing worn moving parts, including cam cleats and turning blocks. I also decided to replace the entire electrical system, which was very basic but starting to show signs of corrosion and aging insulation. Some of *Leota*'s upgrades were far from essential, but as the boat came together, I got a little carried away.

Refreshing the Finishes

To prepare for painting, I removed all the deck hardware and wood trim except the cockpit coamings. Over the winter in our basement, I stripped all the wood trim with a heat gun and revarnished it.

While I had all the deck gear off, I wanted to make sure that the fasteners went through solid epoxy and not exposed core. I drilled out all the fastener holes, making them slightly larger and filling them with epoxy. I was relieved to find no significant rot in the plywood-cored cabintop and fore and aft decks, and most of the rest of the boat is solid fiberglass.

The molded toerail had many gelcoat cracks, likely from gelcoat being applied too thickly in this area (though I found no structural fractures). I ground out all the cracks, filled them with epoxy, then faired them. This took at least two coats of filler before I applied two coats of Pettit primer, sanding between each coat.

Where non-skid wasn't needed, I finished the deck with two coats of Pettit EZ-Poxy in Mediterranean White. I painted non-skid areas with Interlux Interdeck White. Using Interdeck saved me having to mix non-skid and deglosser into a base paint, and it resulted in a very pleasing, uniform finish with non-skid that isn't too aggressive for this small boat. I wanted the gloss and non-skid areas of the deck to be about the same color, so masking between the two types of paint didn't have to be quite so precise.

Leota's topsides had been painted at least once in her lifetime but needed new paint again. I started the process myself, but after watching a fellow who goes by CB varnishing a big, all-mahogany Hacker Craft near me in the shed, I decided to splurge again by hiring him to work on *Leota*. CB and his professional crew rolled and tipped *Leota*'s topsides and boot stripe with two-part Awlgrip. The topsides are Stars and Stripes Blue with a Chevy White boot stripe. It took a lot of fairing and filling and several coats of primer and topcoat, but *Leota*'s hull now looks new.

As a finishing touch, I ordered *Leota*'s name and hailing port in vinyl lettering from BoatU.S. and applied them to the transom.

Sprucing up the Interior

It took a lot of power sanding to strip layers of old peeling paint from the interior of the cuddy cabin while being careful not to damage the fiberglass layup. My back informed me that working for long periods in the cramped cuddy was not a good idea, so I hired one of the marina's technicians, Mike, to finish the work.

Mike did a great job, and though the cuddy isn't like new, it is bright, clean, and refreshed, which was my goal. We repainted the interior with three coats of a good-quality, self-priming exterior urethane gloss house deck paint that I have had good luck with using on another boat.

I removed, stripped, and revarnished the wooden fiddles on the bunks and painted the cabin sole with gray Interlux Bilgekote.

I added a portable toilet just forward of the mast where the original plans show an overboard-discharging head was intended to be mounted. One will have to be a bit of a contortionist to use this head, but it's there for emergencies.

I replaced the two small, foggy portlights with new acrylic and I had their aluminum frames powder-coated in a bronze color at Granite State Powder Coating in New Hampshire. One of the frames broke at a mounting screw hole (my fault). Ensign Spars sells replacement frames, but to keep the project moving, a friend of mine fashioned a new frame out of G-10 that is as good as the original after being spray-painted bronze.

Since we didn't plan to sleep aboard, I just covered the bunks with ¾-inch-thick, closed-cell, blue foam yoga

Having refinished boats before, David knew how big a job it is, and he was happy to hand this one off this time to CB, shown here working on the topsides recoating.

mats. They were inexpensive, easy to cut to fit, and go well with the light blue interior.

Upgrading the Electrics

Leota's wiring is minimal; in addition to the battery cable and solar charger, there is a cable for each of the three running lights, a triplex for the bilge pump, and maybe a wire for a compass light if you get fancy. What was probably the original wiring was a rat's nest of splices and in-line fuses crammed into a small wooden switch box. I made a new watertight electrical breaker box that includes two 12-volt charger ports, modern blade fuses, a rocker switch for the bilge pump's automatic and manual operation, and an external voltmeter.

Because the boat is not self-bailing, I sized a new battery around her bilge pump requirements. I calculated the area of the Ensign's cockpit and how much rainwater it would collect on the worst-case one-day rainfall (3.23 inches on June 7, 2013, in Newport), and how much energy it would take to pump out that much water with the boat's pump.

These calculations indicated I could replace the existing 34-pound battery with a compact, sealed AGM unit that only weighed 9.5 pounds and could be tucked in a corner inside a small battery box. While I was at it, I also replaced the weathered solar battery charger.

Final Touches

When the time came to reinstall the deck hardware, I was glad to find that Harken still made nearly identical replacements for the cam cleats and turning blocks. I decided not to replace the spinnaker hardware, since we don't plan to sail with a chute.

But I did decide, after a beat up Narragansett Bay into a strong nor 'wester last fall, that we could use a new jib. The boat came with a roller furler, so we ordered a new jib from Randy Shore at Sailor and Seam in Newport. As an Ensign sailor himself, Randy knows these boats, and he talked me through all the options for a jib. Each time I order a new sail they seem to get smaller, and this time I got a blade jib with vertical battens. Randy also made us new covers for the mainsail and the cockpit.

I hired Anchors and Thread at Safe Harbor Sakonnet Marina to make a custom-fitted zipper door for the companionway and a tiller cover. The canvas maker's co-owner, Mike, accommodated all my unique requests, including adding built-in

(Left to right) ***Leota*'s electrical needs are minimal, but David rewired everything and added a new electrical box, as well as a smaller battery.**

David asked a canvas maker to create a canvas cover with a door to protect the boat's cuddy cabin.

Leota **gleams at the dock after her refit. Note the clever canvas cover for the cuddy cabin and the tiller cover with built-in straps to keep the tiller centered while the boat's on a mooring, above.**

restraining straps on the tiller cover to keep the rudder centered on the mooring. Mike's innovative designs were professionally executed on time and on budget. All of *Leota*'s new canvas is in toast-colored Sunbrella.

I replaced the delaminating tiller (while sailing last summer, the last foot of it broke off). And while the extruded rubrail could have served for a few more years, it looked a little shabby next to CB's beautiful topside paint job, so I replaced it with a new light-gray one. Ensign Spars stocks many unique parts for Ensigns, so I was able to order the replacement tiller, rubrail, stainless rubrail bow fittings, and a new outboard bracket to match Ensign originals.

Leota **at her mooring, waiting to go sailing, below.**

With *Leota* all freshened up, we don't anticipate her requiring much annual maintenance other than bottom paint and varnish, and her fun-to-work ratio should be high. We're happy with how the Ensign perfectly complements our modest trawler, and we believe both boats will keep us on the water for quite a while longer.

David Sharp is a retired ocean engineer living in Newport, Rhode Island. He started boating as a child and has owned over 20 boats so far. Along with sailing their Pearson Ensign, Leota, *he and his partner, Nancy, cruise New England aboard* Carry On, *a 2001 Cape Classic 30 trawler.*

Closet Play

An extra shower compartment is repurposed into a four-tier storage space.

BY DINI MARTINEZ

One of the things we love most about our Moody 44 is her four cabins. It's a fantastic layout for a family of five, but it does come at the expense of storage space. We needed to get creative, and the biggest, most obvious, and least efficiently used space on board was our forward head's shower.

This rarely, if ever, was used for actual showering, instead serving as a garage for random objects. The decision to turn it into a proper storage compartment was a no-brainer. This "closet" would be accessed either via inside the head itself, or from a second door that opens into the saloon.

Rather than using the space for a series of small storage areas, we decided to design it for big items like backpacks we use for land trips, baskets with all the cleaning stuff, chunky board games, the emergency generator, big packs of toilet paper rolls, the tons of books that eager bookworms go through, and perhaps, down the track, the long-dreamt-of kite-surf gear.

Thinking further, we realized that the bottom section of the proposed closet—aka the shower floor—could be the easiest spot to install a holding tank to serve the toilet in that head, an item that had been on our to-do list for a long time.

Since this article focuses on the storage solution, not the holding tank installation, suffice to say that we first installed a fiberglass holding tank on the shower compartment floor, leaving plenty of space above waiting to be turned into shelves.

To lay out the design, we made cardboard templates, as we do for any semi-major carpentry work. This ensures that the pieces will fit properly and helps me, as a visual kind of learner, better "see" the options and the desired result.

We planned to build three shelves above the holding tank. The shower compartment walls would serve as the walls for the sides of the closet. The storage spaces would vary in height from 14 to 20 inches, decisions based more on what wood I had available rather than any specific idea of what would be stored. All of the shelves ended up being about 31 inches deep and 18 inches wide.

For materials, we reverted to our usual strategy of sourcing items at hand or those easily accessed and recycled—think dumps, carpentry leftovers, bottom-of-lazarette bits and bobs, or street finds—for the sake of our planet, as well as our wallet. I scavenged a bunch of ½-inch plywood scraps from a local carpentry shop; this wood served as the bulk of our building material. We used our onboard electric jigsaw to cut it to the appropriate sizes.

Above the holding tank, we installed the first shelf, supporting it on one side with a solid vertical board facing the toilet. (We did this for the

The kids' boat school arts exhibition currently helps decorate the shelves as seen from inside the head, below left.

From the saloon, all four shelves are easily accessible, below right.

second shelf as well, so that anyone sitting on the head wouldn't have to be looking into a holding tank and a storage compartment, though it does mean that these two compartments can only be accessed via the door to the saloon.)

The remainder of the shelf was supported with cleats; some of the wood I sourced was already in roughly 2-inch-wide pieces, which simply needed to be cut to length to fit the depth of the shelves. Using an assortment of stainless steel screws, I fastened the cleats to the existing shower walls, as well as the new, vertical board, to install this bottom shelf.

From there on, we added another two shelves, supported by cleats screwed into the existing shower frame, and further supported by extending the cleats into what had been a cupboard for storing toiletries.

We kept these shelves open, using rails and fiddles to hold stored items. This meant these shelves could be easily accessed from the head compartment and the saloon, and it also allowed the space to continue to benefit from the natural light coming from the hatches above the shower (now closet).

When all was said and done, we had fun filling the three massively deep shelves. What we store there is still constantly changing. The newest idea is building a hydroponic vegetable system on the top shelf, taking advantage of all the light coming in through the hatches. Vines dangling down the side of the closet would also make for pleasant toilet views and even cleaner air.

For now, the not overly pretty toilet views of stored items have been converted into our kids' constantly changing homeschool art exhibition hanging off the side of our shelves—another unexpected bonus to our new storage closet.

The holding tank was installed first with the first shelf, also enclosed on the head side, above it.

Dini bolstered the support for the upper shelves by extending the wood for the cleats into a cupboard for toiletries, above left.

Dini used cleats, fastened into the shower compartment walls, to support the shelves, above right.

Dini Martinez has lived on boats on and off for the past 20 years, including work on super yachts; three years with a baby and a toddler around the Mediterranean; and years of coastal cruising in her home down under. Currently, she is cruising the Caribbean with her three kids and Argentinean husband on a Moody 44, running yoga retreats and teacher trainings in places they stop for longer periods. You can find out more about her yoga at DiniMartinez.com and more about her family sailing adventures at SailingYogaFamily.com.

Stolen *Secret*

Taken from its mooring, a boat sails into a hurricane and a mystery.

BY GRAHAM COLLINS

My wife, son, and I had sailed our C&C 35-3, *Secret Plans*, around Nova Scotia for 11 years and made countless wonderful memories aboard her with friends and family. Coastal cruising and the occasional race were highlights. The annual guys' "fishing mission" was always an adventure.

Along the way, we also put a lot of work into her with repairs and upgrades including a new rudder, anchor windlass, hydronic heat, mainsail, fresh wiring, and the list goes on. We were happy sailors.

All of that came to an abrupt halt with one shocking phone call from a friend on Friday, September 10, 2021.

"Are you on your boat?" the voice on the other end frantically asked. "The Coast Guard is looking for you!"

We had sailed *Secret Plans* the previous weekend and left her tied on her mooring on Sunday evening, as we had so many times before. After assuring my friend we were fine, I hung up.

Then the phone immediately rang again.

This time it was the Canadian Coast Guard asking if we were on the boat and in distress. Assuring them we were not, they said the Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) that is registered in my name and lives aboard *Secret Plans* was transmitting more than 300 miles offshore, currently near the eye of Hurricane Larry. I assured them we were not out sailing, that it must be a glitch of some sort, and that we would get our hands on the beacon as soon as possible to sort things out.

> "The Coast Guard is looking for you!"

My wife, Jill, was closest to the local yacht club where we moor the boat, and she headed over to assess the situation. The next call I got was from her.

"The boat is gone!" She checked the mooring, and it was in perfect shape. *Secret Plans* had been untied and stolen.

The Search

The next few days were a surreal blur. First came many more calls with both the Canadian and United States coast guards, updating me on the search and asking additional details about the boat. Did she have a life raft? No. Was there a VHF onboard? Yes, one fixed and two handhelds. What type and quantity of flares? A dozen Orion 12-gauge. How old was the battery in the PLB? *Old*.

I enjoyed sailing the boat solo, so she was set up well with a belowdecks autopilot, furling jib, and all lines running aft. She had the normal assortment of safety gear on board, tools and spares, a full water tank, a good amount of nonperishable food, the PLB, and, of course, some rum.

Since the PLB had to be manually switched on, it was clear that its activation was a deliberate act that ultimately prompted the search and rescue. The GPS location it transmitted then showed it passing directly through the eye of Hurricane Larry. At the time and location of the PLB alert, the storm was reported to have maximum sustained winds of 75 knots with higher gusts.

Accordingly, conditions in the area on the morning of September 10 were too harsh to allow for a search, but on Friday evening a search aircraft saw flares—which is why it was important for the searchers to know what types of flares were on board. Aircraft flew out of the U.S. and Canada, and a Canadian Coast Guard cutter was on site by late Saturday. Finally, on Sunday I was informed the search was over, without success. There was no further sign of *Secret Plans*.

The Suspect

The leading theory in the heist of *Secret Plans* is that an individual who had been arrested for smuggling drugs into Canada by sailboat had escaped custody and stolen the boat. He had an RYA Yachtmasters certification, lots of sailing experience, and would have been highly motivated to get out of the country.

Secret Plans **at sunset at a mooring ball in Rogue's Roost, a hideout near Halifax accessible only by water. A favorite destination, it's a reasonable day sail and is always calm.**

(Top to bottom on right) ***Secret Plans*** **sails through some rain and fog off the Nova Scotia Atlantic coast last summer, at right.**

Sam, Graham's son, and his friend, Tuskar, enjoy a snack hanging on the boom while sailing *Secret Plans* out of Halifax Harbor, bottom right.

This suspect was spotted on video entering another yacht club a few days earlier where a Nonsuch 26 was stolen. That escape went wrong when the life ring came loose and its line fouled the propeller. The boat blew ashore at the mouth of Halifax Harbor, and that first attempt failed in the tail of Hurricane Ida.

It is thought that he then made his way to our yacht club, stole a dinghy, and rowed out to *Secret Plans*. The boat's AIS was briefly turned on, and there is a ping showing it outside Halifax Harbor early Tuesday morning, which fits the timeline.

Did he steal the boat Tuesday and sail off only to encounter Hurricane Larry by accident? Unless he is found alive, or some other evidence is discovered, we will never know for sure.

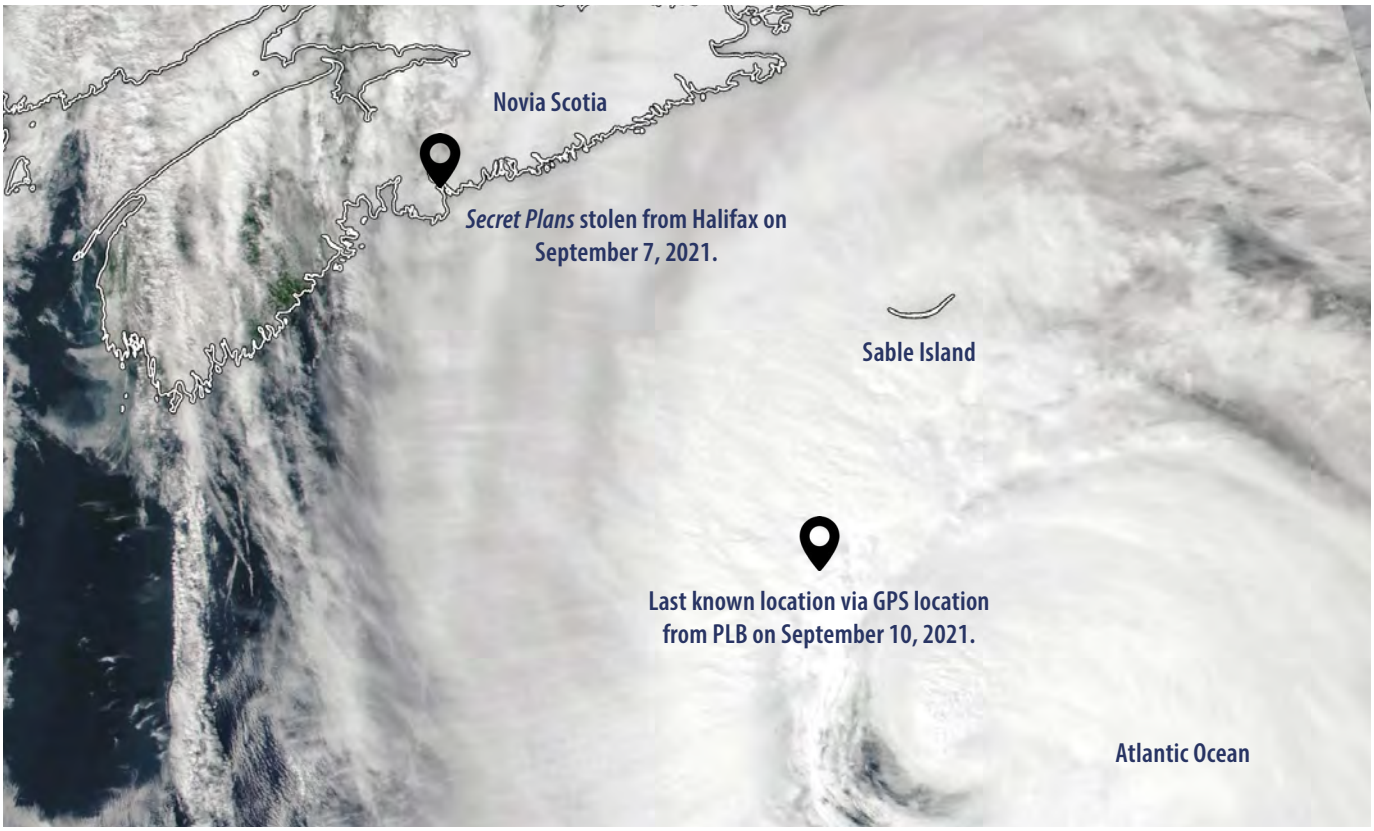
The story was bizarre enough to get picked up by various media outlets and spiraled into a frenzy on some marine and sailing websites. Now, in the local sailing world, I've become the guy whose boat was stolen and lost in a hurricane. It's not the sort of fame one wants, but so it goes.

Three months later, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police declared the case closed and unresolved.

The Aftermath

Many questions remain, and while we are very sad to have lost our beloved good old C&C 35-3 *Secret Plans*, it is also tragic that someone almost certainly has lost his life. It is very discomforting to think that this person fought for his life aboard our boat, likely wearing my foul weather gear, and lost this last fight.

While I had never expected to encounter a hurricane on *Secret Plans*, I do wonder what, if anything, I could have done differently to better equip the boat and crew to survive. What worked and what failed? Did the boat fail or was the crew too exhausted to cope with the conditions? What would have made that difference between survival and loss? The boat wasn't equipped with a life raft; would that have helped?



In the end, we must move on. *Secret Plans* is gone, and our family of sailors has new plans. The insurance paid out, and we have purchased another boat. We are now the proud owners of a Canadian Sailcraft 36 Traditional, another gem of the early 1980s. We've bought her as-is, where-is, and so are working on learning the finer details of our purchase. She has been renamed *Plan B* in honor of *Secret Plans*, and of course because one should always have a plan B.

Luckily, a piece of our old boat will always be with us. The big steering wheel on *Secret Plans* always made the cockpit awkward to pass through at anchor, so we replaced it with a Lewmar folding wheel. We were happy to find that the original wheel from *Secret Plans* fits perfectly in the bigger cockpit of *Plan B*, where it is now installed. This wheel, with so much history and so many memories, will continue to steer us through new adventures.

Graham Collins is an engineer by day building anti-submarine warfare equipment. At night he runs "Compass Distillers," an award-winning craft distillery, and in the remaining time he sails with his wife and son and works on upgrades for the new boat project.

A Raft of Wreckage

An afternoon raft-up ends in disaster when the weather turns fierce.

BY MIKE P. FREY

It was the first day of "The Voyage to the End of the World"—the North Flathead Yacht Club's 13th annual event on Flathead Lake, Montana. My lovely bride, Carrie, and I had been looking forward to joining with *Irish Eyes*, our standard-rig, swing-keel Catalina 25. We were new to the club, and this would only be our second year attending this event.

The voyage would take sailors down the lake's 35-mile length from the club in Somers, south to Kwataqnuk Resort in Polson, where they would share experience and wisdom over libations on the patio. Then the fleet would head back north to The Narrows, a group of beautiful pine- and fir-covered islands. The plan was to raft up beneath Bull Island, enjoy further sharing of experience and wisdom, and then disband to anchor for the night, sailing back to the club in the morning.

As it turned out, Carrie and I got a late start, and after realizing we wouldn't get to the resort in time for the gathering there, we adjusted our plan to stop at The Narrows on the way south, relax for a spell, and await our friends.

We anchored in a small bay on Bull Island's south side where we had all rafted up the previous year. Carrie and I checked the weather. Forecasters were calling for storms moving through from the south later that evening around 9 p.m., with wind up to 13 knots. No big deal.

We discussed the wisdom of rafting up on a lee shore with incoming weather, and then, under beautiful sunny skies with scarcely a breeze blowing, we settled in to enjoy an afternoon of swimming, reading, relaxing, and eating.

Irish Eyes was looking her best. We had just completed six years of "a little of this and a little of that," her topsides and hull clean and white, her bottom blue. She sported a pretty, scalloped-edged bimini that turned her cockpit into a most excellent lounge, and she was flying a large American flag from the forestay. She looked terrific.

I was a bit concerned about showing up first, being in the prime spot, anticipating that other boats would want to raft up with me and make us the main anchor. Though I

Carrie and Mike had just finished several years of refurbishing *Irish Eyes* making her a cozy home afloat. After the storm, the cabin was flooded.

was confident in *Irish Eyes*' anchoring setup, I wasn't comfortable holding an entire raft. My worries seemed resolved a little while later, though, when a few boats came in together, and Doug and Bev on their Catalina 30, *X-Static*, volunteered to anchor the group.

We merrily rafted up, five of us, less than 50 yards from shore. We discussed the weather, took a poll, and assured ourselves that it wouldn't get too bad. We were certain that we would have time to react if the weather began to act up.

We enjoyed the easy company of friends for a time. Then a light rain started to fall, and a little breeze came with it. Someone suggested that we go below to avoid the rain. The crew on *Gayle Force* offered their cabin, and Carrie and I followed along. Two of the more concerned sailors stayed topside, keeping an eye on the changing conditions. We heard thunder in the distance, a long way off, over the mountains to the east.

It didn't take very long. I felt the boat lift and settle, a pattern quickly formed. We'd been belowdecks no more than a few minutes. All at once an anchor alarm sounded and one of the sailors on deck yelled down the companionway, "We're dragging!"

Sailors rapidly poured out of the companionway into a near instantaneous gale. We later learned that the initial gust that hit us measured 45 knots and had built an impressive fetch as it traveled the few miles across the shallow end of the lake before it reached us. The waves were building surprisingly quickly.

I stepped across to *Irish Eyes* as the boats violently jerked and tugged against each other. The two biggest boats, Catalina 30s, started their engines in seconds and began powering into the building surf, attempting to hold all of us off the approaching shoreline.

I grabbed my knife, which I kept sharpened and unsheathed in the gunnel. Not waiting for Carrie, and with the mass of boats continuing to drag towards shore, I felt I had to act fast, so I cut one line, and *Irish Eyes*' bow began to swing away. I was thinking, "Sorry, Dick, I owe you a couple of lines."

Looking up, I could see Carrie on *Gayle Force,* considering stepping across, but we were heaving too much by now and drifting apart. We quickly concluded it was best for her to stay aboard the Catalina 30 rather than attempt a leap.

The scene in the bay after the storm left boats strewn about on the rocks, including Mike and Carrie's Catalina 25, *Irish Eyes*.

Carrie and Mike on board *Irish Eyes* during happier days.

Five frantic pulls and my outboard was running, and I realized I had swung broadside to the shoreline. The waves were lifting the boat's 5,000 pounds and throwing us at the rocks to our port. I looked up and saw rocks and trees that were impossibly close—it was happening so fast.

Still, I was making a little progress. *Irish Eyes* was coming stern into the waves little by little, inching away from the rocks that reached for us from the shore. Every wave would swing the roaring outboard to port, violently wrenching it from my embrace. I fought it back around again and again.

Rocks and trees were impossibly close—it was happening so fast.

I tried to drag the stern away from the rocks by hugging the outboard, in reverse, hard over into the wind. I felt the prop gain purchase. The Honda four-stroke 9.9 had been a good engine for me and this boat with plenty of power.

A few minutes into the event, the waves were huge—they'd built from nothing to 4 feet in so little time. The storm continued to build. The little outboard was working hard when the prop was in the water, which was only part of the time. A wave would roll up beneath *Irish Eyes* and lift her stern, the outboard would come out of the water, and the wave would throw us towards the rocks.

Then we dropped into a particularly large trough, and a wave smashed into the stern. The outboard's tilt lock failed under the force, and it swung upwards, snapping the tiller in two and crushing my hand between the cowling and the transom. I felt the keel bump the rocks 4½ feet beneath me. *Irish Eyes* heeled hard as a wave washed over the outboard, cowling ajar, and it quit running immediately.

That was it.

I steadied myself in the cockpit as our beautiful sailboat with her new sails, new cushions, and shining brightwork bounced ever more firmly on the rocky prominence sticking out from the center of the bay.

The boat aboard the barge after being lifted from the island, underway to the mainland.

Lift and drop, lift and drop. A few short minutes after my fight to save her began, water was coming into her.

She lay hard on her port side, a tree jabbing into her shrouds. A particularly large wave lifted her again and set her high on the rocks, and there she stuck, rocking with every wave.

I climbed into the cabin, threading my arms into a life jacket. What a mess! The dinette was half submerged, belongings floating all around. I grabbed the emergency radio that I keep in its charging station. It was almost dead. I had not been keeping up its charge. I carried it into the cockpit.

I called a Mayday on Channel 16, "*Irish Eyes* on the rocks south side of Bull Island with four other sailing vessels!" A reassuring voice answered immediately, clearly copying my information. Lake County Search and Rescue had been notified and were on their way. The person at the other end of the radio asked me to confirm this message, but as I keyed the mic, my radio went dead.

Approximately 30 minutes had passed, and as I looked east over my bow, I could see Carrie and our friend, Dick, in the companionway of *Gayle Force,* also laying on her port side with her mast in the trees, rocking and grinding on the rocks with each wave.

The wind was randomly gusting high and then it would lull a bit, then it would scream again. From her perch now high on the rocks, *Irish Eyes* moved a little less with each wave. By this time, I had packed dry clothes into a bag along with water and Carrie's shoes. What technology we owned was somewhere on board; remarkably, most of it would be found later in good order.

As I was now solidly aground, I easily stepped off *Irish Eyes* and onto the rocks as she lay on her side. I saw Doug and Bev still working hard to keep *X-Static* safe; perhaps 50 feet from shore, they had deployed their anchor and had their engine running to keep the bow into the wind and waves.

Farther down the bay, I saw Shelby and Lori fighting for *Kona Kai,* a beautiful 24-foot trimaran. She had come up broadside with one of her amas against a tree, every wave attempting to snap it like a breadstick. They had fenders between the tree and the ama, but the waves were very strong.

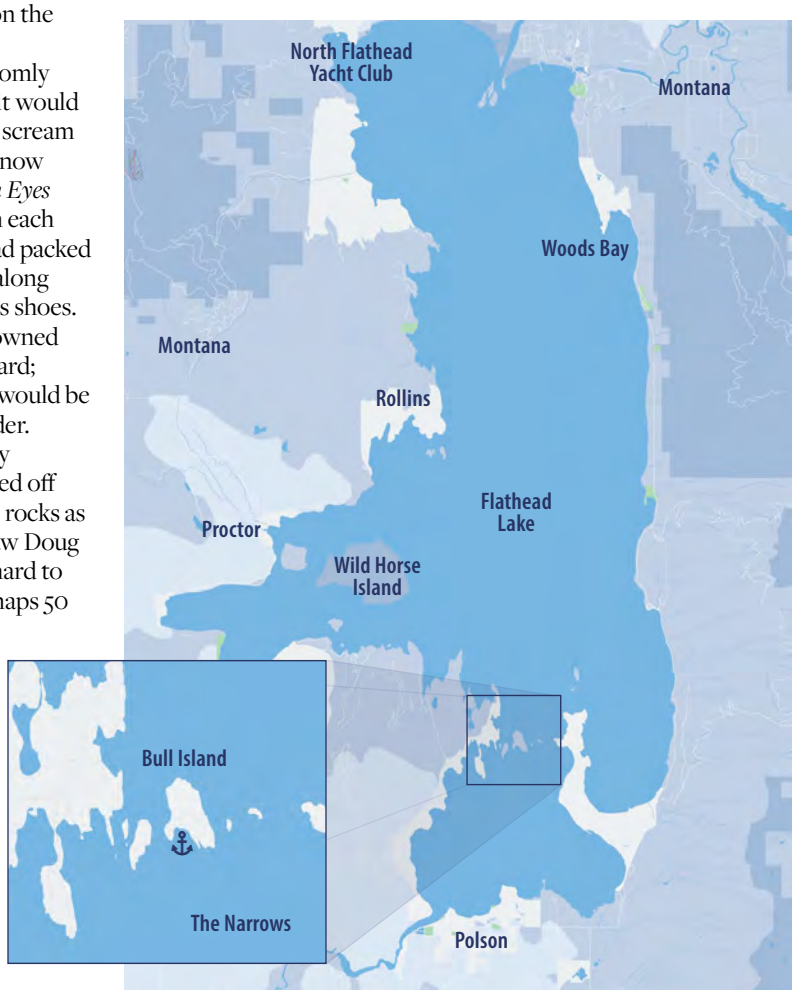
I ran over to help them get the boat's bows into the waves. It was tough going. We would make a little ground and then a large wave would send us back to zero. As the wind and waves lulled briefly, we aggressively fought and managed to turn *Kona Kai* a few degrees off the wind—it was working! She was bow to the wind, and we were making progress out into the surf.

Then it seemed the waves came back with vengeance as the gusts again intensified. We faltered, and *Kona Kai* rushed the shore backwards and slightly to port, knocking Lori beneath the water between the hull and an ama.

Kona Kai lifted as another wave crested over Lori's head, keeping her submerged. The boat's hull came down hard against the pebble beach, right next to Lori! I reached down and she grabbed my hand. She paddled with her feet and made her way backwards, floating on her back, up the beach as I pulled. With no small effort she was clear, and *Kona Kai* had remained bow to windward, backed up on the beach.

We regrouped, found our opportunity, and pushed the boat out into the waves. And then I smelled smoke. Fire. Plastic burning.

I looked back at the three boats on the shore to the west. The winds were again so high. I could not see any smoke. Carrie



was over there somewhere. I bade Shelby and Lori good luck as they pushed out into the surf, and I headed down the bay back to the other boats.

I yelled to Dick over the noise of the wind and waves, "Are you on fire?" Alarmed, he shook his head.

It was Doug and Bev on *X-Static*. Smoke was coming from their engine compartment. They extinguished the fire promptly, but Doug had lost his electrical system and his engine. Their anchor was keeping their bow into the wind, though their keel was firmly set in the sand and rocks below, as they had been blown backwards toward the beach.

Meanwhile, *Gayle Force* and *Irish Eyes* continued to grind away on the rocks with every wave, though when I looked back to *Kona Kai*, I could see Shelby and Lori motoring her safely into the bay. Free!

Two hours after my call for help, Lake County Search and Rescue arrived with two impressive aluminum jet-drive rescue boats, landing them on the shore recently occupied by *Kona Kai*. The rescue crew assessed all of us for injuries, and all of us were accounted for. Remarkably, the worst injury was my hand, and I still wear a small zigzag of scars behind my first and second knuckles after almost three years.

Eventually, a group of us, cold and wet, left our sad and broken boats on the beach, and the rescue boats ferried us to Polson. After thanking the rescue crews, cold and wet we hiked up the hill and across the street to a laundromat to await our respective rides home.

***Irish Eyes* was a sad sight in the landfill.**

Two days later, *Irish Eyes* lay ahull on the deck of a barge owned by a salvager we'd hired to retrieve her. Though he took great care to lift her off the island, barge her to land, and then place her on her trailer, his boom hooked the boat's backstay at the very last moment, knocking down the rig. I couldn't believe it. And, as it turned out, he was uninsured.

Estimates to repair this rigging damage alone exceeded $21,000. This was the coup de grâce. *Irish Eyes* would not see water again.

Over the following days, she was stripped of all salvageable hardware, many parts of which live on in current club boats. Her hull was deposited in the landfill. I couldn't watch as the bulldozer crushed her.

Mike P. Frey was born and raised in Montana, where he and Carrie live with their two children. They taught themselves to sail aboard a 12-foot Sea Witch while caretaking at a private resort. They've continued to learn, racing and cruising on Flathead Lake for the past 18 years. They are currently refitting a Hans Christian Christina 43 and will be cruising for the foreseeable future. Previously, Mike was a ship's engineer in the Caribbean and a paramedic in Denver.

The Takeaway—MF

We are saddened by the damage done and eventual loss of our beautiful little sailboat. She paid the ultimate price for events within and beyond our control that day.

I am most grateful for the health and well-being of all involved, and also for the lessons I am taking away from this experience, which will make me a better and safer sailor. I now realize there are maneuvers I had not practiced in my 15 years of sailing that left voids in my abilities.

I also realize that complacency is a lottery you don't want to win, that accidents happen, that freak storms happen. People make mistakes and things quickly can go out of control.

Among the lessons learned, I realize that trusting the weather report that the winds would be mild was wishful thinking. I had heard stories of extreme gusts coming up with little notice on Flathead Lake, and that August was the beginning of an 18-month stretch of such events in our valley. Now I know.

The day preceding this event was glorious—still, warm, and beautiful. When we read the weather report, Carrie's and my initial instincts were to attempt to lead the group to the safer side of the island. But we were new and didn't feel qualified to make the suggestion, trusting that the years of experience before us knew well enough, and so we became complacent. We won't do that again.

Although the more weather-cautious sailors stayed on deck, they did not see signs of the approaching wind before it was too late. (Perhaps they were not as nervous as we initially thought.) We have learned that ultimately, we must be responsible for our own decisions and not rely on others. We are absolutely emboldened to speak up next time and will no longer simply follow the crowd.

If I had this to do over again, I would take a beat to bring my bride aboard before detaching from the raft. In the heat of the moment, I was moving as fast as possible and did not consider my next step as I was performing the current one. I was reacting in the moment. Perhaps if the two of us had been fighting to save her, *Irish Eyes* would still be floating.

I also should have started my outboard before cutting the lines, and it would have been good to have another hand on board to accomplish all the things that needed to be done at the same time. By freeing myself from the larger boats, I had thought I was helping to save them, but it may have put me and my boat in greater jeopardy.

Obviously, keeping emergency equipment on hand and prepared, such as keeping the portable radio charged, would have been prudent. I have learned this lesson well. Were I to pick up my radio now, it would be charged, as I check it frequently.

Finally, a formal debriefing or a sit-down discussion after such events is enormously beneficial. Our group did this informally and in small batches rather than all at once. I think we missed an opportunity, as we could have learned more if we have met in a larger formal group.

Finding the Path

New to sailing, a young couple is making the adventure happen one step at a time.

BY DAVID BLAKE FISCHER

In November 2020, Nathan and Kirra Davison-Lamb were aboard their newly acquired Cape Dory 31, *La Senda*, moored off Southern California's Santa Catalina Island. With the hills of Avalon behind them, Kirra in a white dress and Nathan in dress blue jeans and a white collared shirt, the young couple stood on the foredeck, exchanged vows, and eloped.

"Our families totally thought we were crazy," Nathan says. "But the truth is we're just happy to be together and get to travel on the ocean."

The crazy thing wasn't eloping, it was sailing. As recently as 2018, Kirra and Nathan were boatless with zero sailing experience and no concept of a life of living on the water. Three years and three boats later, the Aussie-Californians have learned to sail, tackled a gnarly list of DIY boat projects, and twice sailed the West Coast between Ventura and San Diego.

The Davison-Lamb's story is a testament to the integrity of a good old boat and a journey that shows the doors that can open, the skills we learn, and the meaning we make when we embark on new adventures.

Nathan grew up around Ventura, California. By age 9, he was exploring the Pacific Ocean with Junior Lifeguards and surfing. Kirra, who's named for a famed Gold Coast surf spot, spent time in South Lake Tahoe and Australia with a dad who believed that even school days could be surf days.

In November 2018, Nathan and Kirra, then 22 and 21, were in Central California with two surfboards, an '88 Volkswagen, and a loose plan to explore van life—a lifestyle of living in a home on wheels—traveling the coast, and surfing.

"We tried it out for two nights and hated it," Nathan says. "It felt like all we were doing was looking for parking spots."

Kirra at the helm of *La Senda,* a 1983 Cape Dory 31.

That week, they spotted a Craigslist ad for a 1968 Schock Santana 27.

"We didn't know anything about sailboats, but the whole thing looked intriguing," Nathan says. "We went to the marina, crawled around inside the boat, and thought, yeah, we could probably live in here."

They snapped up the Santana for $5K, moved aboard in Oxnard's Channel Islands Harbor, and soon were tinkering with the boat—but not really sailing.

"The Santana was clean and well maintained, but it wasn't glamorous," Kirra says. "On nights with Santa Ana winds, we slept in the Volkswagen, learned how to sacrifice and make the best of things."

Nathan chills in the hammock, on the water at last.

After six months of using the boat as a crash pad, they met Ted Wright, a New Zealander who was staff commodore at Anacapa Yacht Club. Ted took Kirra and Nathan under his wing, put them on a Tartan 34, and gave them a crash course in sailing.

"Day one, he tossed a spinnaker on the dock and told us to stuff the bag," Nathan says. "He put Kirra on the helm and told her to back up the boat."

"I hadn't even backed up our Santana," Kirra adds, laughing. Luckily, she says, they were in a wide basin. Ted was a hands-off teacher who believed that hands-on was the best way to learn how to sail and handle boats.

"He basically stood in the corner and had us do everything," Nathan says, "even sailing downwind, doing jibe after jibe until we got it right."

The stars aligned in Avalon Cove at Santa Catalina Island when Nathan and Kirra decided to elope on board *La Senda*.

Nathan and Kirra soon found the confidence to sail beyond the harbor. That year, they took the Santana 20 miles offshore to Santa Cruz Island and Anacapa Island. They spent rolly nights on the hook in the islands' wild and rugged coves, snorkeling and surfing from the boat, and beginning to dream of living the cruising life.

Going Bigger

This new dream, though, was going to require something more substantial than the 27-foot Santana. In February 2020, Nathan and Kirra sold the Santana, moved in with family, and began doing their homework to find a bigger boat that could take them farther.

"We were researching design, watching a lot of Project Atticus, and reading Nigel Calder's *Marine Diesel Engines*," Kirra says. "It felt like a glimmer of hope that we might someday have a boat capable of cruising."

After two months searching, they scooped up a 1977 Cal 34-III in Morro Bay. But the honeymoon was short.

"Our first night aboard, we woke up to dry throats and a rotten smell," Kirra says. "Was it bilge cleaner? Motor oil? Cat litter?" In the morning, they pumped 30 gallons of inky black water from the bilge. Over the next three months, they rolled up their sleeves and breathed life back into the Cal.

But there was a snag. The boat needed new chainplates, which required removing the mast, and the yard they were in had a long waiting list for any work.

"Do we wait months?" Nathan says. "Do we motor 150 miles south and haul out in Ventura? Do we trust this old boat with rotten chainplates to get us there?" Sail it or sell it? They went back and forth before the decision became clear. "We were super bummed," Nathan says, "but, it wasn't meant to be."

Or was it? One week after selling the Cal 34 they found a fresh listing for a Cape Dory 31 in San Diego.

"We hadn't been on a Cape Dory before, but we were digging the idea of a full keel and a good comfort ratio," Kirra says. "Plus, the boat was an Alberg design."

Hopeful, they hopped in the car and shlepped three hours south to San Diego. On sea trial, the Cape Dory punched through the waves, and its self-tacking jib made upwind work a breeze.

"We were head over heels," Kirra says. "We started cleaning the boat before we even had our offer accepted."

La Senda (Spanish: the path) is a 1983 Cape Dory 31. Designed by Carl Alberg, only 89 were built. With an aft head to port and a U-shaped galley to starboard, the 31 has a practical cruising interior.

"The boat wasn't huge, but the lines were pretty, and the teak was amazing," Kirra says. "That first night aboard, we couldn't believe the boat was ours."

The plan was to quickly get *La Senda* into shape, then sail north from San Diego back home to Ventura. But when the San Diego marina where they were staying required a survey to obtain a slip, the surveyor's report came back with a long list of issues, including three seized seacocks, 10 layers of bottom paint that should come off, and a variety of other necessary upgrades.

"The to-do list was long, and we didn't want to get overwhelmed," Kirra says. "So, we told the surveyor to point out the 'do-now' stuff and hold on the rest."

Nathan removed the through hulls and installed new Groco components with 5200. Kirra disassembled and serviced the Spartan seacocks. Then, they spent two days sanding, fairing, priming, and rolling on Interlux antifouling paint.

Kirra and Nathan got a crash course in good old boat ownership and maintenance when they tackled the list of projects on *La Senda,* the bottom being one of the top to-do items.

After splashing, they lived aboard while continuing to tackle projects. They replaced or rebedded deck hardware, replaced the running rigging, and removed a seized wind vane and a rotted hard dodger. They added new exhaust hose, a water pump, and a Rocna 33 anchor.

Cape Dorys are infamous for their chainplate assemblies—essentially bronze pad-eyes bolted through the deck with mild steel backing plates.

"Fortunately, *La Senda*'s previous owner had replaced the chainplates and added access panels that run from the galley to the V-berth," Nathan says. "Every chainplate and stanchion bolt was visible and easy to inspect. Everything was solid."

After six months of boat work, *La Senda* was ready to go home. In January 2021, Kirra and Nathan cast off the lines and set out on a weeklong, 125-nautical-mile upwind journey from San Diego to Ventura. Conditions were good and spirits were high.

"The trip gave us a small taste of cruising life," Kirra says. "Our favorite moments were mornings at first light, making our way to the ocean, and feeling the sun warm the Earth. In those small moments the world seemed so quiet and utterly peaceful. But damn, was it chilly!"

Halfway home they stopped at Santa Catalina Island where, amid pandemic closures, Avalon Cove was nearly empty.

"We had a great weather window. For three days the stars aligned in Avalon," Nathan says. "When we eloped on the deck of *La Senda*, a neighbor floated past and snapped our photo. It was a really beautiful moment."

After the trip, Nathan and Kirra found a slip for *La Senda* in Ventura Harbor where they could live and continue to work on the boat. Over the next eight months, they installed a new intermediate stay, Dyneema lifelines, waterlock muffler, stuffing box, and cutlass bearing. They repaired soft spots and stress cracks on deck, rolling on new grey KiwiGrip.

"Sometimes it's hard to see past the obstacles you encounter with boat work," Kirra says. "The decks took two months, but we set achievable goals and celebrated small victories along the way, even when they weren't in the master plan."

"And, we stayed motivated and positive by getting out on the water as often as we could to enjoy the boat," Nathan says. One of best parts of the process was being with neighbors.

"The cruising community was incredible," Nathan says. "For instance, when we pulled our prop shaft and removed the transmission coupling, our buddy Fred—a solo sailor on a Baba 30—was there to answer questions, share knowledge, and lend tools. He even gave us his old sails. It was insanely generous."

Ghosting along under the fog offshore, Kirra and Nathan get their sea legs on their new boat.

The Adventure Continues

In early October 2021, *La Senda* was in sailing condition and pulling at her dock lines. Waving goodbye to Ventura, Nathan and Kirra began a slow trip south to San Diego.

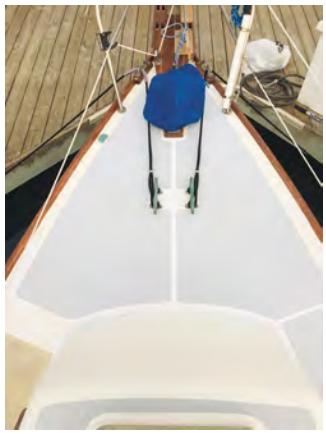
"At departure, we definitely felt some jitters," Kirra says. "But no boat is perfect, right? The best boat is the boat you've got."

They spent three weeks cruising, running downwind, and enjoying extended stops on Santa Cruz Island, a week of snorkeling on Catalina Island, and scoring some waves in Oceanside. On the journey's last leg, a 35-mile sail from Oceanside to San Diego, they faced a test when darkness and fog enveloped them. But with Nathan at the helm and Kirra navigating, they worked together and safely transited the inlets, rock piles, and bridges of Mission Bay—their new home for the winter season.

If fixing up an old boat and cruising was the goal, Kirra and Nathan certainly made it. But, for them, the goal was never really the point.

"For us, this journey has been about being taught perseverance and patience," Nathan says. "We dove in head-first on this adventure. Some moments have been amazing, others we've figured out the hard way. But we've pushed through, enjoyed it, and made it happen."

(Above and below) **The foredeck in mid-repair, and after completion, coated with new KiwiGrip non-skid.**



Kirra agrees. "With boats, it's easy to fall into the trap of thinking you should be doing or accomplishing more. But then, you miss what's happening right now," she says. "So we're enjoying what's in front of us and making the best of things. Getting a boat shipshape is definitely hard work, but when you get to do it with your best friend and you both become badass sailors, engineers, and mechanics, well, that's pretty cool."

David Blake Fischer sails Delilah, *a 1972 Cape Dory 25, out of Pasadena, California. His writing has appeared in McSweeney's, the MOTH, and* Cruising World. *Follow his sailing adventures on Instagram @sailingdelilah.*

The Lemonade Cruise, Part 1

When life gives long-held racing plans lemons, you make cruising lemonade.

BY TOM ALLEY

In late 2017, I decided that it would be really neat to enter the Marion-Bermuda Race and navigate my good old boat using good old navigational techniques (i.e., celestial) to get there.

The 645-nautical-mile cruising race from Marion, Massachusetts, to Bermuda happens every other year, and unlike some of its counterparts, it's for amateur sailors—no professionals—and encourages a diverse fleet of boats to enter. While participants can use electronic navigation, they can also choose to navigate solely by the stars, earning some favorable handicap adjustments and extra prizes for the effort.

Tomfoolery, our 1965 Alberg 35, would fit right in, but first I needed to be sure that she was up to the task of crossing the Gulf Stream and taking on all those ocean miles. So nearly every weekend for three years, projects and upgrades consumed my sailing life. While I used to joke that everything on the boat except for the hull has been either replaced or rebuilt, after looking back on all the things that we did, the statement winds up being frighteningly accurate.

Finally, though, it was time to make it happen. Just getting to the starting line of the 2021 race would be a logistical feat, since our home port in Watkins Glen, New York, is 580 nautical miles, a canal system, a river, and a chunk of ocean away from Marion. After considerable deliberation, logistics dictated we start the voyage in September 2020 so that we could be certain to arrive in Marion by Memorial Day the following spring.

The first leg of the journey—a five-day trip through the Erie Canal—is worthy of a story in itself. The delivery crew and I enjoyed wonderful weather and an uneventful trip. *Tomfoolery* arrived at Coeymans (pronounced "kwee-mans") Landing Marina, just south of Albany, New York, on the Hudson River, where she would spend the winter in storage, awaiting relaunch in spring.

The *Tomfoolery* crew enjoys a brisk sail en route to Essex, Connecticut.

By early May 2021, my crew and I were getting excited. In just five days we would be relaunching *Tomfoolery* and making the final 300-mile jaunt from Coeymans Landing to Marion. The Beverly Yacht Club, one of the race sponsors, would provide a mooring for us for the three weeks between our arrival and the start.

I had just finished putting together the grocery list for the delivery voyage and decided to check my email one last time before retiring for the night. There was an email from the race committee: It began, "We have made the difficult decision..."

What? I read it again. Race cancelled. This can't be. I checked again. And again. I reached out to my contacts in Marion, and they confirmed it. There would be no Marion-Bermuda Race in 2021. The race committee cited concern for the racers' safety after a

Sunrise on the Erie Canal. The trip from Watkins Glen, New York, to the Hudson River included five days on the canal, a story all by itself.

spike in COVID-19 cases in Bermuda in March and April.

I started calling my crew members. A couple of them thought I was messing with them, but once they realized I wasn't they were as stunned as I was. Suddenly, we were a crew without a purpose. All those months—years—of preparations, and now what?

The next day, several emails arrived from other disappointed participants who were floating the idea of sailing to Bermuda as a group, despite the race's cancellation. After all the time and effort my crew and I had spent preparing ourselves and *Tomfoolery*, I was giving this option serious consideration, especially since several of my crew already had airline and hotel reservations in Bermuda for their families.

While I was pondering, another email popped up, this from Bill Gunther at Essex Yacht Club in Connecticut. He had heard about our predicament through a mutual contact in Marion and asked if we would be interested in participating in the Sam Wetherill Memorial Race, a 140-nautical-mile event hosted by his club. While it might not compete with a trip to Bermuda, it did have a couple of legs that ventured into the North Atlantic to give us some time racing offshore.

I looked at the charts. We were only about 200 nautical miles from Essex—a two-day sprint down the Hudson, through New York City, then east through Long Island Sound. My crew and I kicked around the idea for a bit and decided the race would serve as a good shakedown of all the modifications we'd made to *Tomfoolery* over the past three-plus years. This would also help us build confidence in ourselves and our boat if we were to venture to Bermuda with others planning the trip. Decision made: We opted to compete in the Wetherill Race.

So began what we decided to call The Lemonade Cruise.

Just at dawn, the New York City skyline is outlined by early light, and the river is blissfully mirror-like with little traffic.

Erie Canal delivery crew Jim McGinnis (left) and Mike Crouse (right) get ready to tuck into a home-cooked dinner while underway.

Racing to the Starting Line

When I called Bill to thank him for the invitation, I asked when the race started.

"Friday," he replied. "But the skipper's meeting is on Thursday evening."

Yow! We had four days to launch, commission, provision, and get to Essex. Before we could go anywhere, I had to start studying tide tables. While I have some offshore trips under my belt, I'm primarily an inland sailor and can't claim any significant experience with tides. One of the things I found astounding is that the Hudson River, even 125 nautical miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean, has a 5-foot tidal range, so I knew I needed to pay attention.

With our 5½-foot draft, we could only launch around high tide in Coeymans Landing, and the marina entrance channel was also too shallow for us to pass at low tide. Timing would be critical. The marina staff said they could launch us Tuesday at the high tide around 9 a.m. If we hustled getting the boat prepped after launch, we should be able to make it out of the marina before the water got too low.

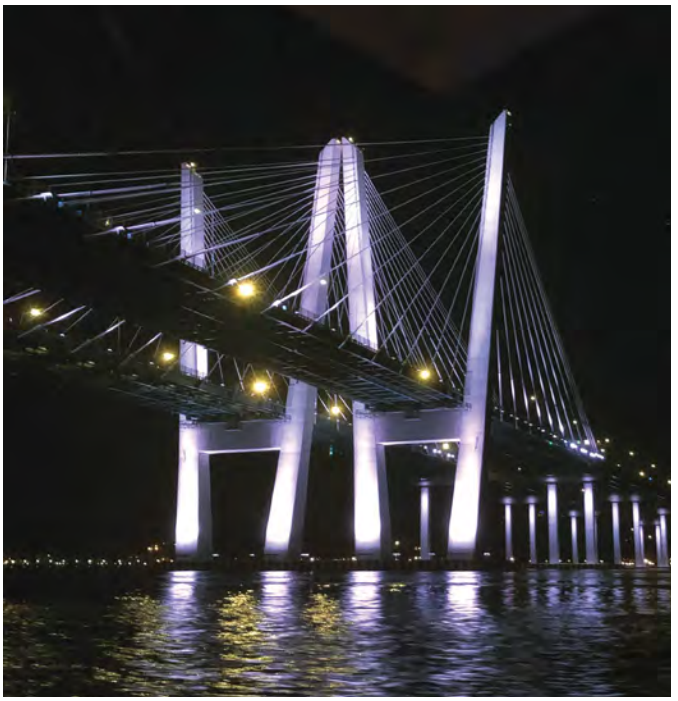
By the time the crew and I arrived at the marina Monday afternoon, *Tomfoolery* was already in the lift slings ready to be the first boat splashed the following morning. We spent the rest of the afternoon and evening unloading gear from the canal transit that we wouldn't need and replacing it with provisions, race gear, luggage, and everything else we thought we'd require for an extended trip. Hundreds of pounds of stuff and countless trips up and down a 10-foot ladder later, we all slept very well on board (we dubbed the boat in the slings the largest hammock we'd ever used).

Tuesday morning dawned bright and sunny, the launch went off on time, the boat's engine fired right up, and after filling water tanks and lashing two extra jerry cans to the deck, we cleared the shoal at the marina entrance 90 minutes later and caught a 1.5-knot favorable tidal current down the Hudson River toward New York City.

Big Apple, Big Tides

The lights of New York City were visible hours before we arrived. The first skyscrapers were abeam at daybreak. We were the only boat on a mirror-calm Hudson River. A consultation of the tide table suggested that we should stop somewhere and wait a few hours before venturing up East River, though Hell Gate, and into Long Island Sound.

First, we took advantage of the calm water and light traffic to pay a visit to the Statue of Liberty. We snapped some photographs as we motored by, then we popped into Liberty Landing Marina in Jersey City, New Jersey,



The Tappan Zee Bridge looks like modern art when lit up at night, top left.

Hell Gate in the East River. Note the "wind line" in the water, marking the line between still water and the tidal current that was pushing *Tomfoolery* at nearly 4 knots, above.

right across the Hudson from lower Manhattan, where the dockmaster let us stay for a couple of hours and enjoy a hearty breakfast cooked on board.

Then, it was time to face Hell Gate. Three places on the East Coast of North America are notorious for their tides: The Bay of Fundy, and the east and west ends of Long Island Sound, known as The Race and Hell Gate, respectively. *Tomfoolery* would eventually transit these last two multiple times in the coming weeks.

Currents in Hell Gate and the East River routinely hit 5 knots, making passage against the tide extremely difficult for our displacement sailboat. Coupled with the wakes and chop generated by all manner of commercial and recreational vessel traffic, the passage can be a bit of a nail-biter if you don't hit the tides just right.

As the tide approached slack, we made one more pass by Lady Liberty for crew members who were off watch and sleeping during our early-morning visit. Then, dodging the ubiquitous New York ferries zooming up, down, and across the waterways, we headed northeast into the East River. By the time we arrived at Hell Gate, we were making more than 8.5 knots over the bottom (the current had not quite peaked in intensity), and by midafternoon, we picked up a freshening breeze and sailed eastward into Long Island Sound.

I read it again. Race cancelled. This can't be.

A Rude Awakening

By 1:30 a.m. on May 20—the day of the skipper's meeting and one day before the start—we were just a few miles from Old Saybrook, Connecticut, and the mouth of the Connecticut River, where we would proceed upstream to Essex. Mike, who was at the helm, and I were beginning to consult the chart plotter more carefully to plan our landfall while the off-watch crew slept. I zoomed out the view to get a better big picture of where we were and to identify the numerous lights we were seeing.

The weather was clear, and the moon had set, so we could see a lot of buoys. We quickly identified the two or three closest lights and determined we were a little too far north to clear one of the shoals near the mouth of the Connecticut River. Locating the flashing red light marking the southernmost tip of Cornfield Shoal, I told Mike we had to go south of it, and he dutifully altered course.

A couple minutes later there was a deafening crash and *Tomfoolery* lurched over what was obviously a submerged rock. Crew member Katie was jolted out of her bunk, then further startled by Mike racing down the companionway, flipping on lights, and pulling up floorboards. We immediately stopped to assess damage.

With more than a little concern, Mike announced that the bilge was full of water. Our bilge is 42 inches deep and will hold hundreds of gallons of water, so this observation was significant. I watched for a moment and did not see the water rising.

"When was the last time we pumped the bilge?" I asked. At the same time my mind was racing to calculate if we were close enough to shore to run aground on a nearby beach if needed.

"I don't know," said Mike.

When *Tomfoolery* is under power, the stuffing box tends to leak a little more than it probably should, so pumping the bilge is required once or twice a day during long trips. Fixing it is harder than it sounds, since we have to remove the engine exhaust system to access it.

We turned on the electric

After the cruise was over, Tom finally saw the nasty results of two close encounters with the submerged rock known as Hen and Chickens off the mouth of the Connecticut River.

bilge pump. After a few moments, water levels began to recede, taking the tension onboard with it until...Wham! As Mike replaced the floorboards, the keel hit rock again. How could that happen? Hadn't we stopped?

When I reviewed our track on the chart plotter later, several things became obvious. The rock we had hit was marked on the chart, but it wasn't visible because I had zoomed out to see light characteristics of buoys that were some distance away. The mark denoting the rock was an unlit buoy some distance south of the actual hazard it was marking. We were traveling into the current when we hit the rock, and forward momentum carried us over it, but when we stopped, the tidal current—running at a little over 2 knots—pushed us back over the same rock a second time while we were all below assessing potential damage.

When recounting the adventure later with local sailors, the universal response was the knowing head nod followed by tales of their own encounters with the rock known as Hen and Chickens. Apparently, striking this rock is a rite of passage, although no one we spoke with had managed to hit it twice at the same time. (Sometimes it stinks to be an overachiever. The only real damage from the encounter was the chunk taken out of the keel, which we saw months later when we hauled out for winter storage.)

Following the rather abrupt introduction to Hen and Chickens, we decided to simply stand off in deeper water to await sunrise before attempting to navigate what appeared to be a rather narrow channel up the Connecticut River. By 5 a.m. the sky was bright enough and we headed upstream, arriving at the Essex Yacht Club about an hour later. We tied up at an empty spot on the dock and grabbed a quick nap until the staff arrived to welcome us and show us to a slip that Bill (who turned out to be the rear commodore) had arranged.

During the skipper's meeting that evening, Bill called us out as special guests who could easily claim the title of the crew that had ventured the farthest to sail in their opening race of the 2021 season. Everyone was willing to share information and advice for dealing with tides, currents, and the many local "features" that make sailing interesting and challenging.

We had made it to the start—just not of the race we'd necessarily set out to sail.

Stay tuned for Part 2 of The Lemonade Cruise in the November/December 2022 issue.

Tom Alley and his family sail a 1965 Alberg 35 sloop, Tomfoolery, *and are active racers and cruisers with the Finger Lakes Yacht Club in Watkins Glen, New York. He also manages the Alberg 35 User Group web site, Alberg35.org. When he's not sailing, thinking about sailing, or tinkering with his boat, Tom is either scuba diving, hanging out with fellow amateur radio operators, or (as a last resort) working as an engineer to support his sailing addiction and, if there's any money left over, send his kids to college.*

A Pearson Runs Through It

Through a long friendship of sailing and writing, a particular boat weaves a steady thread.

BY HERB MCCORMICK

I wasn't in the market for a sailboat. I already had one, a Pearson Ensign, to be exact, sitting up on the winter hard in Portsmouth, Rhode Island—winter being the main reason I was here in sunny Florida, having done the snowbird thing tooling up and down the state's Gulf Coast with my bike and kayak in the bed of my pickup.

En route, I had decided to make a call to my best boat mate, Dan Spurr, who lives on Longboat Key. But it was his son, Steve, who had snagged me, and while we have always been fond of one another, I have to say I was rather gobsmacked when we again reunited and his first words were not, "How's it going, dude?" but, "You're just the man I wanted to see. I'm going to sell you my boat."

It's possible I was even more stunned when he talked me into it—a shoal-draft Pearson 365 (a rare sloop-rigged version of the Bill Shaw design, most of which were split-rig ketches) called *August West*.

But I probably shouldn't have been. After all, the boat was a Pearson. The guy was a Spurr. And the story of me and Dan Spurr, Steve's dad, is one that is woven around writing and boats, nearly all of them Pearsons.

It started with a lovingly cared-for Pearson Triton called *Adriana,* named after Dan's daughter. He'd brought it to Newport, Rhode Island, through the freshwater canals from his home waters on Lake Michigan, to take a job at *Cruising World* magazine, where I'd landed my first job out of college answering phones and running film to get developed. (Yes, I was the receptionist.)

> **The dude smoked a pipe, its smoke swirling in the breeze.**

The dude smoked a pipe, its smoke swirling aromatically in the breeze. He sported a moustache/goatee combo that, at least at one time, was called a Van Dyke. Though he hailed from freshwater, he was pretty much the saltiest character I could imagine.

When I got kicked upstairs, literally, after a promotion to editorial assistant, Spurr and I became colleagues. And Spurr took me under his wing. Both of us landed book contracts at the time, and in the years since we've both authored a few. But you have to start somewhere, and it was in our office late at night that we shared a motto ("Misery loves company"). Spurr taught me a few things, but what's lasted is his work ethic, something I barely knew existed. He personified that old saying: If you want to write, son, you need to put your butt in the chair.

On the water, literally and figuratively, he also showed me the ropes. My experience to that point was mostly comprised of serving as rail meat on beer-can races out of the Newport Yacht Club with the father of a high-school bud who owned a Pearson 26 and then a Pearson 32 (yes, more Pearsons).

For perhaps obvious reasons I was rarely allowed near the tiller when

***August West*, the Pearson 365 Herb purchased from Dan's son, Steve, sits at her dock in Florida.**

racing, but Spurr started taking me out regularly for afternoon sails on *Adriana*, and while by no means was the stately, full-keeled Triton a rocket ship, it was the perfect ride for a greenhorn like me to begin acquiring some skills and experience. Spurr was a wise and gentle teacher. And this sailing thing, I soon learned, had many elements I cared deeply about: fun, travel, adventure, and after I got better at it, even competition. Anyway, I was hooked.

I "graduated" from the Triton to my own J/24, and meanwhile, Spurr moved up to another Pearson, a 32-foot Vanguard from the design board of Phillip Rhodes that he also called *Adriana*, which he fit out for extensive voyaging. And while the Vanguard pales in comparison to the voluminous accommodations found in beamy, contemporary sailboats, to me it was astounding how much more room and comfort could be created in a vessel just 4 feet longer than the Triton.

I spent my birthday in 1988 on a cruise with Spurr to the Bahamas on *Adriana* with a couple of other pals, my first crossing of the Gulf Stream to go along with a whole new revelation: Sailing turquoise waters and hopping from one tropical island to another is a goal to which everyone should aspire. Once again, Spurr opened a new door for me to a world I very much wished to inhabit.

Dan's daughter, Adriana, on the namesake Pearson Vanguard, top left.

We both strayed from the Pearson theme for a bit—when Spurr became editor of *Practical Sailor*, he chose a C&C racer/cruiser called *Greybeard* as his platform on which to test and evaluate new gear and equipment. When he required something bigger and beefier for the same purpose, he moved on to a powerful Tartan 44 called *Viva*, and I was more than happy to take *Greybeard* off his hands.

With each of Spurr's new sailboats, I always learned a few new things myself, and such was the case with the Tartan, an ex-IOR warhorse from the renowned design house of Sparkman & Stephens with a massive sail plan offset by a deep, 7-foot-plus fin keel that totally and absolutely hauled the mail, particularly when scorching upwind with the whole shooting match sheeted home. It was here that I came to truly understand and appreciate how loads and power increase exponentially the bigger you go and the longer the waterline, and that the thrills and chills also correspond accordingly. As an extremely fortuitous chap, I can honestly say there are lots of things I've loved in my life, and taking the wheel of *Viva* in a fresh New England summer sea breeze is one of them.

Pearsons returned to the story during the next chapter, when Spurr moved to Montana, and after a while, the notion of a wintertime escape from the snow and ice seemed like a pretty attractive idea. He found the Pearson 365 *August West* in Newport, and though not enamored of the name—the slovenly character and protagonist in an old Grateful Dead tune called "Wharf Rat"—after adding up the costs and time it would take to sand off the old handle and paint on a new one, he said the hell with it and left it as is. Then he replaced all the standing rigging instead

The Pearson Vanguard *Adriana* anchored on the Intracoastal Waterway.

Dan and Herb, best boat bros, stop somewhere on the Intracoastal Waterway while taking Dan's new trawler up the East Coast from Florida to Rhode Island.

and had the boat trucked to Florida to serve as his Rocky Mountain getaway.

It was a good plan but turned out not to be a long-term one. For in Florida after a season or two, he sold *August West* to his son, Steve, who'd outgrown his Pearson 30. (Did I mention we'd be invoking Pearson Yachts? Just to put an exclamation point on it, it was around this time that I found and purchased a classic 23-foot Pearson Ensign. It all gets a little bit creepy, right?)

And then, earlier this year during my southern sojourn, I'd called on Spurr on Longboat Key, where he'd finally put down a new keel, this one a Grand Banks 42 called *First Light*. (My man has transitioned to what sailors call the "dark side" of powerboats, but the fact of the matter is we're both of the mind that the important thing is being on the water, no matter the conveyance. Besides, he needed something after selling his Pearson 365, no?)

And as it turned out, *First Light* was in the same marina on Longboat Key where Steve tied up *August West,* which is more or less where this tale begins, with another Spurr selling me another Pearson. A fine sailor, Steve these days is a hardworking man with minimal leisure time, and when he does nab some, what he loves to do is hop on his center-console rocket and roar into the Gulf of Mexico to catch fish, another activity at which he excels. Which meant he had two boats. And one of them had to go.

It made no difference when I told him no, that after all, I did have that Pearson Ensign back home. Steve turns out to be pretty persuasive. Like Marlon Brando in "The Godfather," he made me an offer I couldn't refuse. And really, shouldn't every committed sailor own at least a couple of sailboats?

So, what do you know, now I have my second Pearson tied up just down the dock from my longtime boat bro. Kismet? I believe so. Times have changed, of course (though my friend still slings marine journalism, and these days is a contributing editor to this very magazine). Spurr's pipe vanished long ago. The bottom half of his Van Dyke has also been bid sayonara (though the 'stache is still there).

But our adventures continue, and we are, in fact, in the midst of one even as I type, pecking away at this story from the saloon of *First Light* while northbound on North Carolina's Alligator River on the Intracoastal Waterway heading from Florida to Newport. And while this cruise is not unfolding under sail, but on a trawler for cryin' out loud, some things are lasting, too, and that goes for Spurr and me. Boats, even Pearsons, come and go. Mates we remain.

Award-winning sailing journalist Herb McCormick is the author of five nautical books. He lives in his hometown of Newport, Rhode Island.

Bon (Boat) Appétit

Here's a cook's tour of seaworthy recipes suitable for a good old boat's chef.

BY JOHN VIGOR

Pity the poor cook. Think of the limited space for a galley on most good old boats. Think of the lack of equipment. Think how much more difficult it is to cook a decent meal on a small boat than it is at home.

The cook is expected to plan and cook all meals, whether the boat is passage-making at sea or holed up in some little cove while coastal cruising. Yet the cook is also expected to lend a hand on deck when the skipper decides to reef a sail or weigh anchor—usually when the food is just ready to serve.

It takes a special person to be a cook, especially on many "vintage" boats lacking refrigeration and offering only one- or two-burner stoves. It takes a certain stubbornness in the face of innumerable difficulties to provide tasty and varied meals for a crew of wet, cold, starving sailors.

But plentiful good food can make the difference between a miserable cruise and a memorable experience on the water, so there are times when the cook is the most important crew member on the boat, the person to handle with kid gloves.

How do sea cooks manage? They improvise. They experiment. They make do. Above all, they simplify. To give you an idea of what this means, following is a handful of simple recipes tested and used at sea on small boats over the years.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM PAYNE

Onion Soup à la *Jolie Brise*

This is a simple, classic, one-pot recipe. It came from Commander Evelyn George Martin OBE, whose soup was the object of frequent praise aboard his famous cutter, *Jolie Brise*, which won the first Fastnet Race in 1925:

"Place four medium-large onions, peeled and cut into quarters, into a covered saucepan with 3 to 4 cups cold water. Add 2 tablespoons Bovril (or other strong beef stock) 4 ounces butter, a dessert spoonful of Lea & Perrins Worcestershire sauce, a little black pepper, and (when the cooking is nearly done) a small glass of sherry or rather more white wine. Boil gently for 30 minutes or until the onions have fallen to pieces and are soft, stirring occasionally."

JV: This recipe makes enough for four to six people, but it may be rather too glutinous for modern arteries, so I reduce the butter to 2 ounces and substitute four or five beef stock (bouillon) cubes for the Bovril. It's still delicious and highly comforting on a cold, stormy day.

Beef Stew à la *Trekka*

John Guzzwell famously solo-sailed his 20-foot yawl, *Trekka*, around the world in the 1950s. She was then the smallest boat to do so. "*Trekka* Stew was a meal I never tired of," says John in his classic book *Trekka Round the World*.

"It generally comprises three main vegetables: potatoes, carrots, and onions, which all keep well at sea without refrigeration. After cooking these under pressure for about half an hour, I would add a can of meat and a can of baked beans. A spoon of Marmite and a little flour would thicken the gravy and some salt and pepper to flavor, and Presto! another meal was ready."

JV: Marmite is a beef-flavored yeast extract for which you can substitute beef bullion cubes. If you don't have a pressure cooker, use a pan with a lid and simmer the vegetables.

Tahitian Raw Fish à la Herbulot

Florence Herbulot was a well-known French sailor, scholar, and translator, greatly experienced in sailboat racing, cruising, and cookery. She wrote a practical book called *Cooking Afloat*, especially designed for use on small boats with very limited cooking and storage facilities.

If you are inclined to tow a fishing lure behind you while you sail, or if you should come across a fishboat willing to sell you some newly caught fish, this recipe is worth trying. It is a simplified Polynesian version of ceviche, that tasty appetizer so well known in South America.

"For this dish you can use any sea fish as long as it is perfectly fresh...Place the fish, either in fillets or cut into cubes, in a deep dish. Sprinkle generously with lemon juice; leave to marinate for one to two hours and then add some olive oil and pepper; marinate for a further two hours.

"As soon as the fish is really white, with no trace of transparency, it is 'cooked,' that is the flesh has been seethed by the lemon juice just as if it had been boiled in water and vinegar. The only difference is that it takes longer than cooking, but the flavor is wonderful."

JV: Use your imagination for ways to serve it. I just use a toothpick to spear each half-inch cube.

Bread à la *Wanderer III*

Fresh bread is a luxury aboard a small boat. The smell alone is guaranteed to titillate your taste buds. If you should be lucky enough to have an oven in your galley, this simple recipe for bread is worth trying. It comes from Susan Hiscock, who sailed around the world several times with her husband, the well-known sailor and author, Eric Hiscock.

Even if you don't have an oven, this recipe might still be useful. I have personally eaten bread in mid-ocean that was baked in a pressure cooker—but not under pressure, of course.

Here are Susan's instructions:

"Take 3 lb of white or whole-wheat flour, add 4 heaped teaspoons of baking powder and 1 teaspoon of salt, and mix thoroughly. Pour in 1½ pints of milk or water, stir quickly to a stiff paste, shape into conveniently sized loaves and bake in a hot oven (350 degrees F.) for 45 minutes. Get the dough into the oven as quickly as possible after moisturizing, or the bread will be heavy."

Curried Lentils à la *Whisper*

For 36 years, Margaret and Hal Roth sailed the world's oceans in a series of 35-foot sloops, all named *Whisper*. One of Margaret's favorite recipes was built around lentils, which last well at sea:

Ingredients

1 cup lentils
2 cups water, lightly salted
1 large onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped
2 tablespoons butter or margarine
2 tablespoons flour
1 tablespoon curry powder (or more, to taste)
salt and pepper to taste
1½ cups additional water, or stock

"Soak lentils overnight in fresh water. Drain, then add up to 2 cups lightly salted water and pressure-cook for 20 minutes. In a frying pan, sauté onion and garlic in butter or margarine. Add flour, curry powder, salt, and pepper.

"While stirring, add up to 1½ cups of boiling water, or vegetable or meat stock, and simmer for 30 minutes. The curry sauce should be thick, so vary the amount of liquid accordingly. Add the lentils to the sauce and serve with rice and chutney. Serves two."

JV: Once again, if you don't have a pressure cooker, use a pan with a lid and simmer the lentils for 30 minutes or a little more until tender.

Gravlox à la *Wind Song*

I met Burl and Abigail Romick when they were taking their C&C 35 Landfall, *Wind Song*, around Vancouver Island in 1999. They served up one of the most delicious appetizers I've ever tasted. If you like smoked salmon, you'll just love this close relative called gravlox, especially if you've just caught the salmon:

Ingredients

Center-cut salmon, 3 to 3½ lb, cleaned and scaled
Large bunch dill (May substitute dried dill weed)
¼ cup kosher salt
¼ cup sugar
2 tablespoons peppercorns, crushed

"Slice lengthwise and remove backbone and small bones. Place half of fish skin-side-down in a glass or enamel baking dish or casserole. Sprinkle on dill. Combine salt, sugar, and peppercorns. Sprinkle over dill. Top with other half of fish, skin-side-up. Cover with plastic, weighted down. Keep cool for 48 hours. Turn fish every 12 hours. Baste with the juices that form.

JV: When the fish is ready, gently scrape off the mixture on top and use a sharp knife to slice the salmon thinly horizontally, starting from the middle. Serve on crackers or as you see fit.

Sangria à la *Freelance*

Finally, on those happy occasions in port or at anchor, when everybody has been well fed, here's the way to finish off that good meal. My wife, June, and I often enjoyed our version of sangria on our 30-foot sloop *Freelance*, including during our six-month cruise from South Africa to Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Into the bottom of a large jug put one thinly sliced lemon and one thinly sliced orange with the pips removed. Sprinkle with two dessert spoons of sugar and add one generous shot of brandy. Pour in one bottle of red wine and mix well. Chill, if you can. If you can't, don't worry.

Just before serving, top up the jug with lemonade. If you've got ice cubes, well bully for you. Add them to this delicious brew—but I can assure you that a lack of ice cubes will not be noticed after the first glass of *Freelance* sangria.

John Vigor is a retired journalist and the author of 12 books about small boats, among them Things I Wish I'd Known Before I Started Sailing, *which won the prestigious John Southam Award, and* Small Boat to Freedom. *A former editorial writer for the* San Diego Union-Tribune, *he's also the former editor of* Sea *magazine and a former copy editor of* Good Old Boat. *A national sailing dinghy champion in South Africa's International Mirror Class, he now lives in Bellingham, Washington.*

Getting Loopy

Simple to make, mast loops keep halyard ends tidy and secure.

BY LIN PARDEY

"I've been looking around at all the improvements you've made on *Sahula* during the past five years," David said as he climbed back into the cockpit after hoisting the mainsail. "The simplest one is the one I really like best."

I had enjoyed being bosun on *Seraffyn* and *Taleisin* as my husband, Larry, and I voyaged through the years. Five years ago, after Larry was no longer with me, I was invited to help David complete the last leg of his 10-year circumnavigation by sailing from New Zealand to Australia. Before we left, we decided to take a few jaunts to let me get to know *Sahula*, his 40-foot, steel Van de Stadt cutter. On our very first mini-voyage, my itch to tidy up rigging details leapt to the fore.

The day was perfect, the wind lively. David had hoisted the mainsail, unfurled both headsails, and *Sahula* was sailing enjoyably on a beam reach in the lee of the island where I live. I left the cockpit and walked forward.

***Sahula* under sail.**

The base of the mast can be a busy place when multiple halyard tails need tending. Simple mast loops help keep things orderly and out of mischief, top right.

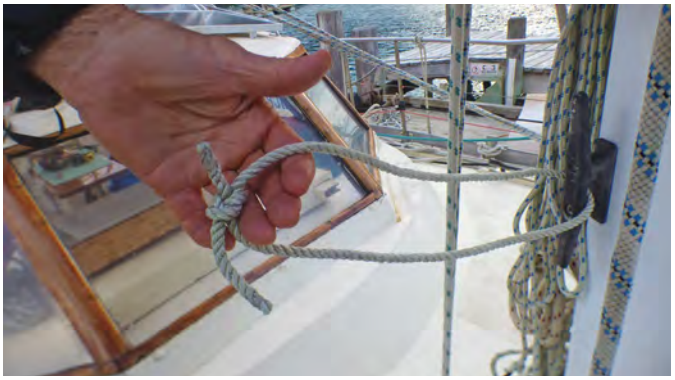
When I got to the mast, I came across a quandary. Like many boats with a double headsail rig, *Sahula* has several halyards that lead down to cleats near the lower part of the mast. Though David had secured the coiled ends of the halyards, to my eyes they not only looked untidy but also tenuous. I could see a potential for the coils to be washed free in a rough seaway.

The quandary was, do I say something and risk stepping on the emotional toes of someone who had already sailed this boat for more than 12 years, or do I keep my mouth shut?

I am not good at holding my tongue.

Fortunately, David's reaction was, "If you have a better idea, go for it."

I seized the ends of a half-dozen short pieces of ¼-inch (6mm) Dacron line. Then I threaded one through the base of each cleat and made it into a loop.



After leading the loop through the coiled halyard tail, just drop the top of the loop over the top of the cleat to keep the tail secure and clean, at right.

Presto, tidy halyard coil loops. Simply pull the loop through the coiled halyard and loop it over the cleat: instant, secure, and easy for visitors to use. There is one caveat—never secure two coils of line using the same loop. I did it once on *Seraffyn* and ended up with an embarrassing tangle.

Since I made the loops for *Sahula*, these halyard coils have stayed in place through some major blows along the coast of Tasmania and in the Bass Strait. And my rigging detail itch has remained satisfactorily scratched.

Lin Pardey now has more than 220,000 miles under her and is still actively voyaging. In October, she will be at booth M5 at the US Sailboat Show in Annapolis and also presenting two intensive seminars at the Annapolis Cruisers U.

A Hatch with Heart

An old, leaky hatch gets a makeover to stop the drips and add some special teak.

BY NICA WATERS

The original forward hatch on *Calypso*, the 1976 Bristol Channel Cutter that my husband, Jeremy, and I have owned since 1992, was a behemoth. Rising a full 4 inches above the fiberglass cabintop, it was so heavy it required two hands to lift. It also leaked badly. Rather than show off the varnish, we instead covered it with a lawn-and-leaf garbage bag topped with a canvas cover—hardly the look we wanted for a boat we prize in part for her aesthetics.

The hatch had leaked for a long time. The first repair, done about 10 years ago, involved encasing the whole top of the hatch in fiberglass cloth and epoxy. It looked terrible—milky epoxy and visible fiberglass texture—and worked as hoped only for about a month before it started leaking again. We were getting the boat ready to go to the Bahamas for a year with the kids and didn't have any more time to deal with the problem, so out came the garbage bag. (That's a pretty good stopgap, in case you were wondering.)

As part of our latest total overhaul and refit, the hatch got a complete makeover, including streamlining height and weight and building a structure that complements the boat's aesthetics while keeping us dry.

Bristol Channel Cutters are known for their workmanship, and though *Calypso*, hull #6, was built before the yard was doing anything other than hull and deck, her finish lives up to that reputation. The hatch is made of teak. Teak sides, teak strips. The latter run longitudinally on the top, while four horizontal teak bows, or ribs, on the underside hold it all together. Using as much of the original hatch as we could seemed to make a lot of sense from all kinds of angles (have you priced teak lately?).

A young Julian Waters sits next to the heavy original forward hatch. Note the circular port in the center; Nica and Jeremy decided not to replace this when they rebuilt the new hatch.

Jeremy starts to dismantle the original hatch.

We knew we wanted to make the new hatch a little lower, but we also wanted to maintain some of its elegant curve, while keeping both sides the same height using the original teak. We knew we didn't want a flat hatch. Like so many things on a boat, finding this sweet spot was a combination of repeated measurements coupled with eyeballing the curve before getting out the jigsaw.

The original hatch top consisted of ½-inch teak strips running fore-and-aft and glued with 3M 5200. Over time, as the sealant cracked and separated, nothing held the strips together, nothing kept the water out. No wonder it leaked. The strips themselves were a mess of epoxy, 5200, and fiberglass; we knew we weren't going to reuse them.

Still, the traditional look of the boat almost demanded some kind of wooden strip top. How to balance the aesthetic requirements with the need for the hatch to be leak-proof? Clearly, one-piece underlayment was the answer.

Rather than using expensive and somewhat scarce marine plywood, we experimented with MDO plywood, the kind used for exterior signs. We immersed a piece of it in a cup of water for two weeks to see if it would delaminate. It didn't. We went with it. Using a single ¼-inch piece laid over the teak ribs beneath, Jeremy

(Left to right) **Jeremy glasses up the new plywood lid (while sporting a nice, warm *Good Old Boat* hat!).**

Nica and Jeremy used as much of the original teak as possible. Here, the new hatch takes shape, with the original ribs and frame recut to accommodate the new curve.

formed the base for the hatch top, which he then coated with epoxy and covered with ½-ounce fiberglass finishing cloth.

Leak-proofing accomplished.

The teak strips for the finishing layer have their own story to tell. You see, Jeremy's dad, Alun, is the one who taught him how to sail, on a kit boat thrown into a moving container when they were assigned to a post in Algeria. Alun long dreamed of going cruising. He bought a Beneteau First 42 for racing while he gathered his tools and pieces of gear, including a handful of long teak battens, for the cruising boat he'd eventually buy. Alun died just months before his cruising dream could come true; much of his tools and gear, including that teak, has come to us.

Jeremy measured carefully, figuring out the spacing between the teak strips so he wouldn't need to source additional wood. After sanding the fiberglass smooth, he drew lines on the hatch top to indicate where each strip would go. This made it easy to place the strips correctly. Working three strips at a time, he painted each strip with epoxy, then glued it in place with thickened epoxy. Why three strips? He had clamps and weights for three strips, no more.

To finish the hatch off, the construction plans call for a brow all the way around that stands 1 inch proud of the hatch frame, which just felt insanely large to us. Instead, we used some ⅜-inch teak stock we already had on hand.

Finally, we applied SIS 440 Teak Deck Caulking from Teakdecking Systems (TDS) to seal all the seams and give it a nice traditional look.

Now, the hatch mirrors more closely the curve of the deck. I can lift it with one hand from inside the forepeak. And, wonder of wonders, we can leave the canvas cover off even if it's raining—no black garbage bag required.

Nica Waters and her husband, Jeremy, sail their Bristol Channel Cutter, Calypso, *when they're not refitting her. Now that they've added a second BCC to the fleet, the ratio of work to sailing time has increased, but they still hope to be heading for the Caribbean on* Calypso *in autumn 2022. You can listen to more of her on the Boat Galley podcast at theboatgalley.com*

Jeremy carefully measures spacing for the new teak strips, at left.

The hatch ready for sealing, bottom left.

The rebuilt forward hatch, finally leak-proof, retains the boat's traditional aesthetic, bottom right.

A Sticky Situation

The first launch of a Catalina 22 after bottom painting didn't go as planned.

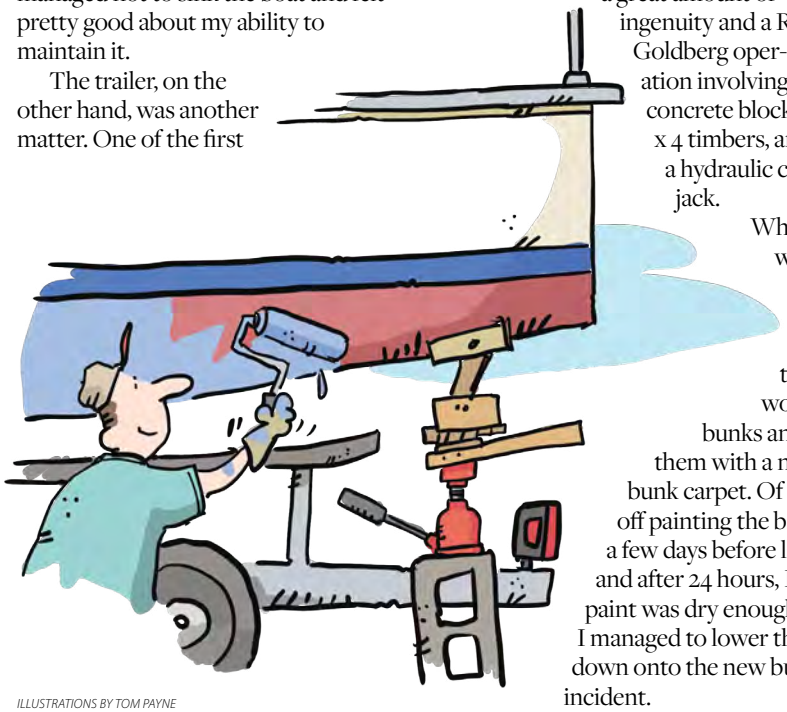
BY BRAD STEVENS

I bought my first boat, a well-used 1981 Catalina 22, after moving from Alaska to the East Coast. I named her *Cheechako*, an Alaskan word for "newcomer"—essentially equivalent to "from away" in Maine-speak or "come-here" in Massachusettan or Virginian. In Alaska, it basically means anyone who's not from Alaska, with a know-nothing connotation, but it's more commonly interpreted as "you have absolutely no idea what you are in for." This seemed appropriate based on my skills at both sailing and boat maintenance.

During my first summer sailing *Cheechako,* I managed to repair a broken tiller, replace the swing keel winch, the roller furling, and most of the rigging, install a new battery, and rewire all the lighting. By the end of the season, I had managed not to sink the boat and felt pretty good about my ability to maintain it.

The trailer, on the other hand, was another matter. One of the first lessons I learned was not to climb up on the transom of the boat while it was on the trailer unless the trailer was attached to the car. Imagine my surprise as the bow of the boat rose into the air, and I found myself riding a 2,500-pound seesaw before the stern slammed down onto the ground beneath me. Then I had to crawl carefully up the inclined deck towards the center of the boat to bring it back down slowly, without having the whole rig slam back downward in the opposite direction.

During my second year of boat ownership, I decided I had acquired enough know-how to paint the bottom all by myself. Raising the boat up off the trailer required a great amount of ingenuity and a Rube Goldberg operation involving concrete blocks, 4 x 4 timbers, and a hydraulic car jack.



While the boat was off the trailer, I decided to replace the rotting wooden trailer bunks and cover them with a new layer of bunk carpet. Of course, I put off painting the bottom until a few days before launch day, and after 24 hours, I decided the paint was dry enough to launch. I managed to lower the boat back down onto the new bunks without incident.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM PAYNE

At the launch ramp, my wife, Meri, and I spent a good hour raising the mast, in full view of the usual hangers-on, without dropping it or making too many embarrassing gaffes (I had built a mast-raising system so Meri and I could raise the mast ourselves). Then it was time to back the boat into the water, which went smoothly thanks to my highly developed backwards driving skills (this being in the days before backup cameras were common). Meri held the painter, expecting the boat to slide smoothly off the bunks.

But something was wrong. The boat wasn't moving. Backing up and stopping suddenly did not dislodge the boat. Pulling forward brought the whole thing out of the water again. Back in the water, I noticed that

the trailer tires seemed to be floating at the surface.

By this time, I had a nice little crowd of well-wishers and pundits offering me sage advice including: "Jump up and down on it;" "Pop the clutch really hard;" "Tie a stern line to the dock and pull forward;" "Back up farther until the trailer sinks." None of which worked, of course.

The only solution was to swallow my pride and pull the trailer and boat entirely back out of the water to solve the problem. My audience, of course, wanted to help, but no, thank you very much, I think I'll take it back home. An hour later we had the mast down and were headed home, tails between our legs.

By now you have concluded, through careful examination of the available evidence and thoughtful deduction, that I didn't let the paint dry long enough, and it had cemented the boat to the new bunk carpet. Removing it required cutting the carpet fibers by slicing between the bunks and boat bottom with a long knife, after which I had to raise the boat off the trailer again, and sand down and repaint the bottom where it had attached itself to the bunk carpet.

This time I let it dry for a week before putting it back on the trailer and trying to launch it again. The second launch was much less eventful, and if the crowd of onlookers was disappointed at not having the opportunity to offer their accumulated wisdom, they were at least polite enough not to let on.

Cheechako, as it turned out, was appropriately named.

Brad Stevens is a professor emeritus of marine science. He learned to sail in (and repair) a series of "almost free" good old boats including a Catalina 22 and a Tanzer 26. His retirement boat bucks are now rapidly disappearing into his "almost perfect boat," a recently acquired Catalina 36.

Head First

A new headliner provides a big makeover for a 44-year-old racer/cruiser.

BY WENDY MITMAN CLARKE

When Doug Peterson designed the Peterson 34 based off his innovative one-tonner *Ganbare*, he reportedly said that the strong, fast racer/cruiser was "built to deliver about eight people quickly and safely from point A to point B."

That meant the belowdecks accommodations were pretty much all business—the offshore racing business that is—with little in the way of what one might call the finer appointments. In the case of the 1978 Peterson 34 my husband, Johnny, and I purchased in 2000 and named *Luna*, one of those appointments in the lacking department was anything resembling a headliner.

In those early years, Johnny installed a headliner made of thin plywood sheets cut to size and covered in a white vinyl fabric, screwed to small wooden blocks glued to the bare overhead. If it sounds a little Las Vegas, trust me, compared with what it covered, it was positively Paris.

This served well for years until we went offshore cruising for an extended period with a much bigger boat. We sold *Luna*, who unfortunately ended up untended on the hard, slowly leaking through deck hardware and in the process rotting most of the headliner backing blocks and the plywood itself (among other things).

When we returned from cruising, we reacquired *Luna* with a partner, and the first order of business was re-coring much of the cabintop and deck. And, having stripped out all of the old, damaged headliner, we had, once again, a clean slate to install a new one.

Our long-distance cruising boat had a beautiful tongue and groove headliner made of a honey-colored Australian wood. And I'd always liked the traditional New England vibe of white tongue and groove running fore and aft in a cabin, offset with horizontal, varnished trim pieces. Too upscale for a 44-year-old ex-offshore rocket? We wouldn't know till we tried it on for size.

Sourcing the Materials

We didn't anticipate any more deck leaks, but you know how old boats are—full of unexpected surprises. Given what had happened to the wood in the previous headliner, we wanted this new one to be made not of wood but of a material that would be light, easy to work with and clean, and rot resistant.

It proved harder to find than we thought. We spent more time than we wanted Googling "beadboard" on the internet, where we seemed to keep ending up with wide wall panels, pine strips, or worst of all, vinyl again. A trip to a nearby Lowe's didn't help much; we purchased a sample of a thin, plastic, beadboard-type material about three strips wide, but it felt flimsy in the hand, and when we held it up later onboard it was an instant nope.

Our search started to yield slightly better results when a friend suggested looking for wainscoting, but in the end, we found ourselves at one of Johnny's

Looking quite industrial, the overhead in the Peterson 34 was bare, without any headliner, bottom left.

The new overhead really dazzled up the interior of the 44-year-old racer/cruiser, bottom right.

(Top to bottom on left) **Johnny Clarke applies a finishing bead of West System 610 epoxy to glue the athwartship supports to the overhead fiberglass.**

The first pieces, between the companionway slider and the mast, are in place.

favorite wood and building materials outfits, Warren's Wood Works in Easton, Maryland. Here, we talked with a gentleman in customer service, explained our project and what we were trying to find, and in no time at all, he laid a sample of what we'd been looking for on the counter.

The material, Azek Beaded Sheets, is made of UV-resistant PVC formed as tongue and groove planks and used in outdoor home applications. Johnny calculated what we would need for the main saloon, excluding the small areas over the pilot berths, approximately 65 square feet. It wasn't cheap—about $400—but we felt it would be worth it.

The materials arrived wrapped in plastic bundles. When we opened them, we found many of the planks covered in a tenacious black dirt that would not clean off no matter what we tried—even though the Azek website said standard cleaning products would work. We were hoping we wouldn't have to paint the planks; the dirt said otherwise.

However, in for a penny, in for a pound, so we decided to install everything before painting to make sure we had enough material and it worked as we'd hoped. Once dry-fitted, we'd take everything down, paint, and reinstall.

Installation

Having never done a tongue and groove headliner before, we were kind of making it up as we went along. We knew we didn't want to drill into the overhead, so we needed to install athwartships support structures to secure the fore-and-aft planks.

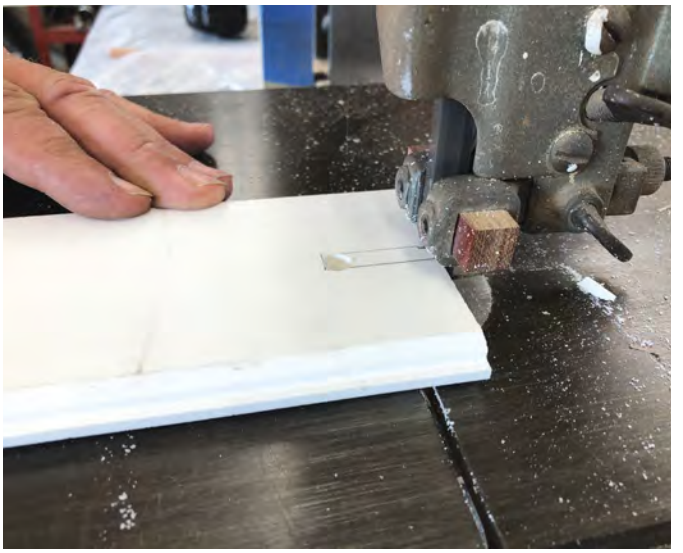
We briefly tried a few wood strips, but what worked best was the Azek material itself, because it was so flexible and held a fair curve. We sacrificed one length and cut it into three pieces to run three athwartships supports.

The companionway opening dictated the location of the first support, since we would need to attach the centerline planks there, first. The second support was about 4 feet farther forward, just behind the keel-stepped mast. The third support was forward of the mast and just aft of the saloon's forward bulkhead.

To attach the supports to the overhead, we sanded the fiberglass and gelcoat smooth where the supports would be glued and roughened one side of the support planks. We applied a liberal coat of West System 610 epoxy to the roughened side of the supports, then glued them to the overhead using a hydraulic jack and other props to hold them in place while the epoxy dried. It worked beautifully.

With the supports in place, we decided to start the installation from the centerline, using the center of the mast and companionway fore and aft as our guides for placing the first piece, and work outward from there. Using a tapered counterbore wood bit, we were able to pre-set the drill depth for a No. 8 by ¾-inch flathead sheet metal screw; these would be our fasteners for the entire install.

Johnny measures a piece of the board, below.



The chop saw made cutting each piece simple and accurate. Note the board's flexibility, top left.

Cutting out an access piece for one of the instrument wires that are located on the aft bulkhead, top right.

After installing the first seven planks that ended at the companionway, we worked down the portside, butting the aft ends of the planks against the aft bulkhead (we supported these aft ends with an L-shaped trim piece.) The forward edges of these planks were cut to land halfway over the second support; this was to ensure room to butt the next course of planks, forward, against them. We also had to trim several of the aft ends to accommodate wiring from cockpit instruments installed in the aft bulkhead.

We didn't know exactly what would happen as we approached the port side of the overhead, but happily, the final plank slid perfectly into place with no extra trimming required.

The first fitting of the aft portside, completed, at left.

We repeated the process on the starboard side. We ran into a snag here, when bolts from the halyard jammers on deck were just a wee bit too long. We'd hoped we could get away with not cutting them, but as it turned out we had to (with a hacksaw).

After all the aft pieces were in, we began fitting the next course forward. This was a little trickier because we had to go around the mast, a solar vent, and the chimney for the propane cabin heater. Also, the cabintop begins to narrow more rapidly here, so we needed to cut angled pieces to fit the deepening curve.

We found that the material was light enough that where needed, we could install short pieces with just one fastener at one end, using the tongue and groove as the additional support. Some pieces had to be scribed, trimmed, and fitted for a proper appearance. The material machined well and was very easy to work with. We used dust collection systems on all the power tools in an effort to minimize any plastic dust.

Once we had the headliner installed, we carefully removed it, labeling each piece with a letter indicating port or starboard,

a number indicating its location from centerline, and an arrow showing direction fore and aft. Then we took everything home and laid it out on plastic on our garage floor.

Painting was simple. We lightly abraded the surface with a Scotch-Brite pad. Then we rolled and tipped three coats of Interlux Brightside white. We did not use a primer.

Finishing Touches

Using our labeling system, reinstalling the painted boards was fairly simple, though the paint did stick some of them together and we had to gently pry them apart to fit them properly again.

Johnny chose sapele mahogany for the athwartships trim pieces to cover the fastener holes where the planks were attached. He determined a width of 2½ inches for each. Using a small roundover bit, he rounded over the edges giving them a nice detail, then cut the strips $\frac{3}{16}^{th}$ of an inch thick on the table saw. Installing them was straightforward.

We didn't want to bring the headliner material too close to the cabin heater's metal chimney, for fear of heat damage. But this left a big open space around the chimney through which the ugly overhead was still visible.

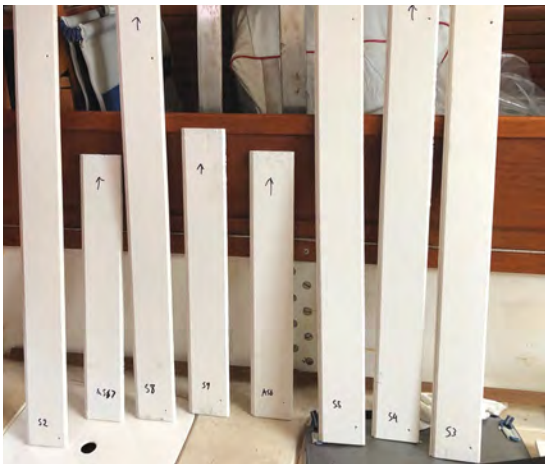
To enclose this area, Johnny chose $\frac{1}{32}$-inch-thick stainless steel plate. After determining the diameter of the chimney, he used a hole saw to cut the appropriate size hole in the plate, then used a metal-cutting bandsaw to cut a slot from the edge of the steel up to the hole. The end result was a metal plate that slid around the chimney, covered the unsightly gaps, and fastened to the headliner.

Final trim pieces included wood trim around the companionway, the mast, and the solar vent opening.

The headliner looks terrific. (As the Dude said in "The Big Lebowski," it really ties the room together.) Although the materials cost more than we'd hoped, the ease of fabrication and durability made it worth it, and aesthetically, it entirely changes the character of the old racing boat's interior.

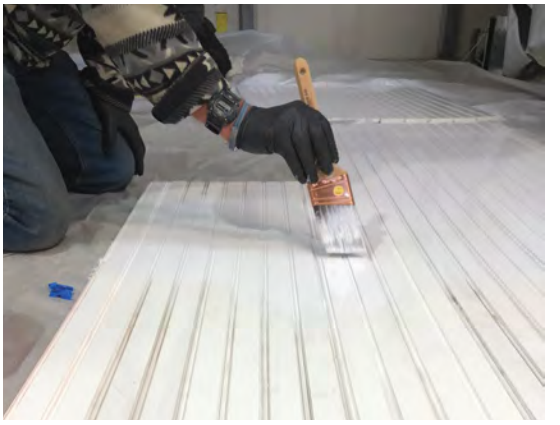
It does, however, point up all the other places she needs some more spiffing, so now it's on to upgrading the woodwork...one more item on the endless list.

Good Old Boat *Senior Editor Wendy Mitman Clarke calls Chesapeake Bay home. Her husband, Johnny, is operations manager at Oak Harbor Marina in Pasadena, Maryland, where he works on a wide variety of good old boats.*



(Top to bottom) **A series of boards, labeled and awaiting final installation. Note the differing lengths; these were for the forward course of boards, which had to be trimmed to fit around a variety of obstacles.**

Although the manufacturer said the boards didn't need to be painted, the Clarkes opted to paint them, both to cover up some tough dirt and make the overhead glossier.



Johnny cut a stainless steel plate to fit around the chimney and cover the gap, below.

Product Profile

Protect Your Pate

Thinning hair is a bummer for anybody, but for sailors especially it has major downsides, among them sunburn, scalp cuts, bumps, and bruises. There is just no protection or padding, and all it takes is a slight lurch while climbing down the companionway to ding your noggin.

In the process of researching helmets for dinghy racing, I came across a $6 solution for my problem: a bump cap insert for my ball cap.

Although bump cap inserts comply with an OSHA category and meet standard EN812, they have no impact rating. They do protect mechanics from low hanging obstructions and sharp objects (like bolts coming through from the deck).

Cap inserts typically have very little padding, and only on the crown, so I upgraded mine with strips of ⅛-inch self-adhesive pipe insulation tape from the local hardware store, a perfect match for the stock foam padding. Add as much as you want, avoiding the ventilation slots and the portion that tucks inside the brim. Not only will this provide a little more bump attenuation, it will also keep the hat on your head in a breeze. In fact, the main reason this has become my go-to hat is that it stays on.

Inserts fit in any hat with an internal brim slot, including many broad-brimmed hats. Some slight trimming around the edge is sometimes required to match the crown height of the hat.

Inserts do *not* provide protection from accidental jibes. Not even a proper helmet can do that. The *g*-force is too great, and your neck may snap anyway, so keep your head down.

Drew added strips of ⅛-inch foam insulation tape to boost the padding inside the bump cap.

It's easy to see how a bump cap can help when Drew is standing just a little too high or going down the companionway in waves.

That said, I have tested a variety of helmets intended for whitewater kayaking and dinghy racing, and I like the Kong Leef (very light), Forward WIP (snuggest fit), and the Zhik H1 (fewest snags). I sometimes wear the Zhik helmet when singlehanding in sporty conditions; it can help when diving down the companionway or if I have my head just a ½-inch too high when grinding. Worth considering if your boom is a trifle low and for dinghy racing.

The Skullerz 8945 is $6.00; I've used one for five years and haven't had a scalp cut or bruise since. For $10, Skullerz makes the 8945 F(x), a new, improved version with more vents and some extra reinforcement, but less space for supplemental padding.

—**Drew Frye**, *Good Old Boat* Technical Editor

Drew wearing the Zhik H1 while working at the mast. With a balaclava under it, he doesn't even know it's there.

We present these profiles as a service, as firsthand accounts from fellow boaters. Neither *Good Old Boat* magazine nor the folks who profiled the products on this page were paid for these profiles. Most products were sent to *Good Old Boat* for review consideration by the manufacturers. We profile only a small percentage of the products that marketers contact us about, choosing only those we're interested in, in the hope you're interested too. A few products we pick up on our own, because we want to share.

Ed McKeever's first rebuild, hull #4688, resting on its new trailer.

The Blue Jay Man

I much enjoyed Jim Champagne's story about refurbishing his Blue Jay ("A Bird in Hand," July/August 2022). It brought back many memories of my Blue Jay restorations of some 20 and 30 years ago.

In looking for a Blue Jay in which our oldest son could sail in the junior sailing program at the Stamford Yacht Club, I came upon two Blue Jays for sale at another club. Both boats needed refurbishment, and each was missing equipment, but the prices were right. I hoped I could cobble together one complete boat. This was not to be.

My hunt for missing equipment brought me in touch with a wonderful person named Sally Evelyn. Sally, now long deceased, in those days operated a company in eastern Connecticut that was the builder licensed by the Blue Jay Class Association to build new Blue Jays. Sally was able to provide everything I needed to complete our son's boat.

I asked Sally what she thought I should do with the second boat. She suggested that I refurbish it and sell it, as I had one successful rebuild under my belt. This worked out fine. Then I got a call from Sally asking me if I would be interested in redoing another Blue Jay. Since I had found satisfaction in working on the first two and there seemed to be a ready market, I thought, why not?

I purchased it, fixed it up, and resold it. I began to replicate this process, becoming an active buyer of Blue Jays in distress. Among junior sailing parents, I became the go-to guy for things Blue Jay and became known as "The Blue Jay Man." I got a real kick out of this and found much satisfaction in supporting the kids in the junior sailing programs of Long Island Sound clubs. It was wonderful to see young eyes light up with the first sight of "their" Blue Jay in my driveway.

My Blue Jay activity continued for a decade or more during which time I refurbished a total of 63 Blue Jays. As near as I could tell, I about broke even financially. But of course, this did not account for my time.

—**Ed McKeever,**
Venice, Florida

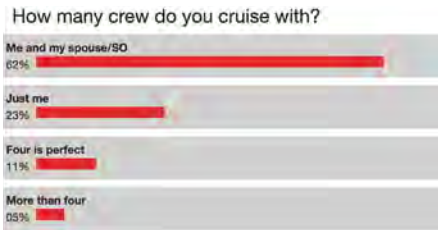
A Speedy Swan

Rob Mazza wrote a very well-researched story on the Ericson 41, and I enjoyed that he mentioned the Swan (PJ) 40 ("Ericson 41...and Two More Quintessential CCA Rule Designs," May/June 2022). I have one of those, *Cygnus*, which I bought in 1991 after my homebuilt 37-foot boat, *Pleiades,* was T-boned by the tanker *Mobil Arctic* off Point Reyes, California. We were headed for the start of the 1990 West Marine Pacific Cup, sailing from Seattle to San Francisco, when it happened. I was lucky and saved the crew. We had time to board the life raft because my boat had watertight bulkheads. The Coast Guard was already out to assist another vessel; they picked us up, gave us dry clothes and breakfast at Bodega Bay, and later transported us to San Francisco headquarters. This accident was a big personal loss. I cried when *Pleiades* sank and disappeared.

The attorneys representing the tankship *Mobil Arctic* promised to make me whole, and I was able to purchase the Swan 40, hull #12, built by Palmer Johnson—"The fastest 40-footer around," according to the original sales brochure, which I still have. My boat was raced by a factory crew for promotion to prove their claim. As a result, it has good stuff like Barient self-tailing winches and 12 sails. I did enter a few races, and the boat is fast! The last race was the Three Tree Point Spring regatta, and we took first place, boat-for-boat and on handicap (see photo below left). When we finished, the committee boat pointed out that we had missed the last buoy, so we turned around, went around the buoy, and still finished first.

The Swan is also built well. I never have leaks—and in Seattle it rains a lot—and S&S designed a very seaworthy hull with better motion than many boats I have sailed. What price do you put on that?

—**Peter Lange,**
Seattle, Washington



Crew Up!

I often read stories that talk about sailing as a shrinking sport. Perhaps the results of a recent sailboatowners.com weekly poll, which posed the question "How many crew do you cruise with?" sheds some light on why that might be happening. Sixty-two percent said they sailed only with their spouse, 23 percent said they sailed alone, 11 percent said four crew was perfect, and 5 percent liked more than four.

It is very unlikely someone will become a sailor unless someone introduces them to the sport. I am in the less than 1 percent. I am a three- to four-day cruiser in Lake Superior's Apostle Islands. My goal is to fill all six berths, ideally with at least a couple of younger novice or non-sailors. It is fun to see the smiles of those experiencing sailing for the first time.

(I also found this photo of another Coronado 35 with a "crew" of 24 by my count. That might be a *little* overkill.)

—**Mike Montesinos**, S/V *Gypsy Spirit*, Bayfield, Wisconsin

Reading in the Rain

I've been sailing in Desolation Sound in what will probably become the coldest, rainiest spring along the British Columbian coast in a generation or two. The weather fronts keep rolling in off the Pacific, onto the Washington State coast, and sliding up to us, breaking rainfall and temperature records for June. I've found (and fixed) deck leaks I didn't know I had.

But all is not bad, I had great sailing days to get up here and keep meeting great people along the way. The accompanying photo is of our friend, Guy, enjoying the latest copy of *Good Old Boat* while visiting with his wife, Karen, aboard *Natasha* on a rare dry afternoon (it started raining as I took them back to their boat!). Guy and Karen are from southern Alberta and spend their sailing time on the wet (typo intentional!) coast aboard their McGregor 26 *On The Wind*, or sailing prairie lakes under the summer sun. It's all a matter of where they want to trailer the boat.

—**Bert Vermeer,** *Natasha*, Sidney, British Columbia

Following on Facebook

Good Old Boat*'s Facebook and Instagram pages are sources of lively conversation about all manner of topics, from our "Masthead Mondays" to featured good old boat sailors. Here's a good one from a recent post about Drew Maglio's story "The Joy of Small Boats: Why Bigger Isn't Always Better," in* The Dogwatch, *May 2022.*

"Before buying a boat in response to yearnings for distant shores and foreign ports, buy one that is suited only to exploring exhaustively all of the destinations closer to home. For your first boat, buy the smallest you can tolerate and the newest you can afford. It's from there that you'll find your own balance."

Yea or Nay to this guidance from Drew Maglio?

I think this is generally good advice, particularly if you're not extremely familiar with boating and boat maintenance. You can have just as much adventure in a small vessel as a large one, and in many ways it's a more intimate and carefree experience. Small boats make small waterways feel majestic. Whether you have the good fortune of beautiful local waters or have to travel to reach your preferred cruising ground, a small boat can be stored ashore and trailered to a variety of launching points. A small boat is much more vulnerable to seas and storms than a large one, but you can often travel in sheltered waters close to shore that would be unsuitable for a larger craft. You can routinely beach a small boat, whereas with a yacht it's something to consider very seriously before attempting.

I used to cruise in a 12-foot cedar sloop, a beautiful craft that's still with me 30 years later. I learned more about sailing in that little dinghy than in the previous 30 years aboard much bigger yachts. It was an expensive purchase for me at the time, but really that's the only noteworthy expense. The maintenance of a small boat is significant, but not shocking. It's something to experience thoroughly before moving on to something larger and more demanding.

Now I have added a fine old yacht to the fleet. Three times the length of the dinghy means nine times the surface area, 27 times the volume and displacement. It's a major life commitment just looking after it. I was at least partially prepared for that level of commitment because I had learned so much with the dinghy.

—**Dan Razzell**

As the old saying goes, "The bigger the boat the less you sail."

—**Ricky Crow**

Pretty much agree. However, my first "big" sailboat (27 feet) was an old fiberglass boat. If you have a DIY bent, it is easier to make mistakes on the older, cheaper boats rather than the newer, expensive ones. DIY isn't for everyone, though.

—**Jon Ericson**

I would add that the smallest boat that will do the job is always the best way to go. Costs and amount of work expand exponentially with size. And if you're going cruising, heavy displacement is your friend. You're cruising, you're not in a hurry. The seakindliness and carrying capacity are something you will come to value much more than speed. Our 33-foot ketch displaced 12 tons, but she sailed well, was very comfortable, and we didn't have to fret about performance being compromised if we took something on board. We met a number of people with much larger but lighter boats who were always sweating every ounce. They may have gone faster than us, but we weren't racing them. We had plenty of light-air sails so we didn't worry about light winds, it was simple to reduce sail as a breeze came on, and we could carry full ordinary sail far longer than the lightweight sleds. If I went cruising again, I would absolutely do it the same way.

—**Carl Conrad**

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Boats for Sale

Catalina 27 Tall Rig
1986. Classic, popular, and fast tall rig. Agile, comfortable racer/cruiser. *Girl of the North* is in clean, great condition, easy to sail. Upgrades w/safety features, engine overhaul, new electrical/electronic systems. Wheel steering, diesel engine. Sleeps 5 in V-berth, quarter berth, pull-out settee. Wide companionway joins cabin/galley to cockpit for sunlight/socializing. All lines to cockpit for easy/safe sailing. Cockpit enclosure adds 3-season comfort/safety. Great for family or singlehanded sailor. Bayfield, WI $12,500. For more: https://bit.ly/3nYrLdX

Joseph Passineau
715-570-7083
jpassine@uwsp.edu
lynpassineau@gmail.com

Tartan 34 KCB
1973. Great condition. Yanmar diesel 90 hrs. New standing rigging. Radar, new holding tank, 4-burner gas stove. Mainsail is 7 yrs old, 2 jibs (90% and 120%). Mooring included. In the water and ready to cruise Elizabeth Islands this fall. Fairhaven, MA. $25,000.

Leslie Trott
201-523-1570
dadder3@aol.com

Cal 2-46
1973. Refit '89. Must sell due to health. Great liveaboard cruiser w/Cal 40 heritage. Perkins 4-236 diesel. Large queen-berth cabins fore/aft w/encl. heads/showers. Great storage, tankage, headroom, amidships engine room w/workbench, large saloon w/galley and table seating 8. Price reduced to allow for refit to new owners' specifications while living aboard at the gateway to the Sea of Cortez and beyond. San Carlos, Sonora, Mexico. $30,950.

Ernest Binz
ebinz@earthlink.net

Pearson 35
1968. In the water and ready for this season. Classic centerboard keel draws 3'9" up, 7'6" down. Mahogany interior. Bottom paint stripped '94. Jib and full-batten main '93. Shaefer RF '93. Self-tailing winches '98. New lifelines '02. New portlights '05. Repowered with Beta Marine 28 (BD1005) Kubota '05. New heat exchanger '20. Spreaders replaced '20. Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, NY. $19,000.

Martina Hooker
mk756@aol.com

Atkin Schooner 33
1957. Fully restored 2012-2017. Ready to cruise. 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. The 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. Westerly, RI. Reduced asking price $45,000.

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

Stone Horse 23
1972. Crocker-designed, double-headsail sloop, #25 of 150 built by Edey and Duff in fiberglass. Boat and Yanmar 1GM10 in very good condition. All spars

are in good condition or new. Sails in good condition and new sacrificial panels on furling jib. Newly made berth and cockpit cushions and Sunbrella sail covers. Easy for singlehanded sailing. Original Edey and Duff trailer included. East Marion, NY. $17,500.

Christian Hess
631-381-2171
whdocs@optonline.net

Tanzer 10.5
1983. Owned for over 29 years. Great cruising boat. Cruised all Great Lakes (North Channel)/lived aboard w/wife over 14 months. Anchor windlass, Hood mainsail, stowaway mast & boom, Profurl headsail system w/self-tacking jib. Vetus bow thruster. Retractable ballasted lead keel w/elec. hydraulic lifting system. Mast tabernacle w/lowering equipment. Dinette w/comfortable seating for 6. Pilothouse access from cockpit down short ladder. Center cockpit w/aft cabin connected to galley through small passageway, w/3 maple cabinets. DVD w/50+ photos available. Lake Erie, OH. $39,500.

Carl Gottwald
419-320-3154

Downeast 38
1975. Cutter rigged. Recently completed $10,000 interior upgrade. Rebuilt inside/out '08. New bottom, rigging replaced. Interior exc cond. Marine survey '09/'19, new zincs, 3.5KW genset. A/C blows cold, VHF, AP, full instrumentation, GPS. Many pics avail. Ft. Walton Beach, FL. $89,700.

James DeSimone
850-939-7241
jdesim2015@gmail.com

Tartan 34
1968. Classic S&S by original builder, Douglas and McCleod, hull #18. Solid hull and deck, no problems. Solent rig w/double RF jibs. New mast '12, masthead and deck-level LED running lights. New dodger, new ultrasuede upholstery, optional deluxe interior w/recent refinish. SS LP stove/oven. Upgraded Atomic 4 engine. GPS, VHF, depth sounder, double anchor roller, 3 anchors. West Coast of FL. $21,000.

David Santos
252-617-2808
santosjd10.5@gmail.com

Pearson 26 Weekender
1976. Great daysailer, exc PHRF racer, heavy-duty gear, spinnaker-rigged. Lots of accessories. Incl LS OB, car trailer, steel cradle. Plymouth, MN. Boat $3,500. Dinghy $300.

Michael Barnes
763-557-2962
granite55446@gmail.com
cgot@inbox.com

Cape Dory 27
1980. *Atlariel*, named for high Elven form of Galadriel. Repowered in '15 w/Beta Marine 14hp diesel (now 500 hrs). Shaft, most wiring, GPS/fishfinder replaced in '15. Mainsail, jib, genoa, storm jib in good condition. Basic safety and sailing equipment; 3 anchors, extra cables. "Bus" heater warms cabin while engine running, alcohol cooking stove, custom-built hard dodger, custom winter cover. 8ft inflatable Zodiac dinghy. Juneau, AK. $15,000. capedory.org/specs/cd27.htm

Steve Behnke
lspengler@ak.net

Morris Leigh 30
1979. Chuck Paine full-keel double-ender, well maintained. Yanmar 2YM-15, 1,005 hrs. New mainsail '19, like-new refurbished genoa '22. New B&G chartplotter '21. Custom winter cover. Northport, NY. $50,000
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To Nap, Perchance to Dream

After a brisk autumn catboat sail, a catnap invokes memories.

BY CRAIG MOODIE

The sail luffs as I round up into the wind, our mooring ball dead ahead. I stretch over the foredeck for the line. We coast up to the ball and I pluck it out of the water, cleat it, and step back to the cockpit to ease the flogging sail down. With the sail ties gripped cutlass-fashion between my teeth, I set to furling the sail, the boat swaying beneath my shoeless feet.

The long sail I've just returned from redoubles my sense of accomplishment: Stiff hands, sore arms, scraped knees and elbows testify to the sporty conditions in the open waters that the boat and I handled with aplomb. The late-September sun feels warmer here in the mooring field than out in Buzzards Bay, and when I finish buttoning up all but the cockpit cover, I wonder, why rush back ashore? Why not commune with *Finn* and savor that aprés-sail glow?

So, I shed my shirt and crawl onto the foredeck to loll on my back, the deck toasty against my skin. I lace my fingers behind my head and peer up at the masthead describing arcs around the few puffs of cloud passing on a southerly course through the blue. The boat dips and yaws beneath me, and the waves cluck and whisper, and a gull skims high above, chuckling, and soon I'm gone, rocked to sleep in the cradle of my boat.

When I wake from my catnap, I stretch and slide into the cockpit. Even in the short time I dozed, the air has cooled and the colors of the sky and water have deepened to cobalt and peach-tinged navy. I pull on my shirt and set to snapping on the cockpit cover. As I finish, I eye the low tent-like hideaway it forms. An urge hits. Sleeping on a boat can be one of the grand pleasures of life—barring skeeters, no-see-ums, or dirty weather.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRITZ SEEGERS

I climb into the dinghy and shove off, glancing again at the little tent on the deck of my little yacht. I could do it; all I need is bug juice, flashlight, and sleeping bag. The cedar deck would be good for my achy back, wouldn't it? I would feel the boat bob and nod and hear her talking in her sleep—creaks and raps and sighs. I would remove the cover and lie out beneath the stars the way I did aboard my father's yawl when I slept topside on the cockpit cushions or curled up in the folds of the jenny, watching the fleets of stars shift and sweep as the boat sleepwalked on her anchor line. Draped dozing over the boom, I was buccaneer tuckered out from swashbuckling.

I could imagine myself back aboard the fishing boats I crewed on, released from the cold and wet and exhaustion on deck to burrow away in the cocoon of an Army surplus sleeping bag, the diesel a rumbling lullaby. I could once again feel myself lift and levitate as we made the long steam home over rounded swells. I could press my ear against the hull and hear the trickle and lap of the shallows below me and let the memory of the fathoms upon fathoms of darkened deeps that lay below when I fished offshore send a trickle of pleasurable dread through me.

I swivel around to see that I am approaching the beach. I ship my oars. Yes, I needed more than a catnap aboard my little catboat.

I promise myself that I'll do it—right after taking a long, hot shower.

The dinghy crunches on the sand, and I climb out and gaze back at the boat.

All I need to do is check the weather to make sure conditions are right—after having a leisurely dinner with my wife—and put on some warmer clothes.

Then I'll row right back out there.

I promise—as soon as I take a few minutes to stretch out on the couch, just to rest my eyes.

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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