The Sails & Canvas Issue | Holiday Gift Guide *pg54* | The Sailrite Story *pg48*

Good Old Boat

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Issue 147: November/December 2022

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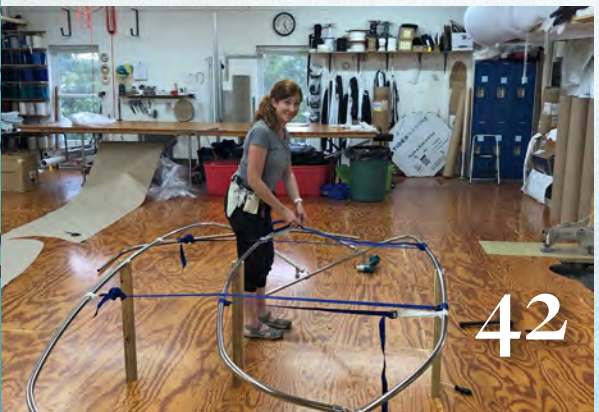

Good Old Boat

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On the Cover

Natasha, a carefully maintained 1978 Islander Bahama 30, makes this sail to windward in Malaspina Strait, part of the Salish Sea on the west coast of British Columbia. Headed for the fabled Desolation Sound cruising grounds, Bert Vermeer sails her up singlehanded and then meets with his wife, Carey, and granddaughter, Natasha, for a few weeks in the sun in a sailor's paradise by any standards. Photo by Maria Steernberg of Sea Snaps Marine Photography.

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The sailing magazine for the rest of us.

Contributing Boats

A few boats behind the stories in this issue.

***Ariose*, 1969 Alberg 30**

"We love just about everything—its beauty, that it's lake-sized but ocean-worthy, simplicity, that it is trailerable, affordable, and perhaps most of all, this boat's robust construction. It has suffered much abuse, especially during our maiden voyage as sailing novices, allowing crew and boat to survive! Painfully detailed in 'Snowbirding Interrupted,' January/February 2018."
Designer: Carl Alberg
Owners: Shirley Jones and Tim Martens
Home Port: Toronto, Canada
Fun Fact: They also have a 1972 Cal 21 as a future fixer-upper, a Sunfish, kayak, and six canoes.
DIY a Jordan Series Drogue on page 34.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRITZ SEEGERS

***Osprey*, 1983 Catalina 27 Tall Rig**

"I love the roominess below. She's nicely balanced, even under jib alone. The high freeboard keeps us dry. The cockpit is large. She's big enough for the two humans and the dog who sail her. My Irwin 23 was prettier, but *Osprey* is our favorite. Roomy. Nimble."
Designer: Frank Butler
Owners: Steve and Susan Wein
Home Port: Devilfish Key, Florida
Fun Fact: So named because, Steve says, "Eagles get all the glory."
Try to solve the mystery leak on page 40.

***Whirlwind*, 1984 Alajuela 48**

"We love her traditional lines above the waterline that mask her fin keel and skeg-hung rudder, which make her quite a bit faster than she looks at first glance. She has a really kind motion out at sea."
Designer: Raymond Richards
Owners: Mike and Maurisa Descheemaeker
Home Port: Skykomish, Washington
Fun Fact: Their first boat was a trailerable, 18-foot, open wooden sailing dory, 11 years ago.
Learn how to stitch your own sail ties on page 46.

Passionate Sailors, Inspired Learners and Doers

BY ANDY CROSS

Sticking a sailmaker's needle into your hand hurts. Ask me how I know. Fortunately, after the first time, I didn't do it again...that weekend, anyway. It was the first day of a sail repair seminar at Carol Hasse's Port Townsend sail loft, and I could confess to not knowing much about sewing anything, let alone sails.

In the moment, I didn't know what I was getting myself into. But I was glad to be there and I was eager to learn. Being a new-to-me boat owner of a racer-cruiser from 1984, I wanted to know how to maintain and possibly fix my own sails because I figured the time would eventually come when I would need to.

Over the course of that weekend, we dug into the fine art of how sails are made, how to care for them, and then how to repair them. Using a palm and needle, we sewed in rings and grommets, whipped the ends of lines, attached mainsail slides, mended seams, and added leather chafe guard. Then, when that didn't seem difficult enough, we learned how to use a sewing machine to reinforce a corner ring with webbing, apply a spreader patch, fix a torn seam, and patch a hole. It was truly a boot camp of sail repair and, like any good class, it provided me with newfound knowledge and some semblance of confidence that I could indeed repair my sails when needed.

About 10 years and however many sea miles later, I can honestly say I've applied some of the techniques that I learned in the class to my own sails and others. I'm not a pro sailmaker by any stretch, but I'm proficient. Being able to learn something and then use new knowledge like this in real-world applications is one of the things I admire so much about sailing—and fellow sailors in particular. A lot of us are like that. We find something that needs to be done on our boats, we learn about it, and then we build it or fix it.

In this canvas- and sailmaking-themed issue, we highlight some folks who epitomize this hands-on approach. For sailor Shirley Jones, it was when she wanted to make a Jordan Series Drogue for her 1969 Alberg 30. On page 34 in "A Serial Sewing Project," she explains the process of researching how to build the drogue and then walks us through how she repurposed an old sail to craft her own.

When a new dodger was needed for Marissa Neely and her partner Chris' 1979 Cheoy Lee 41, it was a DIY project all the way. They jumped into figuring out what they wanted and how they'd pull it off, and then tackled the project head-on. Starting on page 26, "An Artful Dodger" takes the reader from the design phase all the way through the finishing touches of what turns out to be a beautiful hardtop dodger with canvas sides.

In yet another story of building something special out of necessity, Fiona McGlynn profiles the company Sailrite, which was founded by Jim Grant after making his own sails to race with at the Cal 20 Nationals. Of course, Sailrite continues on under the stewardship of Jim and Connie Grant's children and is regarded as the company that launched a DIY sail- and canvas-making revolution (see "Sewing Success" on page 48).

All of these stories and more are truly inspiring, and we hope they help spark your own creative canvas or sailmaking projects. Just watch out for those pesky needles.

Good Old Boat **Editor Andy Cross works on the mainsail aboard his Grand Soleil 39, *Yahtzee*.**

A Balloon for the Win, Soggy GOB Lives On, and Our First Sailing Photo Winner

Response to "What's a good old boat?"

Your letter-writer's comments about the Morris Justine caught my eye. I think he raises a good point worthy of discussion. In addition to writing for the magazine, I am also a devoted reader of the magazine, and as such, I'll share my concept of what constitutes a good old boat.

"Rich and Famous" might be even harder to quantify, but I'm pretty sure I am neither one. I spent my entire career fixing and maintaining other people's boats. Changing out macerator pumps and sanding boat bottoms and snaking radar cables just isn't what rich and famous people do.

In that career, I didn't earn fame or fortune, but I did earn an appreciation for good old boats—especially the "good" part. The good boats were built to last. Their high level of design and construction provide owners with excellent performance, reliability, and safety. But that same level of design and construction also provides the boat-worker like me with a great place to work. Projects always went more smoothly and the end result was always better when the foundation was a well-made boat.

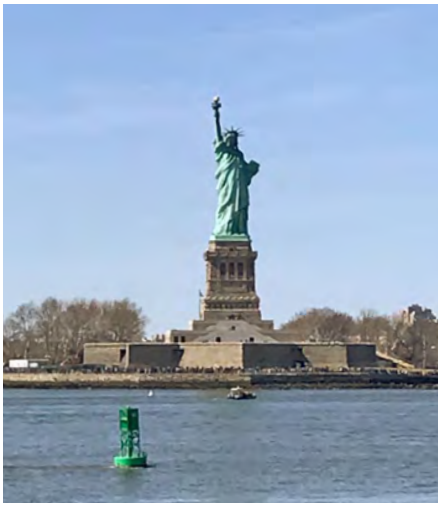
I know I will always spend an inordinate amount of time and money on whatever boat I own. It feels smart to invest all those resources into a worthy hull. I would be happy to trade away boat length and age for quality design and build at any price point.

I think it's a mistake to accept the concept that premium boat brands are just for the rich and famous. When these boats age, they become more affordable and I think represent excellent value. As someone who has worked in the industry, I can attest that the boats with a higher initial build quality hold up better to the test of time.

Chuck Paine and Tom Morris collaborated to produce a real gem in the Morris Justine. My *Sundance* is coming up on her 32nd birthday. She's definitely old, but she still instills confidence because she is also definitely good.

As the bumper sticker says: "Life's too short to sail a bad boat."

—Chris Birch
Boston, Massachusetts



Jim Hunt was on the Staten Island Ferry when he "got a shot of the channel buoy with the pretty lady." He added, "I thought in these trying times, this navigation buoy might be a good reminder of the best of us."

Another Git-Rot Job

I was reading the article by Bert Vermeer in the March/April issue of *Good Old Boat* about the uses for Git-Rot, and wanted to share a use that I've made of this product for many years. I had always read that when drilling holes in a cored deck, you should oversize the hole, back-fill with thickened epoxy, and then drill again so that the hole is through solid glass, not the core. I found it very difficult (especially on a curved surface) to line up the fiberglass plug and the new hole, and was sure that the plywood core was exposed where I couldn't see it. Instead, I've drilled the correct-sized hole; plugged the lower end of the hole with masking tape or modeling clay; and filled the hole to the brim with Git-Rot. The Git-Rot is totally absorbed into the core material, and then I caulk the new bolt as usual. We've owned this boat for more than 30 years and have not detected any leakage or soft core with this method. Mind you, our cored deck is over an inch thick, two layers of plywood sandwiched into three layers of fiberglass. This is one tough old boat! Thanks for a great magazine, which I read cover to cover.

—Mark Branse
1967 Morgan 34 *Rigoler*
Mystic, Connecticut

A Seadog's Observation

I enjoyed Ken Tropf's story about him and his friend reviving and sailing their old wooden sloop around Lake Erie (read online at goodoldboat.com/two-friends-and-a-simple-solid-boat). I was doing something similar about the same time, and I recall that when visiting small harbors and anchorages around New England I would come across many young folks in similar boats.

I got a lot of advice on boat restoration from older seadogs (whether I wanted it or not), and I was looking forward to sharing some of that knowledge now that I'm one of them. But as I visit those same harbors today, I see that the younger, shoestring-sailors are almost extinct. I suppose there are several

Members of the East Coast Sailing Association in Satellite Beach, Florida, show off their complimentary copies of *Good Old Boat* magazine. The club was founded in 1966 and continues to attract sailors and their classic plastic sailboats.

reasons why today's cruisers tend to be older, and their boats have become bigger, shinier, and a lot more costly.

I don't think it's so much the cost of boats that has discouraged younger sailors, because there are still bargains, especially for anyone willing to add some labor to a good old boat. But maybe it's a desire to get there quicker in our busy world, and all the other attractions available today that don't require sanding, painting, and hanging upside down in a bilge. The high cost and scarcity of moorings and slips today also have to be a major contributor to the changed makeup of the cruising fleet.

So lacking many younger do-it-yourself sailors who are interested, I have to bore my daughters and their husbands with all my codgerly advice.

—**David Sharp**
Newport, Rhode Island

Club Copies

About five years ago, *Good Old Boat* sent out an email to subscribers letting them know that the magazine would be happy to mail out complimentary copies of the magazine to yacht clubs or other organizations as part of a promotional campaign. I'm a member and secretary for the East Coast Sailing Association (ecsasail.com) so I requested 20 copies to hand out to our club members. I took a picture of our group with their copies but then promptly forgot about it and just recently came across it and thought it might be a good picture for the magazine. Most of our members own good old boats, and I'm just finishing up my third boat review (Southern Cross 28) from boats in our club.

—**Joe Cloidt**
Indialantic, Florida

In the July 2022 issue of *The Dogwatch* newsletter, we asked readers to submit photos of their boats sailing for a chance to have it featured in the magazine and to win a *Good Old Boat* hat. This month's winning sailing picture is from Rick Shepler.

Sailing Photo Winner

Several years ago, my dockmate took this photograph from his C&C 30 MkII while sailing on Possession Sound with Mt. Baker just in view to the north. *Capella* is my 1980 Cal 25 MkII hull #308. We have been together 20 years, and going forward she still remains a good fit for day sailing Puget Sound.

Thank you for all that you bring to the readers of *Good Old Boat*. Fair Winds!

—**Rick Shepler**
Everett, Washington

Overcoming an Override

Regarding "The Foul Winch: Racing Gone Awry," (*The Dogwatch*, June 2022), here's another solution that we've used a couple of times when we had an override or when the stripper broke on the winch and the line fouled itself on the self-tailer. Tie a second line to the fouled jib sheet with a rolling hitch. Take that line to a winch it can reach and tighten it. Now there is no pressure on the fouled line, and you can free it easily. Rewrap it on

continued on page 56

Nauticat 40

A Stout Little Ship With Some S&S Sailability

BY BRANDON FORD
PHOTOS BY BRANDON FORD AND DAVID CHAMBERS

David Chambers was about 13 years old when he first saw a Nauticat. His dad had taken him along to Anacortes, Washington, to look at a 32-foot version of the Finnish-built motorsailer.

"I remember sitting in the boat and hearing the yacht broker tell Dad she could sail around the world," he says. "I'll always remember that."

After his dad taught him the basics of sailing, he continued to learn when he joined the U.S. Navy Reserve and went to Seabee school in Gulfport, Mississippi, where he rented Lasers and Hobie Cats to sail in the Gulf of Mexico. Assigned to Sand Point Naval Air Station near Seattle, he kept on sailing Lasers and Hobie Cats, then moved up to renting a San Juan 24 and a Catalina 27.

When the time came to buy his own sailboat, he was looking for a good liveaboard that could also cross oceans. Holding on to that early memory, he knew the make would be a Nauticat. But which one? The traditional full-keel Baltic beauties of the early days? Or the later, sleeker designs by Sparkman & Stephens?

Pointed to a Nauticat 40 for sale in Tacoma, David found *Pyxis,* which had been on the market a long time and was not in great shape but had everything he wanted. In 1985, *Pyxis* had served as Nauticat's West Coast showboat for the new S&S design. Nauticat had loaded the boat with some extra features and amped up its already outstanding fit and finish, which only added to the coolness of owning a former showboat.

"I came close to buying the 44 because it was more convenient for living aboard, with a sliding side door and larger windows, but then I decided that the Sparkman & Stephens hulls would be better for sailing," David says. He has not been disappointed. "They do sail surprisingly well."

History and Design

Pentti Siltala started Siltala Yachts as a family shipyard in 1961 in Finland. The company focused on building traditional, heavy motorsailers in fiberglass. The look of the early yachts was reminiscent of Scandinavian fishing boats.

Siltala's first boat was the high-deckhouse Nauticat 33, designed by Finnish engineer Wilho Aarnipalo and which became a bestseller. At the end of 1986, the yard launched another successful model, the Nauticat 35 designed by Kaj Gustafsson.

As the popularity of the Nauticat 33 and 35 grew, so did demand for larger Nauticats; the 44 and 36, also designed by Aarnipalo, followed. In the early 1980s,

The Nauticat 40 was rigged as a sloop, cutter, and ketch, each with a fairly generous sail plan for a motorsailer.

High topsides permit good headroom below while also keeping the cabin trunk relatively low. The pilothouse and rail-to-rail aft cabin trunk make for a somewhat bulky appearance and added windage.

the company introduced three models designed by Sparkman & Stephens, the Nauticat 521, 43, and 40, in production from 1984 to 1993.

Sparkman & Stephens improved the Nauticat's sailing and seakeeping abilities by replacing the full keel with a more modern fin keel, reducing the wetted surface area. The keels still have a long chord to give good directional stability and keep the draft fairly shallow at 5 feet 9 inches. An aft-hung rudder on a skeg gives the boats better handling and a tighter turning radius.

The other big change was above the waterline. S&S boats retain Nauticat's essential features but have shorter pilothouses, smaller windows, less freeboard, and a flatter, but still springy, sheer. These changes decrease windage and improve handling in crosswinds and at anchor.

The three designs also did away with the original sliding side doors in the pilothouse, exchanging convenience for improved seaworthiness.

In the 1990s, Gustafsson became the manager of the shipyard and one of its owners. In 2005 the shipyard changed its name to Nauticat Yachts. After several hard years, the owners of Nauticat declared bankruptcy in 2018.

In late 2021, a group of entrepreneurs, led by an experienced yachtsman and the owner of a sailing school, Dmitry Muratov, bought the company assets and moved it to Latvia as Nauticat Yachts Oy.

Construction

Materials and processes at Nauticat in the 1980s were fairly typical of the composite boatbuilding industry at the time—E-glass fabrics set in polyester resin and wetted out by hand. There was no vacuum bagging or resin infusion, which is becoming the norm today, to capture toxic emissions and better consolidate the laminate.

While an online owners' forum of Nauticat 33 owners reports multiple cases of osmotic blisters, David says he and other Nauticat 40 owners have seen no evidence of this problem on their boats.

Teak decks do not last forever, and if water travels down dried-out bungs covering screw heads and into the deck core (probably balsa wood), integrity of the deck can be severely compromised. A surveyor should pay special attention to the decks on a pre-purchase survey.

"The boat is really overbuilt and super solid. Both the hull and rigging are impressive. We cut a hole near the keel to install something, and it was this thick," David says, holding his thumb and finger about 1.5 inches apart.

Rig

Most Nauticat 40s come as staysail ketches with a total sail area of 948 square feet spread over three sails (main, #2 genoa, and mizzen). But standard calculations using 100% foretriangle yield a sail area-to-displacement ratio of a low 12.9. This is a motorsailer after all.

Pyxis, however, came as a cutter rig, with the same sail plan, sans the mizzen. The mast is stepped on the keel. The main and working jib are just 552 square feet. The sloop or cutter rig with a large roller furling genoa seems like enough to drive her in all but the lightest conditions. Not having the additional windage from the mizzen also seems to help.

"I'm happy with the cutter," David says. "The mizzen would go right behind the wheel in the cockpit, and all the extra standing and running rigging ends up being a lot of clutter and would really be in the way." David has replaced all running rigging and will replace the standing rigging before making a planned passage to Hawaii.

"I am a casual sailor," he continues. "I like setting the sails and then hitting the autopilot button so I can go below to get a cup of coffee."

On Deck

The cockpit on *Pyxis* is comfortable and feels secure except aft, where it turns into an elevated open deck. This is an outstanding feature at anchor or during the relatively calm conditions we enjoyed on our test sail. But should conditions get wet or hairy, the helmsman may want to retreat to the inside pilot station with all the instruments, a comfy chair, and good 360-degree visibility. Oh, and forced-air heating should the weather turn cold.

Besides exposure, another problem with a high center cockpit is the difficulty of getting a fair lead on the foresail sheets. While the two-speed winches handled the job well, there seemed to be excessive friction while trimming the headsail.

The sidedecks are wide enough for good passage to the mast and foredeck. Overall, the decks are uncluttered, and the teak decking provides secure footing.

The mast step and partners for the mizzen mast rise a few inches above deck level just behind the wheel. They looked to be a tripping hazard, but the arrangement did make for a comfortable footrest while manning the helm.

As much as he loves the beauty of the teak decks, solid teak rails outside, and

A long swim ladder is needed to reach the water from the raised afterdeck.

beautiful joinery inside, it is a lot of wood to take care of, David says. "I prefer to *use* the boat." *Pyxis* will soon be 40 years old, which brings a lot of the usual problems. "The teak decks are about shot, and the Danish hatch manufacturer is out of business," he says.

Below Deck

When David bought the boat, he intended to live aboard and wanted "something spacious, light, and fun." He got all that and gorgeous teak woodwork that Finns are famous for.

Four steps down the companionway brings you to the pilothouse with a nav station that should satisfy any Baltic old salt. The wooden wheel is beautifully made. There is a 360-degree view from the helm. A hatch above the station allows a decent view of the sails and rigging, as well as ventilation.

To port is a raised dinette that puts the large windows at eye level when diners are seated.

Going forward between the helm station and the dinette, a few steps down lead to a compact galley to port and another dinette to starboard. The starboard dinette can convert into a small double bunk with a privacy curtain that closes it off from the galley and passageway.

Forward is a head and cabin with a small double bunk and a seat that would be just right for two kids.

Back in the main cabin, aft of the helm station is a passageway to the large owner's cabin aft with a full-width berth. A seat and what could be a small vanity or desk complete the furnishings. The en-suite head is a comfortable size and has a separate shower stall, although David, who is 6 feet 4 inches tall, says the shower stall is one of the few places that lacks standing headroom for him.

Throughout, the boat provides massive areas for storage.

"The Jeanneaus and Beneteaus have everything inside pushed right out to the edges of the hull," David says. "It makes them look huge inside but doesn't give you many places to put things."

The boat carries 230 gallons of fresh water in two tanks located under the galley.

Pyxis is powered with a 90-hp Ford Lehmann paired with a 22-inch Max-Prop.

There are decent sightlines from the helm in the pilothouse, with instruments and paper chart display close at hand.

The queen-size berth in the aft cabin has 6-foot 3-inch headroom and is flanked by bedside counters and storage.

"It smokes, but it has 4,300 hours on it, and I've put on about 500 of those," David says. "I usually keep her at 1,600 rpm, and she will do 7.5 knots in flat water. It's a very pleasant ride. She carries a little over 200 gallons of fuel and burns about 1.5 gallons an hour. That gives us pretty good range."

The engine and fuel tanks are under the pilothouse and easily accessed by removing three panels. The stuffing box can be tended to from the engine room and from under the berth in the aft cabin.

Upgrades to *Pyxis'* electrical system are in the works: a new isolation transformer, which protects the boat (and crew) from potentially deadly stray currents in a marina, and a new inverter/charger.

Underway

For our test sail, my wife, Virginia, and I met David and his partner, Robyn Vilhelmsen, on the guest dock in Friday Harbor Marina on San Juan Island, the namesake of this enchanting cluster of islands sandwiched between the southern tip of Vancouver Island in British Columbia and the top of Washington State. They had sailed from their summer anchorage at Cayou Quay Marina in Deer Harbor on neighboring Orcas Island.

After some small talk in the cockpit and a safety briefing that would make any airline flight attendant proud, David crept through the skinny water at the guest dock to San Juan Channel. The Ford Lehman diesel was fairly quiet, buried beneath the boat's beautiful woodwork.

Once out of the channel, all aboard were pleasantly surprised to feel a breeze. The day exceeded our expectations—and those of the weatherman—with winds reaching nearly 10 knots toward the end of the sail, a nice change from the usual dead air of a Pacific Northwest July.

I helped Robyn raise the mainsail, a job made more difficult by the halyard exiting the mast from nearly deck level. The only workable way to hoist the large sail was using the two-speed winch, a slow process compared to jumping the halyard from above head level. Were it my boat, I would check other mast openings to see if it could be changed.

Once the main was up and the genoa unfurled, *Pyxis* heeled over slightly and got to business, reaching 5 knots on a close reach in only 7 knots of wind. The wind seemed just right for evaluating such a heavy boat. I'm sure she would do well in a blow.

The question I wanted to answer was: How does she sail in the light winds typical of Pacific Northwest summers? The answer is, very well, indeed. Boat speed was usually between 4 and 6 knots, depending on the point of sail, with the wind

rarely reaching above 10 knots. Respectable in my book.

She also came through the eye of the wind smartly on tacks. Hydraulic steering is about the only option on a boat like *Pyxis*, whose entire stern is devoted to a plush master's cabin. It has good and bad points: the steering is easy, like the power steering on a Buick, but it doesn't allow feedback like a tiller or cable-and-quadrant steering systems.

The autopilot worked seamlessly, as it should in flat water and light air. There is a provision for an emergency tiller should the hydraulics fail, but the helmsman would need to be below, standing on the bunk with her or his head sticking out of a hatch. Doable, but I would hate to cross an ocean that way. David replaced the hydraulics cover on *Pyxis* with clear Plexiglas so he can keep an eye on things.

A primary mission during a test sail is to get some good photos of the vessel underway. David was a champion host. First, he launched his Mavic drone off the stern deck. Hopes were high as it flew behind the boat and then passed us, pointing its camera at us. Our excitement turned to dismay when the little drone flipped upside down and pancaked into San Juan Channel.

The L-shaped galley features a double sink, gimballed stove/oven, a microwave, icebox with refrigeration, and good storage, top left.

Looking aft from the galley into the saloon, the steps leading down to the aft cabin, and the companionway steps leading to the cockpit, bottom left.

Undeterred, David brought the inflatable up to the stern boarding ladder and got in with his SLR camera. I took the helm of *Pyxis* and put her through her paces.

At the end of our sail, David brought *Pyxis* into an anchorage near the dock where Virginia and I would pick up the ferry from San Juan Island back to Anacortes. Dropping the hook was easy with a vertical electric windlass and a wireless remote.

David, Virginia, and I scrambled down the stern ladder into the inflatable for a quick dinghy ride to the ferry dock. As the ferry pulled away from the dock, I looked longingly at the smoke from *Pyxis*' barbeque, knowing I was missing out on good bratwurst on a good old boat.

Conclusion

David says that recently, he watched a new Beneteau Oceanis 46 sail into Deer Harbor.

"It's a better-looking sailboat with the sexy bow and wide stern with a fold-down swim deck. It just looked fast!" he says. Still, he's happy with *Pyxis*, noting, "It's kind of like pistachio ice cream. Most people like chocolate or strawberry, but there are some of us geeks who like pistachio."

And who love Nauticats. True to their purpose as comfortable, "little-ship" motorsailers, they are solid choices for liveaboards or full-time cruisers, and the Sparkman & Stephens pedigree of the Nauticat 40 provides an extra measure of sailability.

That said, one must not expect the same performance from a heavy-displacement, high-sided motorsailer that one would have on a mainstream cruiser/racer. The tradeoff is inside steering and liveaboard accommodations.

There aren't many used Nauticats on the market. Most notable on yachtworld.com is a 1986 model in Cartagena, Colombia, listed for $120,000, and a 1985 model in the United Kingdom for $144,000. Other sites have old U.S. listings ranging from $125,000 to $155,000 for mid-80′s models.

Brandon Ford, a former reporter, editor, and public information officer, and his wife, Virginia, recently returned from a two-year cruise to California, Mexico, and seven of the eight main Hawaiian Islands. Before their cruise they spent three years refitting their 1971 Columbia 43, Oceanus. *Lifelong sailors, they continue to live aboard* Oceanus *and cruise the Salish Sea from their home base in Olympia, Washington.*

LINE DRAWINGS BY ROB MAZZA

Nauticat 40

Designer	Sparkman & Stephens
LOA	39'4"
LWL	32'10"
Beam	13'2"
Draft	5'9"
Displacement	30,865 lb
Ballast	8,819 lb
Sail Area	792 sq ft
Sail Area/Displ.	12.9
Displ./LOA	390

Nauticat 40...

. . . and Two More Pilothouse-Type Cruisers

BY ROB MAZZA

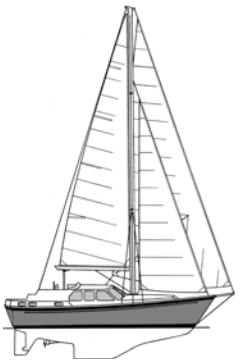
The Nauticat 40 represents a direction in yacht design that leans much more to creature comfort than to offshore performance. Despite that, she is certainly more sailer than motorsailer, yet still offers a light and airy interior that incorporates inside steering to keep you out of the elements.

In "Defining a Pilothouse" (September/October 2013), I addressed the subject of doghouses, raised saloons, fixed dodgers, and pilothouses. Based on the definitions that article established, the Nauticat 40 certainly falls into the pilothouse category.

One typical problem in most tall pilothouse configurations is reduced forward visibility from the cockpit. The Nauticat 40's Sparkman & Stephens designers have solved this by raising the cockpit sole to such a height as to easily see over the pilothouse (if this were a powerboat, I'd be tempted to call such a configuration a flybridge). Below, this arrangement also allows for a roomy, full-height, aft cabin.

Reduced forward visibility from the cockpit is evident in the profile of the Pacific Seacraft 40 which, like the Nauticat 40, has an inside and outside steering station, but the Pacific Seacraft maintains the standard aft cockpit configuration. The Gulfstar 39, on the other hand, gets around the problem of reduced forward visibility by maintaining a much lower height to her pilothouse which, as defined in the above-mentioned article, is really a raised saloon with no inside steering.

All three of these boats sport almost identical modern cruising underbodies with separate keel and rudder, and each incorporates the slightly more conservative skeg on the rudder. The Nauticat, however, is the only one that attempts to add balance to the rudder with the lower section projecting forward of the rudder shaft in the form of a horn. The Pacific Seacraft is the only one to retain the prop-in-aperture configuration that would have been the norm in most full-length keels.



	Nauticat 40	Gulfstar 39	Pacific Seacraft PH 40
LOA	39'4"	39'7"	42'3"
LWL	32'10"	32'5"	31'3"
Beam	13'2"	12'1"	12'5"
Draft	5'9"	4'9"	6'1"
Displ. (lbs)	30,865	19,000	24,500
Ballast	8,819	8,200	8800
LOA/LWL	1.20	1.22	1.35
Beam/LWL	.40	.37	.40
Displ./LWL	390	249	358
Bal./Displ.	29%	43%	36%
Sail Area (100%)	792	684	834
SA/Displ.	12.9	15.3	15.8
Capsize No.	1.7	1.8	1.71
Comfort Ratio	45	31	38
Year Introduced	1984	1981	1997
Designer	Sparkman & Stephens	Dick Lazzara	William Crealock
Builder	Siltala Yachts	Gulfstar Yachts	Pacific Seacraft

Looking at the numbers, there is one anomaly that stands out immediately—the 30,865 pounds published displacement of the Nauticat 40, compared to 19,000-pound displacement of the Gulfstar and the 24,500-pound displacement of the Pacific Seacraft. When deducting the ballast weight from the total displacement, you arrive at what we used to call at C&C the "everything else" weight of the boat, which in the case of the Nauticat would be about 22,000 pounds, versus about 11,000 for the Gulfstar and about 15,700 for the Pacific Seacraft.

Granted, the Nauticat has a more sumptuous aft cabin than the other two boats, but considering that each boat has about the same engine and similar mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, and similar interior woodwork and deck hardware as well as spars and rigging, the only variable—other than the aft cabin—is the lamination weight of the hull and deck. Can those differences really amount to an over 6,000-pound difference between the Nauticat and the Pacific Seacraft and a whopping 11,000-pound difference to the Gulfstar? I'm at a loss to explain that discrepancy.

The rigs of all three boats are very similar, embodying the attributes of the modern cutter, with large "J" measurements, mast stepped well aft, fixed staysail stay, masthead rig, and in the case of the Nauticat and Pacific Seacraft, fixed bowsprits.

That heavier displacement of the Nauticat results in an extremely high displacement/length waterline ratio of 390, a very low ballast/displacement ratio of 29%, and an anemic sail area/displacement ratio of 12.9. The displacement/length waterline ratio of the Gulfstar comes in at a very competitive 249, while it is also on the high side for the Pacific Seacraft at 358. Ballast/displacement ratios are also more reasonable at 43% and 36%, respectively, and sail area/displacement ratios also fall more in the norm for boats of this type at 15.3 and 15.8, respectively.

Capsize numbers are consistent for each boat, well under the threshold of 2. It is interesting to note that the Nauticat's heavier displacement is offset by her greater beam to result in a capsize number equal or similar to the other two lighter but narrower boats. That heavy displacement certainly comes to the fore in the exceptionally high comfort ratio of 45 compared to 31 for the lightest displacement Gulfstar and 38 for the intermediate displacement Pacific Seacraft.

Many older monohull sailboats have cave-like interiors; these three boats work to avoid that by bringing more light below and creating eye-level visibility outward. Modern boats try to achieve the same effect by placing large, fixed ports in the hull sides, and while that helps, it does not achieve what these three boats do in that regard.

All three are good examples of different approaches to the same challenge of belowdecks livability on cruising sailboats.

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.*

All Patched Up

For in-the-field sail repairs, adhesives can get you out of a sticky situation.

BY JAMIE GIFFORD

When I was a young sailmaker in the '80s, our loft purchased a German-made sewing machine that had an air cooler to keep the needle from heating up enough to melt thread and a robust pulling system to grunt huge sails along in precise time with the needle.

Soon after purchasing the machine, we built a 900-pound Kevlar genoa for a 120-foot sloop. After a few seasons' use in the Mediterranean, it required a few tweaks. The local sail loft in Antibes was "tres petit," so in a grassy area, several sailmakers pushed and pulled as I worked stiff Kevlar sailcloth through a pathetic little sewing machine. Needles shattered. I cursed like a sailor.

It was a good example of the reality that once sails are out of the sail loft, repairs in the field mostly involve binding materials together in imperfect conditions. While fundamental to sail repair, sewing is also often impractical. Anyone who has hand sewn a broadseam back together, or machine sewn a patch into the middle of a sail bunched up across the entire foredeck, knows the colorful vocabulary associated with such thankless tasks.

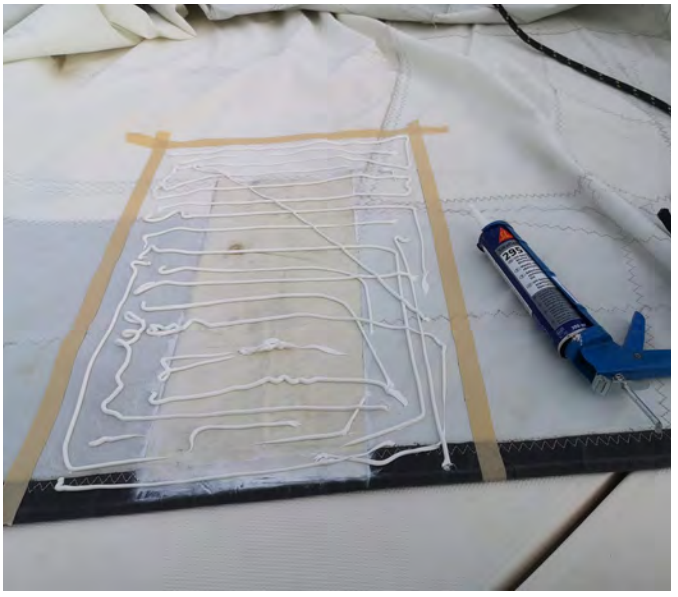
So, what are the alternatives for in-the-field DIY repairs? Sail repair tape seems obvious, but it's limited. It bonds well to clean surfaces, but the pressure-sensitive adhesive remains liquid and slides under load. It's also lightweight, often just over 3 ounces—about one-half the weight of sailcloth for a mainsail on your average 30-footer. It's not intended for structural repairs.

A better choice for do-it-yourself sail repairs is the use of adhesives that when applied to sailcloth layers can create temporary and permanent structural repairs.

I've used two different adhesive types for field repairs to sails. Polyurethane sealants, such as 3M 4200 Fast Cure and Sikaflex 291, are flexible, waterproof, and very strong. This is the best choice for permanent patches on tears in medium- to heavy-weight sails. Cyanoacrylate (commonly sold under the trademark Super Glue) is good for smaller, get-you-home patches. It's strong, but the bonds will degrade with flexing.

And when I say get you home, I really mean it. A good example was a cruising couple in Tanzania preparing for the rigorous passage to South Africa who contacted us with a problem. Their Dacron headsail was failing in a region without a sailmaker to make repairs. We worked up a plan with available resources: a few tubes of Sikaflex and Dacron pieces poached from a dinghy sail. Repairs held for the 1,500 nautical miles to South Africa, where they ordered a new sail.

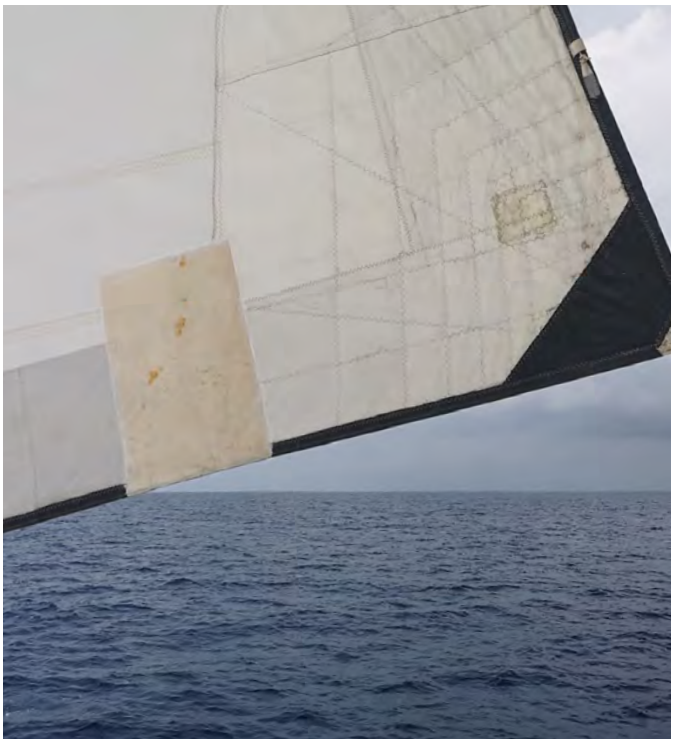
When sewing, seam strength correlates to the number of stitches per inch. With adhesive repairs, the key to strength is the amount of bonded surface area. Since higher sail loads require greater surface area to adhere a patch to, start your



The perimeter of the new patch is outlined in tape, while adhesive has been applied to the area to be patched. Patch size is determined by whether the tear is low-load or high-load, at far left.

A Dacron patch cut from an unused dinghy sail, at left.

Weights applied after bonding the patch on the affected part of the sail will help the adhesive set firmly, at left.



The patched sail is deployed and hanging tight. Done properly, an adhesive patch can last for miles and years and is a much easier in-the-field option than sewing, at right.

repair by assessing the tear. Sail load paths radiate out from the corners and then tend to parallel the nearest edge (luff, leach, foot). A tear parallel to the load path, such as parallel and near to the leech, is a low-load tear. A tear perpendicular to the leech is a high-load tear, as it crosses the load path.

The next step is to size and make the patch, preferably from material the same weight as the sail or similar.

On a low-load patch, size the patch to be 1 to 2 inches wider than the tear on all four sides. A high-load patch should be 3 to 6 inches wider per side than the tear. For example, a 20-inch-long tear that is perpendicular to the leech (so, high-load) will have a patch that is 26 inches long by 6 inches wide on a smaller sail, and maybe 12 inches wide on a larger sail.

To prepare the damaged area, lay out the sail on a flat surface so the tear is flat. Apply layers of blue tape (duct tape will do) to cover the tear and keep the sides from shifting. Then carefully flip the sail so the taped area is on the bottom. Measure and cut your patch.

To adhere the patch:

1. Clean and dry the patch area with acetone or rubbing alcohol.
2. For a clean finish, set the patch in place and apply blue tape around the perimeter to protect the area beyond the patch.
3. Remove the patch, then spread a relatively thin coating of the best adhesive for your repair to the sail and the patch surfaces (polyurethane sealant is the best for patching tears).
4. Place the patch on the sail, mating the coated surfaces and pressing them together.
5. Lay plastic over the top and set flat weights (such as books) over the patch to ensure surface bonding, then let it cure as per adhesive instructions.
6. Once cured, remove the tape applied on both sides of the sail.

If the tear is big and high load, consider applying a patch to both sides of the sail. And finally, if the patch is in an area of sail where lazy jacks or rigging snag on the edge, apply sail repair tape over the edge.

The genoa on *Totem*, our Stevens 47, has just such a patch in place now. The tear happened in South Africa, seven years ago. The repair took about one hour, plus cure time. There was no cursing.

Jamie Gifford is a sailmaker/designer, rigger, and recovered racing sailor. Since 2008, he and his wife, Behan, and their children cruise their Stevens 47, Totem, *full-time, including a circumnavigation.*

The Sail Artist

Oxford's Downes Curtis was one of Maryland's most enduring sailmakers.

BY WENDY MITMAN CLARKE

Maryland's deep maritime heritage is inextricably linked to the stories and experiences of Black people on the Chesapeake Bay. As an enslaved boy, Frederick Douglass began to learn to read and write while spending time in Durgin and Bailey's shipyard in Baltimore, where he watched shipwrights mark each piece of timber with a letter indicating its location in the ship's construction. Later, he worked as a caulker for Fells Point shipbuilder William Gardner, and he used those skills to get a foot in the door on the wharves in New Bedford, Massachusetts, when he fled Maryland and slavery in 1838.

It's likely that free and enslaved Black Marylanders worked in the lofts supporting the fleets of sail-powered vessels that dominated Bay commerce until well into the early 20th century. But one of the only full-time, independent Black sailmakers in the state through the 1900s, and certainly the most enduring, was Downes Curtis of Oxford, Maryland. He and his younger brother, Albert, learned the craft from Dave Pritchett, an English sailmaker who had come to the Eastern Shore town on the Tred Avon River.

Downes Curtis. Photo, John W. Cane, 1996, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum Collection (945.44)

A young Downes Curtis patches a sail. By H. Robins Hollyday. Photograph from the collection of the Talbot Historical Society.

When Pritchett died in 1936, Downes and Albert continued the work of the sail loft.

"We cut canvas sails for log canoes and oyster-dredging boats, you know, skipjacks and bugeyes," Curtis told Jack Sherwood in *Maryland's Vanishing Lives*. "If they didn't get sails from us, they got them from Mr. Brown in Deal Island. Mr. Brown is gone. Only us is left who do it the old-timey way."

According to Sherwood, the brothers also cut sails for their oysterman father, Raphael, as well as for recreational yachtsmen who brought their boats to one of Oxford's many boatyards. A 2001 story in the *Easton Star-Democrat* noted that the brothers made sails for the likes of Errol Flynn, James Cagney, Walter Cronkite, and the Kennedy family, among others.

The loft building itself was once a school for African American children up to grade eight, Agnes Washington, Curtis' sister, told the Easton newspaper.

"All nine Curtis children attended classes at the schoolhouse where our mother had been a teacher," she said. Today, the loft building is a private residence. The owner told a local news crew she still finds hooks and nails from when the Curtis brothers stretched sails across the floor.

Locally, Curtis became best known for his craftsmanship in building sails for traditional log canoes. Once used for commercial fishing and oystering, low-slung log canoes now are used only for racing on the Chesapeake, with the fleet based on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Like other commercial boats of the time, speed to market was of the essence, and log canoes—their open hulls loaded with

Curtis made sails for the likes of Errol Flynn, James Cagney, and Walter Cronkite.

Downes and Albert Curtis mending sails at the loft in Oxford, top left. By H. Robins Hollyday. Photograph from the collection of the Talbot Historical Society.

Downes Curtis, left, and his brother, Albert, making sails at Curtis' loft in Oxford, Maryland, bottom. By H. Robins Hollyday. Photograph from the collection of the Talbot Historical Society.

oysters for ballast—carried clouds of sail to propel them. Today, the clouds of sail remain, but the ballast is human–crews who hike out on boards called prys to keep the over-canvassed, tender boats from capsizing.

Curtis became a renowned log canoe sailmaker and cut sails for some of the most competitive and historic boats in the fleet. His skills were such that they were noted by historians who sought to place the log canoe *Island Blossom* on the National Register of Historic Places. Built in 1892 in Tilghman Island, *Island Blossom* is now owned by Judge John North of St. Michaels, and the Maryland Historical Trust's National Register Properties listing notes that, "The sails were cut by Downes Curtis of Oxford."

Curtis continued to make sails in his loft until his death in 1996 at age 85. In 2015, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (CBMM) launched an exhibition featuring his tools and sailmaker's bench. The museum's magazine, *The Weather Gauge,* noted in a 1997 story that Curtis "stands out as an African-American maritime artisan on the Chesapeake Bay."

This story originally appeared in Maryland Sea Grant's magazine, Chesapeake Quarterly: Black on the Bay, Then and Now, Vol. 20, No. 1, February 2021. *Access the magazine and the story's digital version at chesapeakequarterly.net/V20N1*

Good Old Boat *Senior Editor Wendy Mitman Clarke is also a science writer and editor at Maryland Sea Grant. You can see more of her work at wendymitmanclarke.com*

***Island Blossom* (background) racing under a full press of Egyptian cotton sails made by Downes Curtis,** above right. Photo, undated, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum Collection (36.3)

The straight stitch sewing machine used by Downes Curtis, from the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum exhibit that included some of the sailmaker's equipment and tools, below right. Photo, David W. Harp, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum Collection (1997.1.117).

The Lemonade Cruise, Part 2

An overnight race, a 12 Metre sail, and new friends and places round out an unexpected adventure.

BY TOM ALLEY

To make lemonade one must start with lemons; in our case, it was the last-minute cancellation of the 2020 Marion-Bermuda Race, for which I and the crew of my 1965 Alberg 35, *Tomfoolery*, had been preparing for three years. Staged in the Hudson River after transiting the Erie Canal to make the starting line on time, we were stunned when the committee cancelled the race due to COVID-19 issues in Bermuda ("The Lemonade Cruise, Part 1," September/October 2022).

But an alternate invitation from the Essex Yacht Club (EYC) in Connecticut to race in their annual Sam Wetherill Trophy Overnight Race helped us point our bow in a new direction and provided a jumping off point for what we came to call The Lemonade Cruise. *Tomfoolery* made it to EYC just in time for the pre-race meeting and party, receiving a warm welcome from club members.

The Race

The next morning dawned with a thick fog, but it quickly burned off as the day progressed. The race was scheduled to start at the time of maximum favorable tide (11:00 a.m.), so we left the harbor a couple of hours early to get down the Connecticut River and into Long Island Sound with enough time to try to read the winds, currents, and waves.

In the Sound, however, the wind took its sweet time showing up. After a two-hour delay, the breeze began to fill in and the race committee initiated the countdown to the start. Just before 1:30 in the afternoon, we cleared the starting line and were on our way—only to sail about a mile when the light breeze began to die and the tide began to turn. Was the committee boat getting closer? Yes, it was. I checked the depth, and we were in less than 30 feet of water.

"Mike! Throw out the anchor!"

"What? Are you sure? Is that legal?"

"Absolutely! Toss the anchor out *now*!"

As soon as the anchor took hold, we watched six boats slide behind us. Mike, a seasoned racer from the deep waters of Lake Ontario, could hardly believe what he was seeing. Here was a 56-year-old cruising boat "passing" a small fleet of much newer go-fast racers.

After about 10 minutes, the breeze filled in again, and we raised anchor and proceeded east. We repeated the anchoring maneuver about an hour later when the wind died again, passing another three boats from the group that had started some 30 minutes ahead of us before the wind filled in and stayed with us for the rest of the day. While the racers did eventually pass us, we were quite satisfied that we stayed with them for the first three hours of the race.

Tomfoolery successfully sailed through The Race—a rather notorious, deep, short passage where the waters between Long Island and Block Island sounds mix, mingle, and generally cause a ruckus—against a foul tide and headed for the first turning mark just north of Martha's Vineyard, about 60 nautical miles distant.

***Tomfoolery* clears the Essex Yacht Club committee boat and crosses the starting line of the Sam Wetherill Race.** Photo courtesy Essex Yacht Club.

The *Tomfoolery* crew is all smiles after finishing the Wetherill Race, top left. **Left to right, Jim McGinnis, Mike Crouse, Katie Alley, Tom Alley, and Andrea Johnson.**

Tom Alley shakes hands with Essex Yacht Club Rear Commodore Bill Gunther, who recognized *Tomfoolery* for being the boat to travel farthest to compete in the 2020 Sam Wetherill Race, top right.

During the night the wind built, allowing us to exercise *Tomfoolery*'s new mainsail slab reefing system, and it worked much better than what I'd sailed with for two decades. The newly installed AIS transponder made it easy to keep track of our competitors along with the commercial traffic in the area. New lee cloths on the bunks that we had sewn over the winter helped the crew rest while off watch, and newly installed jacklines kept everyone secure on deck.

Best of all, the recent conversion of the ice box to a refrigerator kept the food fresh and the drinks cold, while the upgraded stove gave us hot coffee and soup.

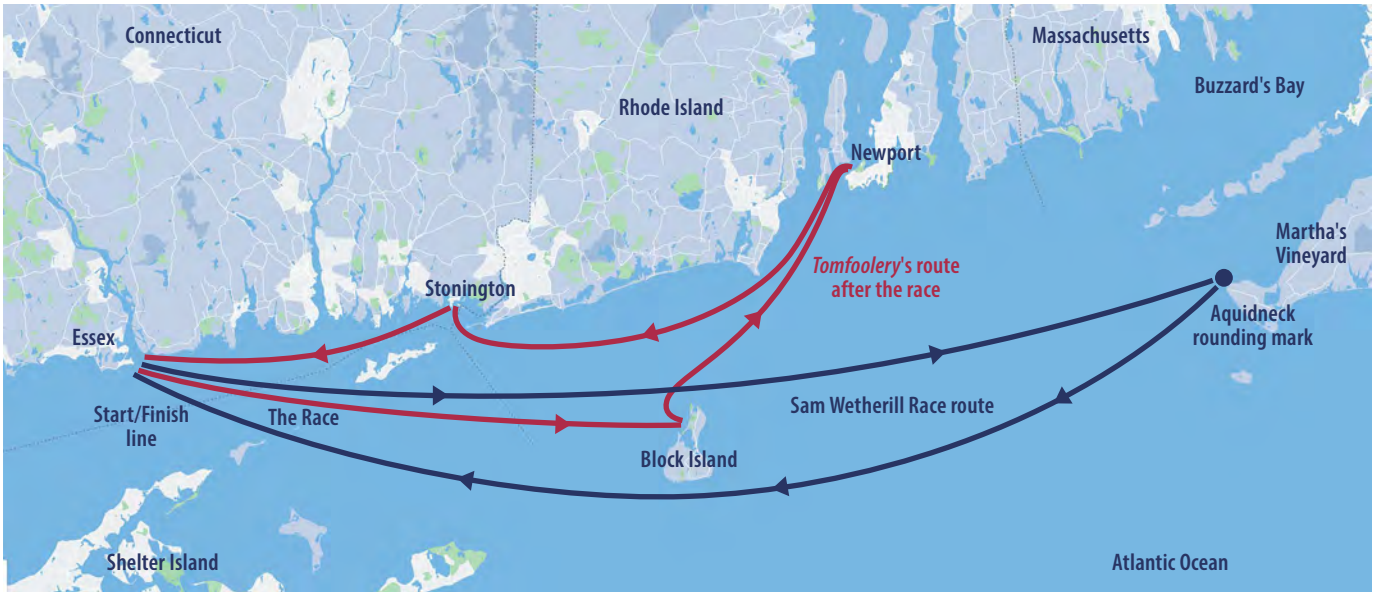
After sailing through some impressive (to us) ocean swells around the south side of Block Island, we battled another bout of afternoon calms on our way back to The Race. Fortunately, this time the tide was with us, so we were "drifting" toward our intended destination at about 3.5 knots.

Around sunset, we caught sight of one of our competitors and engaged in a bit of a tacking duel as we both tried to get through The Race before the tide turned foul again. The crew received a boost to morale when we pulled ahead, and our competitor was swept back out to sea by the changing tide.

That night, however, we would be tested again as the wind died, and the water was far too deep for us to anchor (200–300 feet). The poor night watch was stuck ghosting along, just barely able to hold ground against the tide. We considered heading toward shallower water to anchor, but the number of rocks noted on the chart reminded us too much of our too-close encounter with Hen and Chickens on the way to EYC.

Just before sunrise, the breeze changed direction and filled in enough to allow us to make progress. At 5:13 a.m. on Sunday morning, *Tomfoolery* crossed the finish line off Old Saybrook. Shortly thereafter, we were back in Essex to be greeted by other racers who had finished ahead of us.

After getting some much-needed sleep, our crew learned that we had finished 12th in a field of 23 boats. The yacht club was gracious enough to honor us with a token for being the boat and crew who had traveled the farthest to compete. They also invited us to come back to compete again, but I think the logistics involved will not allow that to be an annual event for this skipper and crew—at least not aboard *Tomfoolery* so long as her home port is 500 nautical miles away on an inland lake.



Tom at the wheel of the 12 Metre *Intrepid*, with *Tomfoolery* crew members Katie and Mike enjoying the ride.

What Next?

With the Wetherill Race behind us, it was time to make the next decision. We had a little over two weeks of down time until the Marion-Bermuda Race would have started, so we had plenty of time to mull things over. Would we join others in June to sail to Bermuda, or would we spend some time cruising and exploring southern New England? None of our crew had ever visited either destination, so it wasn't a clear choice.

We deliberated for a while, but in the end, the choice distilled down to the following: sail for 14 days to visit one island for three to four days; or, sail for 14 days and visit half a dozen places in southern New England.

The prospect of visiting multiple destinations won out simply from the diversity of experiences it offered, so we began to prepare an itinerary. To gain more local knowledge, we asked many of the people we had met in Essex what they considered to be must-see destinations and started compiling a list. In a few days, we had more suggestions than we could possibly visit, however everyone's list seemed to have a few places in common, so those naturally received top priority.

We pulled up a chart and put a marker on each of the proposed sites and then started looking at how to tie them all together with a route. After a bit of back and forth, we had something resembling an itinerary that also provided alternatives and contingencies. We also had a plan in place to allow for various crew to come and go to meet family and job obligations. This worked out well because with people moving around, we could more easily stage vehicles where they would be needed.

At the same time, I contacted other Alberg 35 owners in the area via Alberg35.org to see if anyone was interested in getting together for a small rendezvous. Several owners were eager, so we picked a place that would work for everyone and planned a potluck dinner there.

Block Island was at the top of everyone's list of suggested destinations. We arrived after a very pleasant and sunny day's sail from Essex. The harbor was quiet, and we had a prime slip within walking distance (about a mile) of the main town. Our crew rented mopeds the next day and toured the entire island. It was a blast! After our experience as "Heck's Angels," we had some absolutely fantastic seafood for dinner at Dead Eye Dick's Restaurant near our slip.

The following morning, we set off across Rhode Island Sound to sail to Newport. What sailor doesn't want to visit Newport? We reserved a slip at Bowen's Wharf, but when we arrived in the early afternoon, we were shocked to learn we were the only boat spending the night. Other marinas around town were similarly devoid of visitors. The dockmaster lamented how slow the season had been so far with very few visiting boats. (This would change the following week with visitors pouring in for Block Island Race Week. At that time, we were told, you could not get a slip, a parking spot, or a restaurant reservation anywhere in town.)

A second surprise was that our berth was right next to a pier with several America's Cup 12 Metre Class yachts. Shortly after tying up, two of my crew disappeared to get a closer look. They returned wearing big smirks on their faces.

Katie climbs the steps up from the beach along the southern shore of Block Island near the Southeast Lighthouse. This was the lee shore *Tomfoolery*'s crew was steering clear of during the Wetherill Race; they could hear the surf crashing on the shore from a mile off.

The deck layout of *Weatherly*, a 12 Metre Class America's Cup boat, moored in Newport, Rhode Island.

"Did you have anything planned for us to do tonight?" Mike asked.

"No, why?"

"Good! We're going sailing. All of us. On that boat!" said Mike, pointing to *Weatherly*.

And sailing we went. Conditions were perfect, with about 10–12 knots of wind that had the boat moving between 7 and 8.5 knots the entire evening. All of us got to take time at the helm, had a turn at some winches and handling sails. What an experience!

The next morning, we picked up a few souvenirs from nearby shops before casting off for our next port. Mike and Jim had to hop off back in Essex to attend to shoreside obligations, so rather than make the 50-mile journey from Newport in one day, we stopped in Stonington, arriving right in the middle of the harbor's Wednesday night races.

After dinner on the boat, we explored the town a bit and then went to the Stonington Yacht Club (a very nicely converted textile factory) for a nightcap. There, we bumped into a young man who turned out to be the son of Essex Yacht Club Rear Commodore Bill Gunther, who'd invited us to the Wetherill Race. Small world.

Visiting Fellow Albergs

After leaving Stonington, we sailed to Essex to drop off Mike and Jim. The next day, my daughter, Katie, and I sailed west to Clinton, Connecticut, (past Hen and Chickens, this time without hitting it) to meet up with a couple of other Alberg 35 owners. The marina in Clinton also promised a laundromat, a feature that by this time we desperately needed. What looked like a small marina on the chart and Google Earth turned out to be a huge complex harboring hundreds of boats. Good thing we had reservations, because the place was packed.

We spent the afternoon with Mike and Sydney, who live aboard their Alberg 35 with their teenage son and dog, and Bruce and Glynis, who are in the process of refitting their Alberg 35 for some extended voyaging. It was great fun chatting with them about their boats and comparing notes. (We had met with a third boat owner, Walt, in Saybrook earlier; he couldn't sail his boat to our rendezvous due to a family event that weekend.)

After our weekend in Clinton, Katie and I set out for Essex once more. With a boatload of clean laundry, we would stop there to restock with food and fuel and pick up Jim to begin our trip home the following day, making numerous stops on the north shore of Long Island before heading back up the Hudson River and through the Erie Canal. This final leg of our voyage would cover a bit over 500 nautical miles and take us about 11 days.

Sunset in the Great Salt Pond on Block Island. Photo by Katie Alley.

I'll save stories about our experiences in the Erie Canal for another day, as there is much to see and do along the Canal. In fact, the Erie Canal can be a destination unto itself, especially if you are a student of American history.

Our Lemonade Cruise had been a true adventure and an extremely gratifying experience for all of us. In hindsight, it proved to be the right decision to make, albeit for reasons we had no way of predicting. Among them, the country was still "waking up" after an 18-month period of isolation and limited travel due to COVID-19, so we had relatively few issues with finding slips and moorings. We got extremely lucky with the weather; during our final month-long tour and trip home, we had a total of three days with poor weather. This helped us arrive at the Erie Canal a few days ahead of schedule.

Our timing was perfect there, too; we were the last boat through Lock 6 before it broke down and closed for multiple days. Other locks suffered mechanical problems after our transit that resulted in closures totaling a week. After that, heavy rains in upstate New York caused flooding, which closed sections of the canal for an additional three weeks. We got home ahead of all of that.

Finally, had we set out for Bermuda, we would have been greeted by tropical storm Claudette approximately two-thirds of the way there. (Or we would have been forced to call off our trip a second time if the forecasts had been reasonably conclusive with respect to the storm's predicted route.)

All in all, the lemons turned out to make a fine lemonade. Would I do a trip like this again in the future? You bet!

Tom 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. Tom manages the Alberg 35 user group website Alberg35.org and spends a little time indulging in amateur radio under the call sign NT2S (Nice Time 2 Sail). 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 habit and, if there's any money left over, send his kids to college.*

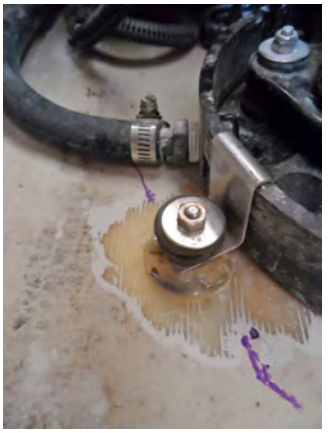
A Studly Standby

For certain applications, glued-on studs are an alternative to through-bolts.

BY DREW FRYE

Through-bolts are the gold standard for strength and security when it comes to attaching stuff to our boats, but sometimes, drilling a hole through the hull or the bulkhead into the next cabin just won't do. Or maybe you just like to avoid pulling down the hull liner for access or creating opportunities for leaks that could lead to core failure.

For projects requiring fastening components that don't bear rigging loads or are subject to high impact, glued-on studs are a workable solution to avoid the invasive nature of through-bolts. Basically, these studs are ¼-inch, coarse-thread bolts with big heads adapted for adhesive bonding. I've mounted electrical panels, solar panels, air conditioning units ("Air Conditioning: Where the Climate Insists, a Built-In System Pays Dividends," March/April 2018), and rope hooks using glued-on studs, with nary a failure.



A Sea-Lect Designs stud in place, holding down part of Drew's AC unit. Note that the fiberglass area below the stud was sanded before application.

The Sea-Lect Designs stud on the left includes holes around the base to enhance adhesion. On the right, this DIY version is made from Garolite with a ¼-inch bolt tapped into it to serve as the stud.

Weld Mount markets a complete system, including a rapid-cure, methyl methacrylate adhesive. I've installed hundreds of the ¼-inch studs in industrial settings, generally to secure conduit and instruments to chemical-process equipment; obviously, you would rather not drill into or weld onto an in-service chemical or refining vessel.

On the boat, I've used dozens, mostly mounting electrical gear. I clean the surfaces of all grease, sand with 150-grit paper, apply a ¼- to ½-milliliter lump of glue from the applicator onto the center of the stud base, and press and twist a quarter turn until a little comes out all around the outside. The glue is thick enough to hold the stud in place without support, and depending on the adhesive, within 10 to 20 minutes you can begin installing equipment (it reaches full strength in a few hours).

The only downside to the Weld Mount system is that the studs come in packs of 10, the adhesive is pricey (I like Weld Mount's AT-2010 for general use, $44 for a 50-ml cartridge, which can bond 150-200 projects, according to the manufacturer), does not keep more than a month even in the fridge, and you need a special gun and motionless mixers. The whole setup will cost about $115 to $120, so if you only need, say, four fasteners, that's a bit steep. It's best for commercial users and big jobs.

For a smaller DIY job, Sea-Lect Designs offers small quantities of studs; you can buy these as singles and in four-packs. They come in one size/thread, ¼-20 x 1¼-inch long. They don't require a special adhesive, so the studs can be attached with thickened epoxy or covered with a fiberglass circle for a smoother finish.

However, epoxy is slow-curing so the stud must be held in place, and thickened five-minute epoxy is relatively weak. The best DIY choice is Devcon Plastic Welder, which is just rebadged Plexus MA310. Very similar to the Weld Mount adhesive system, it is fast-curing, pre-thickened, bonds well to stainless, and is stronger than epoxy. Properly mounted, these studs will pull out a chunk of fiberglass skin before failing.

Another possibility is to make your own stud using a threaded fiberglass pad. Cut a piece of ½-inch precast fiberglass, such as Garolite, bevel the edges, tap for a ¼-inch thread, and epoxy in a section of ¼-inch stainless

Drew used DIY Garolite studs to mount solar panels on his boat. Double nuts on the studs allow for accommodation of compound curvature and easy removal.

bolt (degrease the bolt first, as it will carry machining fluid residue). Without the holes of the Sea-Lect Design studs or the high-viscosity adhesive of the Weld Mount system, these tend to slide around as though on skates, so use tape or clamps to stabilize them until the epoxy kicks. Painted to match whatever surface you're bonding to, these will look like part of the boat.

If you weld, you can make your own studs with larger bases and greater bond area, and even increase the stud diameter.

Finally, an alignment tip: Sometimes it is simplest to hold the equipment in place and install the studs through the mounting holes while the glue is still wet. For our AC unit, we placed the unit and then positioned the hold- downs with the glue-on studs around the perimeter of the pan. When the epoxy kicked, we tightened the nuts and had perfect alignment with no measuring. When mounting solar panels, we let the studs hang from the frames and gently placed the panels and frames on the hardtop. A nice feature of mounting equipment like solar panels on studs is that you can adjust the heights for a stress-free fit.

I don't recommend these solutions for equipment that bears rigging loads or is subject to high impact. The skin of a cored hull can pull off if the load exceeds the skin-core bond strength of about 500 pounds per square inch (the stainless stud bases are about 1.5 square inches), and Weld Mount rates its ¼-inch studs at 500 pounds.

But if you have an application where they can work, you might want to try them. I'm happy when I don't have to drill through a bulkhead or a deck, and I've never had a failure.

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

An Artful Dodger

Replacing an old canvas dodger with a hardtop/canvas hybrid levels up comfort and safety.

BY MARISSA NEELY

In the grand scheme of things, few items on a sailboat are truly more oriented to comfort than a dodger. After a few rounds of bashing into the wind, days of sailing under the brutal sun, and combating squalls, the dodger plays a major role in protection and well-being.

In 2018, my partner, Chris, and I bought our 1979 Cheoy Lee 41, *Avocet*, with no intentions of cruising; we were barely 21, fresh out of college, newly wed, and excited to make a boat our first home—and nothing more than that. Only after the days, months, and years of DIY projects, as we uncovered more of *Avocet*'s past life as a true cruiser, were we inspired to continue her legacy and sail to new horizons. This meant we needed not only to make *Avocet* comfortable to live aboard, but also make upgrades so she's capable of sailing through whatever Poseidon throws our way. And sometimes the stars align, and a project will accomplish comfort and function serendipitously.

The canvas dodger we had inherited with *Avocet* had seen better days. The frame was not stout, the dark blue canvas had been sun bleached and abused over the years, and perhaps worst of all, the Strataglass was as transparent as milk, making any attempt to see through it impossible. Although it served well as a windbreak and had gotten us this far in our journey, we knew it was time to upgrade.

Originally, we thought we'd create a completely rigid hard dodger and forgo the hassle of sewing canvas at all. But on the advice of notable sailors (such as Lin Pardey), we decided to create a hardtop that could support our Renogy 100 solar panels, with canvas sides that can be removed for easy cleaning and air flow on particularly stuffy days at anchor.

Having researched plenty of DIY and professional hardtop/hard dodger configurations, Chris had a concept for how he wanted the dodger to look, scribbling design after design onto a yellow legal pad for me to review. With the final sketch approved by yours truly, he got to work cutting materials and bringing his drawing to life.

Chris and Marissa used the old dodger as the template to shape the new one. Here, the new material is laid on top of the old dodger and a solar panel placed in approximate position for sizing.

Taking Shape

The overall shape of the top was really determined by two things: the length of our solar panels (which would be mounted on top) and the dimensions of the core material, which was exactly 4 feet wide. With these, we established that the length fore and aft would equal the length of the solar panels, while the hardtop width would remain 4 feet (just a hair larger than the previous dodger) to keep us from cutting away more material.

Following a basic FRP construction plan, we decided to use a factory-scored honeycomb core called Nidaplast. At 1 inch thick, this lightweight, rot-resistant, and flexible material could bend to match the arch of the old dodger.

Chris chose 1708 fiberglass cloth (17-ounce biaxial glass and 8-ounce matte glass) for this project for its strength in layers and interweaving fibers that, when bonded with resin, offer excellent torsion rigidity. He decided that two layers of 1708 glass on each side would give us the desired strength.

The first day, we cut the Nidaplast core to shape, leaving the old dodger in place and using it as a template and support, ensuring we would create the perfect arch and soft corners with our new design. Chris then cut the fiberglass cloth for the top skin, making sure to overlap where the edges of glass met to ensure there were no weak spots. Since the cloth was so large, it was tough to wet out alone, making layup a two-person job. With the glass still wet, Chris applied fairing compound to chemically bond, making this about a four-hour process.

The weight of the glass and addition of pink, goopy fairing compound made the once light core material quite dense, causing some unforeseen

Applying fairing compound to the new hardtop, top left. **Note the supports beneath, which Chris added when the new core material developed some dips as glass and fairing were added.**

The conduit laid into the underside of the hardtop would be used to run wires for the solar panels and the lights, bottom left.

dips throughout the dodger top. Working quickly to prevent the dips from setting in place, Chris used every camera tripod, paddleboard paddle, and boat hook he could find to better support the structure while it cured.

Once dry, the next step was to remove the new piece to the dock, but Chris quickly realized that the top was not as rigid as he had intended. This was a perfect opportunity to implement a design technique that would benefit us in more ways than one.

We laid two Divinycell 2 x 55-inch stringers parallel across the beam of the dodger top, securing them with a layer of 1708. This strengthened the top while also creating the perfect raised platform to mount our solar panels. Chris had learned this technique building fishing boats, and we had put the concept to the test when we successfully stiffened the decks aboard our Victory 21, *Geronimo.* With this modification complete, we moved the top dockside so we could finish glassing and fairing the underside.

Lights, Conduit, Paint

With the bottom of the hardtop easily accessible, Chris located where he wanted to install two red lights that would help illuminate the cockpit at night. Part of his decision to use 1-inch-thick core was to inlay conduit not only for the lights but also our solar panels, keeping the wires neatly out of sight. So, before he glassed the bottom skin, he mapped the paths for the conduit and used a router to cut away the core for the Garolite conduit material. Using a generous amount of thickened epoxy, we glued the conduit tubes in place and then resumed glassing.

After a couple days of work, we had a solid hardtop, which meant we could determine where we would glass the 4 x 32-inch aluminum mounting plates to the underside that would attach to the aluminum frame we were building. This process looked pretty funny as we hoisted the now-fairing-compound-pink hardtop above the cockpit using a Dyneema bridle, a rope off the backstay, and four lines on each corner to help stabilize the hardtop. This arrangement let us find the proper dodger height and "tilt."

With the mounting points mapped out, we resumed glassing, starting with two ¼-inch G10 backing plates that the aluminum frame would be bolted to. Using G10 ensured a flat surface immediately, rather than fairing two parallel flat spots on the areas that had the most curvature.

After three days of glassing, fairing, and planning, we moved the dodger top to the Ventura Harbor Boatyard, where Chris could safely complete the sanding needed before finishing.

Although we are DIY junkies at heart, we are not afraid to hand off projects to trusted professionals if necessary. When it was finally time to paint, Chris and I both were consumed with work away from the boat, so we hired our friends at the boatyard to spray the dodger top with Oyster White Awlgrip. This honestly wasn't the worst investment. Since the yard prohibits

Excited about the new hardtop, Chris and Marissa gave it a test sail even before the canvas was installed.

DIY spraying, we would have had to roll and tip, which meant three separate coats with sanding between each, making this a multiday affair. In one day, the yard completed the job, and we had a beautiful hardtop ready to be united with the boat—once we finished the frame.

The Frame

While the painting unfolded in the boatyard, we shifted our attention to building the frame with the help of our friend and master metal worker, Ryan. After extensive research and thought, we decided to build the frame of 1¼-inch aluminum tubing, which would be cheaper than other metals as well as lightweight, an important consideration since its location is well above the waterline.

Ryan's masterful welding brought our metal frame design to life. Since one of our goals was to eliminate horizontal torsion or any wobble, Chris implemented gusset tubes into the design to ensure it would remain stout, a major upgrade from our rickety old canvas dodger.

Before the boys could build laterally, they had to first build the bases to support the structure. This took some time to plan, but eventually they decided on the placement of the four circular aluminum bases that would be through-bolted to the boat, as well as the locations where the aluminum tubing would be welded.

Ryan welded two 4 x 32-inch plates atop of the tubing that corresponded to reciprocating G10 plates glassed into the underside of the hardtop. Between each bolt we used a fair amount of Tef-Gel and G10 washers to separate the stainless bolts and nuts from the aluminum. We finished the frame with Nyalic, which we had successfully used during our mast rebuild.

Before assembling everything aboard *Avocet*, Chris installed the bolt track for the canvas and ran the wiring through the conduit. With everything ready for the moment of unification, we carefully carried the dodger top from the dock to the boat. After some gentle nudging and

Chris applies fairing compound to the hardtop.

adjusting, we finished bolting the top to the frame and completed the wiring into the boat. We were over halfway done!

"That looks niiiiice," Chris said as he flicked on the new red cockpit lights, which illuminated the space beneath the dodger and glowed into the cockpit. With construction complete, we couldn't wait to put our hard work to the test and took *Avocet* out for a sail, despite not having any canvas to protect us from the wind or spray.

Chris and Marissa used Canvex templating material to fabricate the new Sunbrella sides of the dodger.

The Final Steps

Back in the marina with a renewed sense of determination, we pulled out our trusty sewing machine and bolts of Sunbrella to begin perhaps the most challenging part of the entire project: sewing.

It's always nice to have friends who possess skills we lack. For instance, our friend Mitch, who had worked for a canvas company, shared his experience, and with his guidance we felt confident taking on this critical part of our dodger. First, we measured the distance from the starboard corner all the way around to the port corner, which provided the measurements to order the correct amount of navy blue Sunbrella, Tuffak for the windows, and eight YKK #10 finished zippers.

The old dodger, built on a less-than-stout frame, had seen far better days.

With materials in hand, Mitch offered a technique that was new to us, stretching the canvas over where the finished product will be, using pins to form the shape and hold it all in place for sewing. Although this worked well for the front panel, the complex curves of the two side panels proved to be too difficult for us to manage with the Sunbrella, so we resorted to using some Canvex gifted to us by another set of friends (sometimes it really does take a village—or a marina!). Canvex is great for this type of work because it is easy to bend and can be cut as many times as you want to make the perfect template before taking the cuts to your expensive canvas. After a day of trial and error, Chris had the templates needed to make the cuts in the Sunbrella that would become our dodger.

> Sometimes a project will accomplish comfort and function serendipitously.

The following day, we used space in our friend's storage unit that has essentially been transformed into a sewing paradise. With plenty of room to lay out materials, take measurements, and sew, this part of the project went by like a breeze. Living aboard a sailboat is great, but sometimes you just need a little more space to get the job done! Using Lifetime Thread by Sailrite, Chris sewed the binding, chafe protection, and some zippers, leaving the three panels ready to be test fit on the dodger.

To our pleasant surprise, everything fit as it should except for a few minor adjustments, such as tightening the front panel and recutting where the side panels met the front to attach the lateral

***Avocet*'s new hardtop was a game changer in terms of comfort, safety, and aesthetics.**

The lights built into the new hardtop provide the cockpit with a warm glow at night.

zippers. Chris busted out these updates, installing the remaining two zippers and sewing the Tuffak windows into place before cutting out the canvas.

This is when the project really came together. Seeing the navy blue canvas attached to the dodger was like the icing on a cake—but we were still missing the cherry.

We had been holding onto two Renogy compact 100-watt panels for a year or so, just waiting for the right moment to install them. Once we laid them on top of the new hardtop, we realized that there was room for an additional panel, so we relocated one of the other panels attached to the side of the cockpit to its new home on top of the dodger. Now equipped with 300 watts of power potential on the dodger alone, our lithium batteries were well fed and ready for cruising.

Mounting the panels to the stringers was simple after drilling four small holes to accommodate ¼-inch G10 tubing and 3⁄32 pins; the pins mean we can easily remove the panels for cleaning or replacement.

This project combined multiple DIY elements, and while we had many of the necessary skills to execute the new hardtop on our own, it would have taken longer or perhaps included more trial and error without the foresight and guidance of our friends. So, here's a formal thanks to Mitch, Quincey, Alan, and Elizabeth for their extra set of hands and sewing advice; Ryan the Metal God for once again working his magic; and our friend Dale at the Ventura Harbor Boatyard for the last-minute accommodations and paint services.

As I sit in the cockpit writing about this project, it seems only fitting to be under the new hardtop, watching the sun set over Santa Cruz Island where we are anchored for the next while. The red lights are illuminating my keyboard and the canvas is shielding me from the light breeze, keeping me comfortable as I type. We are so thrilled with this upgrade and look forward to continuing to put our hard work to the test.

Chris and Marissa Neely have been living aboard and upgrading their 1979 Cheoy Lee 41, Avocet, *since 2018. Primarily they sail in and around Southern California's Channel Islands. Follow them at svavocet.com, on other social platforms at @svavocet, and on their YouTube channel called* Sailing Avocet.

Maintaining the Investment—MN

A new dodger is a substantial financial and time investment, so we thought it would be helpful to share the maintenance recommendations from the material suppliers in addition to the advice from our own experience.

- The Strataglass website (strataglass.com) also covers maintenance details, recommending a multi-product application approach to keep the glass clean and clear, using products from IMAR. As a general rule, avoid harsh chemicals, petroleum-based products, or hard bristles on the Strataglass, so check your cleaning supplies before going all in.
- This advice also goes for care of the hard top, since it will depend on the paint you use. Our Awlgrip paint is best cared for using AwlWash, a product the company created with its specific paint chemistry in mind. According to the AwlGrip website (awlgrip.com), you can also use distilled white vinegar and hot water to remove stubborn salt stains.
- Sunbrella has a comprehensive guide on its website (sunbrella.com) but recommends a mild soap and water solution for general cleaning, occasionally followed by treatment with 303 Fabric Guard to restore the fabric's water repellency.
- For the aluminum frame (and any aluminum on a boat) you can either leave the metal bare, which allows it to oxidize (protect itself), or finish it with a product like Nyalic, which leaves the metallic look while preventing dusty residue from oxidation. We don't recommend painting the metal, as this can starve it of oxygen and lead to a cascade of corrosion later, but if you do decide to paint, remember that a good marine paint job lies in the prep work. Speaking of corrosion, any fasteners need to be of the same metal or be thoroughly coated in a barrier like Tef-Gel to prevent dissimilar metal corrosion.

Singular Vision

For Canadian sailor and artist Christopher Pratt, the yacht was the art.

BY ROB MAZZA

Many artists have rendered the elegance of yachts under sail, but few have captured the essence and beauty of the yacht itself as a distinct piece of sculpture, focusing on the graceful curves and shadows inherent in such a complex three-dimensional shape. No one has accomplished this as well as Canadian artist Christopher Pratt.

Undoubtedly this is because Pratt, who passed away peacefully at his Newfoundland home on June 5, 2022, at the age of 86, was an avid sailor who keenly felt the pull of the sea and imbued his work with its subtle, restless yearning. Renowned for his silkscreen prints, oil, and watercolor paintings of his beloved Newfoundland, Pratt owned several boats, almost all C&Cs. Several became inspiration and subject matter in his art.

Pratt emphasized the beauty of the whole hull in his paintings, and he often captured his subjects suspended between the two elements of air and water. Like all sailors, he seemed to be fascinated by the moment when the keel is about to kiss the surface of the sea—when she is about to make the transition to the magical interface between wind and wave.

Among his most ardent admirers was C&C's George Cuthbertson, who had a framed Christopher Pratt serigraph print entitled "My Sixty-One" hanging in his living room, as well as a serigraph of Pratt's C&C 43 entitled "Yacht Wintering." Cuthbertson recognized Pratt's emphasis on the boat out of her element, and in one correspondence between them noted, "I have been interested that you always show your subjects 'in repose,' static, brooding. As far as I know, 'My Sixty-One' is the first to have made it out of the cradle and into the water—still static—but it conveys the promise and a certain latent energy. Welcome relief from blossoming spinnakers breasting the briny!"

Pratt's involvement with racing in Conception Bay led him to become Commodore of the Royal Newfoundland Yacht Club in 1980. "For many years beginning in the late 1970s he pursued excellence in another forum—sailboat racing," notes his obituary (carnells.com/obituaries/christopher-pratt/). "Although he did not at first intend to race his sailboats, he quickly grew to love the competition, the opportunity to refine and perfect his skills, and the camaraderie of fellow sailors. As with everything else, he sought perfection on the water. He made major contributions to the sport of sailing in Newfoundland and was made a lifetime member of the Royal Newfoundland Yacht Club in 2017, an award for which he was justifiably proud."

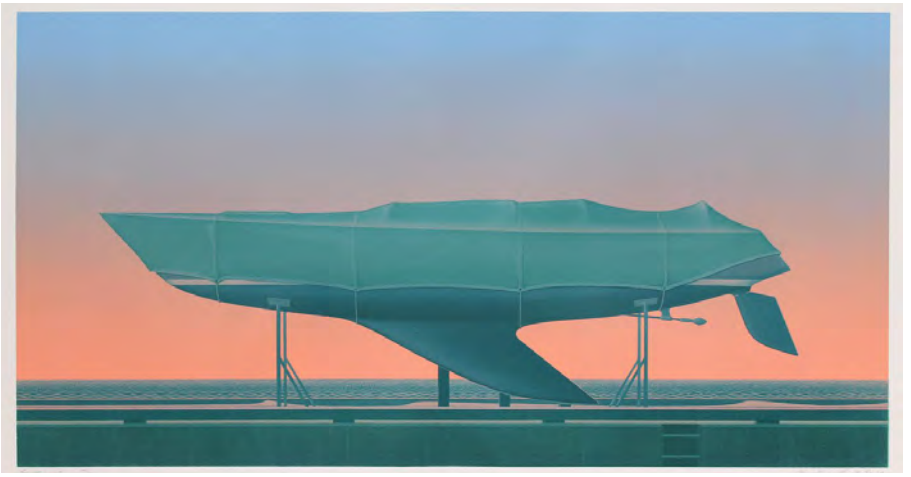
Christopher's son, photographer Ned Pratt, told me that over his father's long sailing career, Christopher owned eight C&C designs, beginning with a Paceship Bluejacket 23 in the late '60s, the C&C 30 *Walrus Too* in the early '70s, followed by the C&C 35 MkI *Lynxx,* which he purchased with his brother, architect Philip Pratt. Philip renamed the boat *Lynx* and has sailed her around the world, most recently in the British Virgin Islands.

"My Sixty-One," Silkscreen, 1988

This is the boat Pratt aspired to own. About this print Pratt wrote, "I dreamt of owning a big boat, powerful and cavernous, with the damp, diesel smell that real boats have; and we are always putting to sea at night, sometimes motoring, the diesel throbbing and the boat pitching headlong into a wide rolling swell; and then we would be too close by the land, hearing the roar of water in the cliffs, the foghorn's wailing and startled seabirds croaking harsh and alien and, rounding east and north, see the cold, blinding fire of Cape Race light."

The C&C 39 *Proud Mary,* named in honor of his wife, artist Mary Pratt, provided the family with a summer home on the water that they sailed into ports along the coast of the island. His undisputed favorite though, was the C&C 43 *Dry Fly* (formerly *Avanti*), which he owned from 1973 to 1985.

With advancing age and scarcity of family crew, he felt obliged to sell the 43 to buy the smaller C&C 37 *Cossaboom* before upsizing to the semi-custom



"Yacht Wintering," Silkscreen, 1984

Pratt's C&C 43, Dry Fly. *George Cuthbertson also had this print displayed in his living room.*

C&C 41 *Greyling* in the late '80s. After selling the 41, Pratt was without a boat for a period of time, Ned said, before buying another C&C 37, *Dora Maar*, his last boat. He always aspired to ultimately own a C&C 61, which never happened due to the constraints of practicality.

When I designed for C&C, I had the pleasure of sailing with Christopher aboard his C&C 43, *Dry Fly,* in his home waters. His advice to this Great Lakes sailor was, "Rob, in Newfoundland we treat the water like it's sulfuric acid, so don't fall in!"

With that number of C&C designs in his life, Christopher formed close relations with many C&C personnel and would sneak off to visit the plant in Niagara-on-the-Lake whenever he was in Toronto for a show or an opening. Indeed, Ned says that upon his return home, his father would speak of the trip to the plant and his meetings with "Big George" and other C&C people more than he would talk about the show.

John Kelly Cuthbertson, George's son, believes that Pratt and his father shared a deep level of mutual admiration (both were members of the Royal Canadian Academy of the Arts).

"Launching Greyling," Silkscreen, 1992

In correspondence, George comments to Pratt regarding "My Sixty-One," "It hangs in our living room and is absolutely riveting. I enjoy watching visitors, many of whom have no familiarity with sailing, ships and the sea—but without ever realizing it their eyes return again and again to your haunting image—as do mine."

Both Dan Spurr (*Good Old Boat* boat review editor) and I can personally attest to the accuracy of that statement and the magnetism of the image.

Ned Pratt says that even after George Cuthbertson's retirement from C&C, his father and Big George discussed obtaining the tooling of the 43 to build another custom C&C 43 for Christopher, but by then the costs of such a project were becoming prohibitive.

With one exception, images of the serigraphs and paintings in this article were provided by Gisella Giacalone, owner and director of the Mira Godard Gallery in Toronto, which represented Pratt for over 50 years. Like me, Gisella also once sailed with Pratt, being immediately whisked away to his boat after she landed in St. John's. Both she and Pratt were proud of the fact that she did not become seasick in the long North Atlantic swells.

"He was down to earth, a proud Newfoundlander and, in spite of his many accomplishments, he was never a self-promoter, always down to earth and humble," Gisella said.

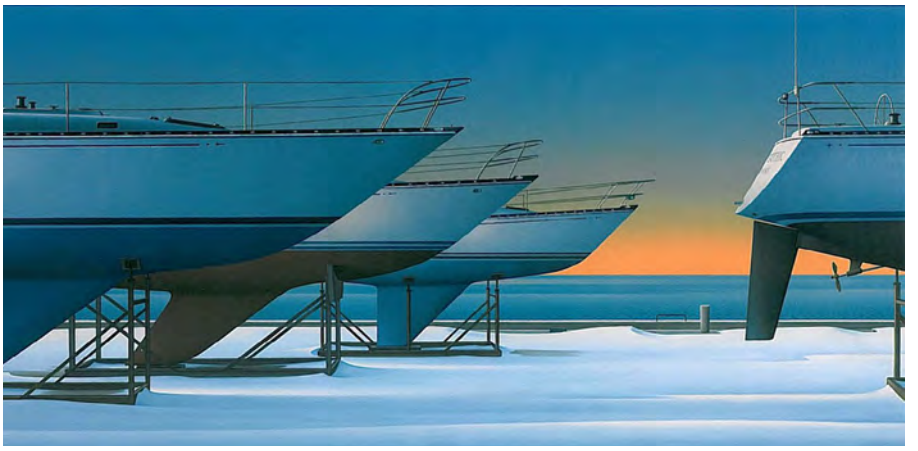
"New Boat," Silkscreen, 1975

Rob Ball has a framed copy of this print in his living room.

His work is featured in a great many major public, corporate, and private collections including the Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, the Canada Council Art Bank, Mt. Allison University, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the National Gallery of Canada, the Rooms Provincial Art Gallery, and the Vancouver Art Gallery.

In 1980 Pratt was asked to design the new provincial flag which proudly flies today. In recognition of his extensive body of work, in 1983 Pratt became a Companion of the Order of Canada, the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a Canadian citizen, and in 2018 a recipient of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. He truly was a remarkable individual.

Good Old Boat *Technical Editor Rob Mazza's bio can be found on page 13.*



"Four White Boats" Canadian Gothic.

All images @EstateofChristopherPratt. All reproduction images courtesy of the Mira Godard Gallery.

C. Pratt with Argentia Interior: The Ruins of Fort McAndrew. Photo by Ned Pratt.

A Serial Sewing Project

Building a Jordan Series Drogue is an exercise in patience but well worth the effort.

BY SHIRLEY JONES

As my partner, Tim, and I prepared to sail from Montreal, Canada, down the St. Lawrence River, into the Atlantic and ultimately south to the Caribbean, we decided that one piece of emergency gear we definitely wanted aboard our 1969 Alberg 30, *Ariose,* was a Jordan Series Drogue (JSD).

We made this choice after deep-diving storm tactics. The JSD, often referred to as the sailor's airbag, was invented in the early 1980s by Don Jordan. This series of small parachutes affixed to a long line, weighted at the end, is deployed off the stern. While the boat runs with the wind, the drogue remains anchored in at least a following wave or two, thus slowing the boat, improving motion, and keeping a good position stern-to the seas. Compared to the conventional single parachute drogue, the JSD has been proven to be easier to deploy, more stable, and less vulnerable. It's akin to having many eggs in the basket versus the one-egged single drogue.

Our friend, George, in 1991 narrowly survived Hurricane Grace sailing drogueless in the tempest that inspired Sebastian Junger's book *The Perfect Storm.* Since then, he will only put to sea with a JSD. We also read about more celebrated seafarers, like Jeanne Socrates, who credits the JSD for keeping her safe on her record-breaking solo circumnavigation. Even the U.S. Coast Guard has strongly endorsed it.

Shirley at work on the Jordan Series Drogue. Hours of repetitive fabrication were made more tolerable with movies, podcasts, and audio books.

So, we were sold, but when we obtained a quote of $2,300 (Canadian) to buy one, our instinctive DIY natures kicked in. Tim and I pride ourselves on living frugally, and we derive a great deal of satisfaction from the learning and sense of accomplishment in doing our own work on *Ariose.* Making a JSD was added to my project list. Oh, and Tim helpfully offered to add the metal polishing to his.

Planning and Design

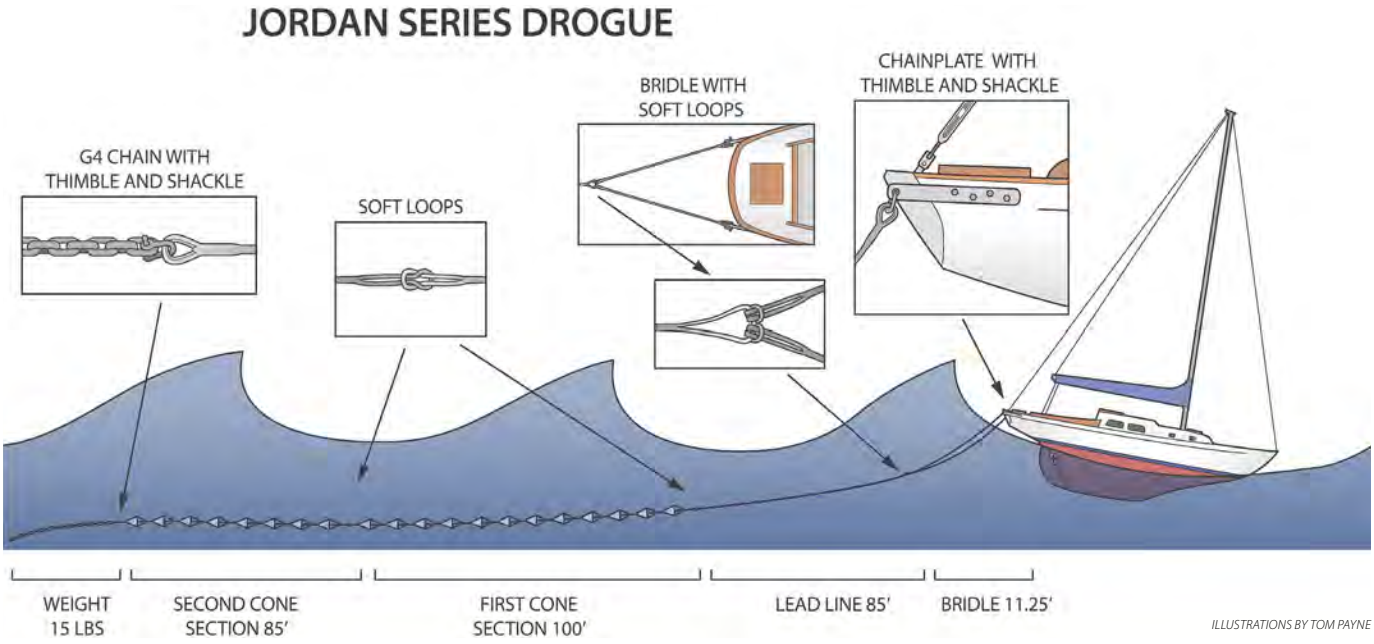
I started by filling several long winter evenings with reading and viewing all I could on the JSD. The Alberg 30's specifications put *Ariose* at 9,000 pounds. We have had her craned out when fully loaded and were startled to discover we had an additional 2,500 pounds aboard. So for the purpose of this drogue, I rounded up and assumed a 12,000-pound displacement.

All JSDs have four components: the bridle, a long lead line, followed by a length of small cones, and a weighted bitter end. I decided on a separate lead line, and also to divide the coned line into two. This saved some money by letting me use smaller-diameter rope on the aftmost line, which would be under lower forces.

It also offers added functionality to this hopefully never-to-be-used gear. A shorter coned section, deployed off the bow, could serve as a sea anchor to stall for a daylight approach to land, or for a needed rest at sea. If we lost *Ariose*'s rudder, half the cones off the stern would provide a means of emergency steerage. The lead line could be easily detached should we ever require it elsewhere, like jury-rigging a replacement stay.

For me, these advantages outweighed the disadvantage that each added attachment point introduces a potential weak link. I hope this is not a mistake. I made a mental note to choose chafe-resistant rope and to be darn sure my splicing was up to par.

A total length of 230 feet, 105 cones, and a 15-pound weight met recommendations for our displacement.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM PAYNE

Assembling the Parts

Confident that I had a design that would work, I sourced what I needed to make the drogue.

Many types of fabric can be used to make the cones. I had acquired a discarded sail for a pittance from a boat salvager and it had been calling out to be upcycled. Sailcloth offers a more robust option than the often-used ripstop nylon, which if deployed repeatedly or for longer periods of time is prone to fraying.

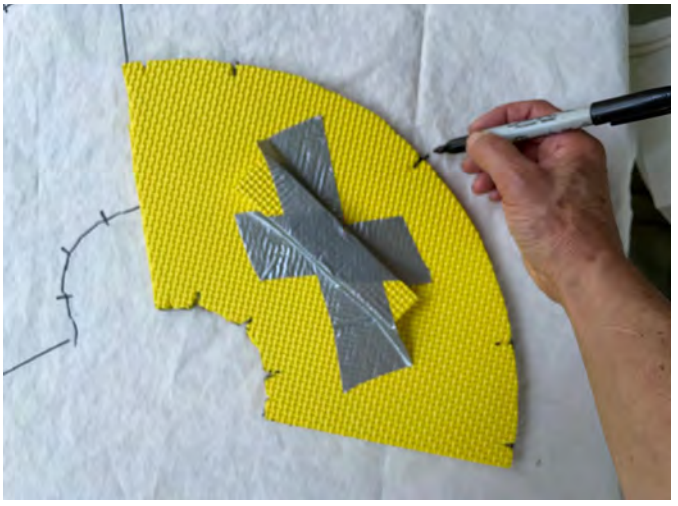
The JSD's cones are attached with sewn-on straps spliced through the line and secured with stopper knots. I chose nylon binding tape, which is like light webbing but easier to form the required figure eights. For thread, I had bonded polyester, size #138, left over from other canvas work. It is far stronger than necessary, but I have never heard anyone complain about a drogue being too durable. The thread color does not match, and that may be a good thing as it will allow easier inspection of the integrity of the stitches over time.

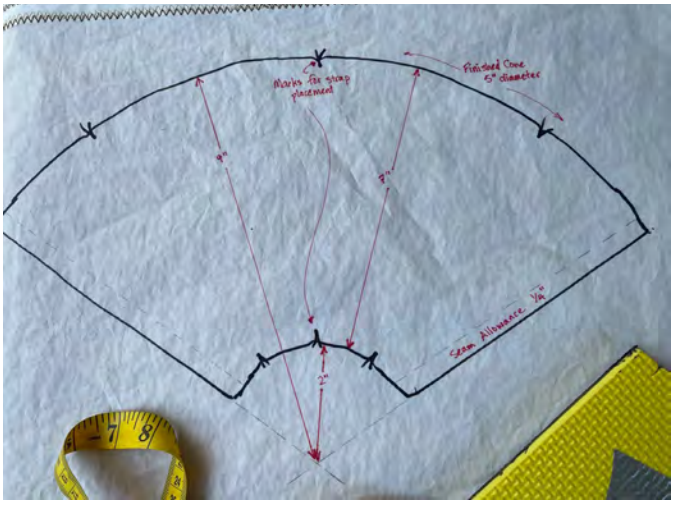
I debated using nylon or polyester versus ultra-high-molecular-weight polyethylene (UHMWPE) rope. After much back-and-forth, I settled on Dyneema, a popular brand of UHMWPE. It is significantly stronger than traditional rope, so a smaller diameter provides the needed strength and is less bulky for stowing. It is easy to splice, its splices reduce strength far less than with traditional fibers, and it resists chafe and tangles. These are all positive features for a JSD.

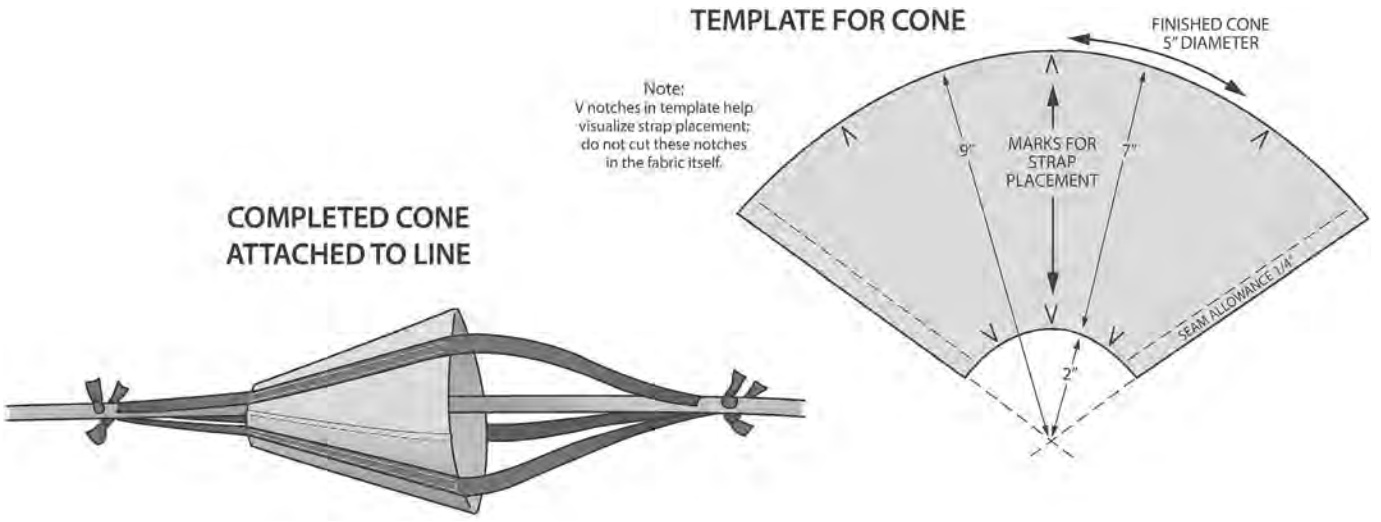
Dyneema also has less stretch than polyester, and much less than nylon, which is good, as I did not want to add a bungee effect to what would likely be an already wild ride. It is also significantly more expensive, about double or triple the cost, but an unexpected employment contract and the temporary illusion of having surplus cash caused me to set aside our typical frugality.

Trying to figure out what size of rope I needed felt like a journey down a rabbit hole. There is a lot of information out there, and much of it is incomplete, like dictating size of rope without specifying type. I decided on ¼-inch Dyneema for the bridle, lead line, and first section of cones, and because

Left to right, **Shirley used leftover foam mat from lining some of *Ariose*'s lockers to create a template for fabricating the cones, though any semirigid material, like cardboard, would do; the cone pattern.**







the final section would be under less stress, 5⁄32-inch Dyneema for that.

Finally, I purchased a small amount of tubular nylon webbing as chafe protection for the bridle. *Ariose*'s transom-mounted swim ladder and steering windvane could possibly interfere, so this seemed prudent.

(When the drogue's construction was nearly complete, I found additional resources that have left me with some doubts about our JSD's strength. I am confident that the lines will be more than sufficient for a typical severe storm. If we were ever to be so unfortunate as to encounter a breaking wave strike or other worst-case scenario, however, our drogue may be undersized. Considering that we are not heading for the roaring 40s and are highly motivated to avoid storms, our JSD will likely never be deployed, and if needed, should be adequate. But, if I were to start again, I would put out a little more money and size up the lines.)

For the weight, almost anything that will weigh down the end of the drogue keeping the cones submerged will work. I thought we could just secure some tools from the excessive collection we keep aboard. Tim was not in favor of this option. Fortunately, I found a spare length of slightly corroding G4 that, when combined with our dinghy anchor chain, provides the recommended 15-pound weight.

The JSD needs to be well secured at the stern. After querying an Alberg 30 owners' forum and checking other resources, I narrowed the possibilities. I decided, as most do, on chainplates, purchasing two 1⅕ x 12-inch rectangular plates of 304 stainless steel. Tim rounded the corners and polished them to a lovely shine. They would be installed on the aftmost hull, just below the toerail and extending slightly off the transom. Our 50-plus-year-old boat, like most of that era, sports beefy fiberglass, especially thick at the hull-to-transom joint. A backing plate and ¼-inch bolts would ensure the attachment is sound.

And what about the connections within the drogue itself? Although hard attachments may intuitively seem stronger, the open end of thimbles, if not perfectly spliced or if the rope stretches, can actually abrade the line. Closed thimbles are better, but I was not able to find any used ones, and with my design having 11 attachment points, new would be prohibitively expensive.

The greatest forces would be at the chainplate-bridle attachment, and this is also the only area that once deployed can be easily monitored, so I decided on thimbled eyes there to shackle to the chainplate. A thimble-shackle attachment for the chain at the drogue's bitter end also makes sense. All I needed were three strong thimbles and shackles, which I bought used, and in between, spliced soft eyes, joined with a cow hitch, which would connect each section of line.

With materials sourced and ready, I assembled the tools. My industrial sewing machine came out of its case but making a JSD does not require heavy-duty sewing. Any machine will do. Hot knife, tape measure, splicing fids, and rug hook were laid out and ready. Although

Completing the straps on one of the cones.

Shirley used a $2.50 rug hook to splice the cone straps, first inserting the hook into the rope core, pushing straight toward the cone at least four strands' length before angling slightly to emerge a strand or two over. It was then just a matter of hooking a strap and pulling it through, at left.

optional, I highly recommend keeping your favorite device with engaging playlists or podcasts at hand. I found this to be an essential anti-boredom tool.

Fabricating the Cones

I started by making a template to pattern what would become a 5-inch diameter by 7-inch-long finished cone. A taped-on handle to easily move the template and cut notches to mark eventual placement of straps eased the process.

Before getting too far, I did a test. I cut one cone and three straps, sewed it together, spliced to the line, and stuffed the cone with scrap fabric to simulate being filled with water. After some slight adjustments to the knots' positions on the line, it passed the Goldilocks test. The cone was not too taut, nor too loose. It was just right so that it should open wide when needed.

Cones spliced into the line.

I spread the sail and set to work drawing the patterns, all 105 of them. Then, relocating outside to ensure good ventilation, I used a heat gun to cut each out. Having a clean and bonded edge saved substantial time. Cutting with scissors would have required hemming the leading edge to prevent fraying and would have doubled the time to sew the cones.

I then hot-knifed the tape into 24-inch pieces to form 315 straps (three per cone) and made a mark at 10 inches on each, the length needed to tie off the leading edge of the cone. This proved to be a time-saver later, letting me quickly position and sew each strap without interruption.

I was ready to start sewing. A zig-zag stitch is often recommended on the straps, but my machine's temperamental tension performs better with a straight stitch, so that is what I used, trusting in the strength of the heavy thread. I aligned each strap evenly on the cone, using the marks made when patterning. Some recommend stapling or using double-sided tape, but I found I was able to hold the straps in place without these added steps. It was just a matter of sewing the three straps on, folding the sailcloth in half with the straps on the inside, and sewing the straight edges together to form the cone.

I quickly adopted a "route" that allowed me to complete the full cone's sewing without ever needing to cut the thread. This was a major time- and thread-saving strategy. I secured each seam well with lock stitching, reinforced the leading and trailing edges of each strap, and formed the cone with a strong semi-felled seam, extending the top stitch of the seam as far as the machine could reach into the formed cone.

Then, once turned right side out, I added each completed cone to a slowly growing stack of dunce caps. If you enjoy repetitive tasks, you may enjoy

Resources—SJ

If I can make a Jordan Series Drogue, you can too, *but* do your own research. There's a plethora of information about JSDs on YouTube, blogs, online forums, and more. Here are a few resources that I found helpful:

- jordanseriesdrogue.com: This official site, maintained by the family of the late Don Jordan, the JSD inventor and namesake, is very valuable. The Coast Guard Report CG-D-20-87 of its investigation of the use of drogues to improve the safety of sailing yachts is also posted here, if you would like to really geek out.
- eglin.net/2bikes/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Jordan-Series-Drogue-Instructions-2.pdf These step-by-step instructions include technical details based on U.S. Coast Guard recommendations.
- dragdevicedb.com/drag_device/jordan-series-drogue: Victor Shane has put together an impressively detailed database on drag devices. He includes multiple examples of different boats having deployed variations of the JSD, with feedback on its use. An invaluable source of real-world experiences.
- nineofcups.com/Articles/Seriesdrogue.pdf: David Lynn, *Good Old Boat*'s electronics editor, has detailed how he fabricated a JSD for his Liberty 458.

A mock-up of a JSD bridle leg attached to the chainplate, which would be installed on the aftmost hull, just below the toerail and extending slightly off the transom.

making the cones. If you don't, brace yourself for a period of light torture.

Adopting a "good enough" philosophy worked when sewing. I did make sure all stitching was of first-rate integrity, but I did not correct areas that turned out less than pretty. If this JSD is ever deployed, I am quite sure that no one will be taking notice of how straight the seams are.

Shirley grabs a mid-project selfie with a freshly finished dunce cap.

Splicing

It was time to cut the lengths of rope. Since longer is better with JSDs, I added a generous extra allotment (I thought) to each segment just in case there was ever a need to cut and resplice. I started with creating loops by splicing eyes. Having replaced our lifelines with Dyneema less than a year ago, I felt confident with my splicing ability, but this is not a step where I wanted to risk any blunders, so I still turned to YouTube.

I refreshed myself by reviewing instructional videos on the three versions of a Brummel splice that were required: the easier both-ends-of-the-rope-available method for most eyes, the thimble version, and the one-end-available method for the eyes at the opposite end to the thimbles. I find the latter method most challenging, seeming to require my brain to perform as many inside-out acrobatics as the rope.

I threaded nylon chafe guard on the bridle legs before beginning, and there was no need to pre-thread the cones on, as the two coned segments had at least one end without a thimble. I kept the soft loops which, at about 8 inches diameter, were large enough to easily pass cones through when attaching or detaching segments. I also significantly increased the length of each splice's tail bury to add strength.

Despite believing that I was being meticulous with details, I still miscalculated. When measuring the length of the bridle legs, I cut the rope longer than the recommended minimum of 2.5 times the width of the transom. It was only after completing the splices that I discovered that they were slightly under the minimum. I had neglected to allow for the lengthy bury at each eye in my calculations. A nearly 2-foot tail at each eye, insignificant in a 100-foot line, ended up reducing the intended 14-foot bridle leg to 10 feet! That is significant. I will decide whether to re-do them after sea-trialing the drogue and having an opportunity to observe how well it pulls. The lesson learned for me is to add "calculate thrice" to the common rule of measuring twice and cutting once.

Attaching the Cones

Now, with the bridle done and lead line complete, it was time to get those cones tied on their lines. I threaded the cones on each line, ensuring that the open end of all faced forward. After pre-marking the lines at alternating 16- and 4-inch intervals, I took rug hook in hand, and set to tackling this next step, bracing myself for more tedium.

After loosely aligning a cone within the first 16-inch section, I inserted the hook into the rope core, pushing straight toward the cone at least four strands' length before angling slightly to emerge a strand or two over. It was then just a matter of hooking a strap and pulling it through. Then with a slight twist about a third of the rope circumference, I repeated for the next strap.

I found the straps held well enough that I could pull straps for several cones through before setting the hook aside and tying each off with a figure eight knot and a tensioning tug. I was pleasantly surprised to find this step progressed more quickly than anticipated, occupying me for two movies and a few podcasts.

All that remained was to cow hitch the JSD's sections together, then shackle the chain weight onto the tail.

Making a JSD for *Ariose* was tedious, but maybe sowing dull Karma now will reap rewards should we ever encounter the adrenaline-triggering conditions that would warrant deploying it. Hopefully, Tim and I will never know.

Shirley and her partner, Tim Martens, are avid DIYers, having completed extensive maintenance and upgrades on Ariose, *their 1969 Alberg 30. Recently retired, they weighed anchor from their off-grid terrestrial life in northern Ontario, Canada, and have moved aboard to enjoy the next few years of continued off-grid life at sea. Currently, they are somewhere between the Canadian Maritimes and the eastern Caribbean, hopefully encountering nothing but fair winds. They share their liveaboard life and learnings at ArioseNotes.com.*

The Bottom Line—SJ

The cost in Canadian dollars	The time in hours (I did not account for research nor materials sourcing)
$20 discarded sail cloth $90 nylon binding tape $10 used heavy shackles and thimbles $740 Dyneema rope $3 nylon tubular webbing $15 stainless steel plate $20 polishing supplies $20 machine screws and locknuts	– 4 hours planning, mocking-up – 16 hours fabricating cones including drawing, cutting, sewing (clocked 6 minutes to sew one cone once I was in the groove, not counting bobbin changes, breaks, and other interruptions) – 2 hours splicing eyes in lines – 5 hours attaching cones to line
Total: $918	**Total: 27 hours**

Step	Notes	Tools	Materials
Cones	– 105 cones needed, 5″ diameter at wide end x 7″ length requires ~1 sq ft per cone of fabric – Nylon binding tape for straps is economical and offers sufficient strength and ease of tying stopper knots. – 24″ strap to achieve required cone shape and stopper knot x3 straps per cone	– Tape measure – Marking pen – Hot knife – Sewing machine	– 105′ sq ft sail fabric (discarded genoa) – 630′ of ¾″ wide, 3-mm thick nylon binding tape – Thread: UV bonded polyester #138, contrasting color
Rope	– 252′ recommended minimum total length and ~9,000-pound design load, (as per 12,000-pound boat) with fewer forces exerted further from boat – Bridle: each leg to be minimum 11.25′ (i.e. 2.5 x transom width of 4.5′), and capable of 6,300-pound design load (i.e. 70% of full load) – Lead line: 85′ – Line(s) with cones: 100′ fore section and 85′ aft section	– Splicing fids – Sharp scissors	– 30′ of ¼″ Dyneema rope for bridle, lead line, and fore section of cones line – 100′ of 5⁄32″ Dyneema rope for aft section of cones line – (These rope lengths include generous allowances for splicing eyes.) – 2x heavyweight thimbles, 2x shackles for bridle to boat – 10′ tubular webbing (bridle chafe guard)
Weight	– 15 pounds		– Spare G4 ⅜″ chain, approx. 10′
Attachment to boat (lbs)	– Chainplates, to be mounted on aftmost side of hull, just beneath toerail, extending slightly beyond transom	– Drill, metal drill bits – Polishing tool and supplies (optional)	– 2x–1½″ x 12″ x ¼″ stainless steel plate (we used 304 ss, then polished it) – 2x–¼″ backing plates, stainless steel scrap, approx. double size of chainplate – 8x–¼″ ss machine screws, locknuts – 1x–thimble and shackle

* Based on Alberg 30's fully loaded displacement of 12,000 pounds and informed mainly by U.S. Coast Guard recommendations, and the official JSD website.

Water...Where?

A mystery leak kept filling the bilge.

BY STEVE WEIN

"Steve!"
"What?"
"There's water in the cabin!"
"There's...what?
"Water in the cabin! Lots of it!"

My new girlfriend, Susan, and I were out for a daysail on my Catalina 27, *Osprey*. We were running close-hauled as we tacked our way southwest in Illinois' Carlyle Lake in about 10 to 15 knots of wind, gusting up to 20, washing our port side with the amount of heel we were experiencing.

We were ecstatic. I was, especially, because after two marriages over 40 years with partners I had to drag to the boat, I finally thought I had found someone who loves sailing and is a natural at it. This was only her second time sailing and the first time with me as skipper on my boat.

Susan's first sail was on my nephew's Freedom 40 in Pensacola Bay under similarly windy circumstances. Have you been on a sailboat with a novice on board, and the first time the boat heels, they look startled, then start to scramble up to the high side while asking plaintively, "Is this supposed to be like this? Is it gonna turn over?"

Not Susan. She didn't seem bothered at all, and the onboard conversations continued. It was natural. I thought, I've found my first mate!

So here we were, on a beautiful, sunny day with brisk winds. I was trying to impress her with my seamanship and my beautiful craft. Then she climbed down the companionway ladder for snacks and literally stepped into it.

Yes, there was water in the cabin. The bilge was full and overflowing. The carpet was floating in a few inches of water pooling on the port side of the cabin sole. This had never happened in the eight months since I'd bought the boat. The bilge was always totally dry.

***Osprey* under sail, nice and level. The leak only occurred when the boat was heeling under sail.**

As every sailor knows, when you buy a good old boat, you make a list of projects that need immediate attention, like a new engine. Other things end up on a wish list.

Since the lack of an automatic bilge pump was on the project list, I bought a new one to install. But, because the bilge had been totally dry up to this point, the new bilge pump sat in the blister package, not yet installed while I tackled other projects that I *thought* had priority. That's why it was high and dry in my garage while my boat's interior definitely wasn't.

Susan took the tiller while I went below to see for myself. Where was all this water coming from? At what rate was it flowing into the boat? I grabbed the handle of the manual bilge pump and pumped her out. Thankfully the waterline inside the cabin crept lower as we dropped sails and motored in.

When we returned to the dock, I checked along the hull-to-deck joint, which was dry. The leak didn't come from there. There was only a residual bit of water in the bilge. I started theorizing where it had come from.

A few weeks earlier, I had replaced the plumbing from the water tank to the sink in the head and to a new foot pump I had installed for the galley sink. I then filled the water tank for the first time with about 15 gallons and tested the water system. It worked fine.

My first theory was that somehow the water tank leaked when we heeled. I pumped out enough water to insert my iPhone into the tank without drowning the phone. The deck fill and water line coming out of the tank were tight and double-clamped. That left only the possibility that the top access hatch, which was fine when the boat was level, leaked when the boat heeled and hobby horsed through the waves.

The photos seemed to show that the hose connector from the deck fill to the tank looked suspect.

I emptied the water tank and figured that the following weekend I would replace the deck fill hose connector.

Well, the following weekend came and so did two guests, so I postponed the deck fill fix, threw off the lines, and went sailing. With the water tank empty, there should be no problem, right?

It was another day with glorious winds and a good heel on *Osprey* as one of my guests went below and...

"Steve!"
"Yes?"
"There's water in the cabin!"
"What!?"

Obviously, my water tank theory was out the window. Despite the empty tank, the carpets were floating again.

We dropped the sails (again), I pumped the bilge out with the manual bilge pump (again) while motoring back to the dock (again).

The new Suzuki outboard used a much larger bracket to attach to the boat, which obscured the holes from the previous engine.

I then pulled up the floorboard to see only a residual amount of water (again).

I checked the seacocks. Both were totally dry. I checked the hull-to-deck joint (again). Dry. I studied the floor of the bilge where the keel bolts come through and noticed what I thought looked like a slight crack, barely visible, portside of the keel bolts.

Oh, no! Is it just on the surface or is it deep? Is there delamination there, and if so, is the keel wobbling enough in choppy water to let some in, while not a drop gets in while she sits in calm water? The keel bolts were shiny, as if they had been put in yesterday. No rust, no corrosion.

A closeup of the bolt holes, now filled, that were the source of the mystery leak in *Osprey* when the boat was under sail.

I researched Catalina 27 keel problems and learned everything there is to know about the dreaded "Catalina Smile," when the coring of the keel stub turns to mush, allowing the keel to wobble and possibly depart from your boat when you least expect it.

The cure for it would be even worse. Did the water enter through the keel or from elsewhere? I needed more information.

The following weekend, I finally installed and wired the automatic bilge pump to the floor of the bilge. We then took *Osprey* out for a spin. I kept the floorboard up and was ready to go below as much as possible to try to figure where the water was coming from. The bilge pump was running about every 10 minutes because water was invading the bilge.

I noticed it was flowing into the aft end of the bilge, so I opened the compartment under the cockpit that would house the engine if this Catalina 27 had an inboard. My auxiliary was a new Suzuki four-stroke 9.9-hp long shaft outboard in the outboard well.

While crawling in the dark void under the cockpit, I followed the stream of water aft to the transom and noticed outside light streaming in from two holes through the transom, seemingly drilled by a quarter-inch bit, about 3 inches above the waterline.

What were they for?

We dropped the sails (again), I pumped the bilge out...well, you know the drill.

At home, I scanned through the hundreds of photographs of *Osprey* that I had taken as I documented all my projects. I focused on the repowering project completed a few weeks earlier.

The boat had come with an old Chrysler 9.9 long shaft that ran great at high rpm but died at low rpm—not entirely helpful when entering a marina. So, I had the yard repower *Osprey* with the new Suzuki.

However, apparently the old Chrysler engine's clamp had been bolted *through* the transom, and when that came off, the holes were not filled. The bracket for the new engine, which was much larger than previous one, hid that fact.

When I approached hull speed, especially heeling, the water passing past the stern would well up over the holes and flow in. It is incredible how much water can enter your boat through two little holes!

The good news was that whoever drilled those holes in the first place had sealed the core of the transom at that time, so water hadn't penetrated the transom itself. All I had to do was plug the holes.

Done!

Even after moving back to Florida, where Susan and I sail *Osprey* in Pensacola Bay and cruise the Gulf of Mexico year-round, that new automatic bilge pump stands ready. But so far, the bilge has been totally dry. The water stays where it belongs—outside of *Osprey*. And we both like it that way.

Belowdecks on *Osprey* under normal circumstances, when the rugs weren't floating in water.

Steve Wein has been sailing since 1974 on the Gulf Coast as well as the Great Lakes. Currently, he and his wife, Susan, sail the Catalina 27 tall rig Osprey *in the Pensacola, Florida, area. On shore, he works in radio at various stations, from small markets to major markets like Chicago, and he's presently part of the news department of NewsRadio 92.3 in Pensacola.*

Canvas Keys

Want your boat to have great canvas? Ask the right questions.

BY BREENA LITZENBERGER

Marine canvas can make sailing more enjoyable and safer while sprucing up a boat's aesthetic. Yet so many people don't know what they are buying when they hire a marine canvas professional.

At a glance, it can be difficult to see the difference between one dodger and the next, because much of what defines quality canvas is in the details and workmanship that stem from the canvas maker's knowledge and experience. These differences become more evident when you sail on a boat on which the canvas maker has added hand grabs and hard legs to the dodger, so the framework offers stability as you move fore and aft. Likewise, a thoughtfully built dodger will be placed at precisely the proper height for you to see through, rather than over, from the helm, and fasteners will pull the fabric tightly but not rip it.

A lot of details are small but key to the overall project, like adding webbing where there needs to be extra strength, chafe protection where there is a lot of use, and using plastic zippers with plastic cars to prevent corrosion issues.

As owner of Inner Banks Sails and Canvas in Oriental, North Carolina, I see a lot of canvas on a variety of boats, and although pricing among canvas shops does not vary too drastically, the quality of craftsmanship and attention to detail does. As canvas is the finishing touch on most boat refits and sewing is somewhat of a mystery to most people, it is no wonder that many sailors simply call a shop and hire them without knowing if this shop can create durable, functioning, and beautiful canvas.

> **Good canvas is rooted in a deep understanding of boats.**

Frequently, customers get ahead of themselves—they'll call me and want to know what their fabric choices would be, and whether I can create an entire custom framework for their solar panels once I am done with their bimini. They focus on details that happen in the construction or even post-construction phase, rather than the basics of initial hiring.

Good canvas is worth every penny; knowing what good canvas is makes the difference. The following questions will demystify the process, help you understand how to vet different shops and see if they're right for your project, and help ensure that you're getting quality canvas for your boat.

Finding the Right Shop

How far is the canvas maker booked out? Canvas shops typically have a backlog of work, and depending on how many employees they have it could be as long as a year. Rather than seeing this as a negative, you might realize that it's often due to the quality of work that the shop produces. If clients are willing to wait, there's a reason.

Are they typically on schedule? If you do take a booking with a shop, it's good to know when the project will actually start and if there is any detail that might delay it. For the past year, our shop, Inner Banks Sails and Canvas, had to get materials months in advance to start a project on time, and it was imperative that clients knew the challenges we faced so they could keep apprised of the progress.

Can you find references, testimonials, or past work examples similar to what you are looking for? It's important to ask other sailors who they use for their canvas work and who they recommend, especially if they have a similar boat to yours or you think their canvas is done well.

Are they sailors? Not all canvas shops are run or staffed by sailors, which is a shame because so much of good canvas is rooted in a deep understanding of boats and what the canvas will do underway in different circumstances. While this isn't

When you are looking for something extremely custom like this two-toned dodger and bimini combination, it's important to find a shop that is willing to work with you on design ideas that are both beautiful and functional, top left.

Added canvas, such as window covers, might not come standard but they might be a good idea to add to extend the life of your canvas, center left.

a make-or-break question for a shop, it is something to take into consideration.

Do they have insurance?
Marine insurance is expensive, no matter what line of work you are in. If a shop has insurance, it proves two things; that your vessel is protected while they are onboard, and that they are professional enough to work in any marina or boatyard with the added credential.

How much will the price change from the original estimate, barring any change to orders or add-ons throughout the process?
When cold-calling canvas shops, you will most likely get a ballpark estimate, so it is important to know how much that estimate might change moving forward.

What is the warranty on the canvas they make?
Good shops will stand behind their work, and this is a simple question to ensure that they do.

Test fitting this bimini frame for a canoe-stern Pacific Seacraft allows Breena's staff to check that all of their measurements and calculations were correct before bringing it out to the boat, bottom left.

What kinds of materials do they typically use? What is standard for their shop?
Most sailors have heard of Sunbrella, but thread, chafe protection, and interfacing materials are less widely known. It's important to ask the canvas shop what other materials they typically use in a project and for what reason.

What makes their canvas better?
I have only ever been asked this one time, which surprises me, as I would think more people would want to know why we believe our shop is the right shop for the job. This question gives the shop a chance to gloat a bit about their work but will also give you insight into what you will be paying for.

Sewing up the Details

At Inner Banks Sails and Canvas, we meet the client on the boat for their onboard consultation a month before the start of a project. This is when design details are hammered out, fabric colors are chosen, and the price is firmed up. This gives everyone a chance to provide input on the upcoming project so there are no surprises when the work begins. At this point and throughout the construction process, your shop should be keeping you up to date on any changes or modifications, and as a client you should be asking the following questions to make sure you are getting exactly what you want.

What can I expect from the end product?
Often, sailors know what they want their canvas to accomplish, but they don't necessarily know how to go about communicating that to the shop. These questions will ensure that you address the functionality of the canvas and don't get any surprises when a zipper leaks water or you can't use a winch underway when your enclosure is in place:

- Will it be watertight?
- Will there be softness in the glass vinyl, or will it be rigid?
- How long will this canvas last? When should I expect fading, loss of water repellency, or zipper failure?
- Will I be able to use winches/cleats/etc. while the canvas is in place?
- Is the framework sturdy enough for me to use as support, a more permanent structure, or is it something I can quickly dismantle?

Finishing seams prevents fraying and gives all the projects a more finished look, top left.

After the canvas is installed and the client uses it, there may be some minor adjustments or additions that need to be made. Make sure your shop is willing to come back out and address them, center left.

Added hard legs and hand grabs make this dodger incredibly sturdy. Little details like a red snap on the port window cover help clients easily install them in the correct locations, bottom left.

What steps are taken to prevent typical wear and tear? Canvas shops (especially ones that accept canvas repairs) know what typically starts to break down in canvas. It's important to know what the shop you hired does to prevent these typical breakdowns. Following are parts of the canvas that fail most often:

- Fasteners pulling out of the fabric
- Sun-damaged zippers
- Glass glazing or yellowing
- Chafe on Sunbrella
- UV damage of thread

What could I add to make it last longer? Items like window covers or a storage bag for enclosure panels could add to the overall price of your canvas package, but they can also prolong the life of your canvas by years, so they might be a wise investment depending on your boating plans.

How are the seams finished? Nothing irks me more than fraying seams on canvas work! Yes, I may be the only person to notice, but to me it indicates work that was done fast without longevity in mind. When a seam is heat-sealed (cut with a hot knife) or fully felled (folded and tucked under itself), it may take a little longer for the shop, but it means your canvas will look better and last longer.

Do you take water diversion into consideration? Biminis made to shed water outboard of the coamings so you don't sit in the cockpit and get water dripping down your back, or a seam turned downward so there's no pooling and the water just runs down the fabric instead, are small details that make a big difference. It's important to know that the canvas shop you hire is taking such details into account.

How does the shop handle change orders? Every project has small changes that the client requests or the shop may recommend. It's important to know ahead of time that you will be told the cost and schedule effects of these changes rather than being surprised when you're handed the final bill.

Zipping it Up

Now that your beautifully functional canvas projects are complete, these are the final questions you should be asking to keep the canvas in tip-top shape.

Can you provide closeout documents? After the project is complete, the shop should give you the following documents in case you ever need to reference them for repairs, pricing, or even to recommend aspects of the project to fellow boaters:

- Materials list
- Warranties
- Care and maintenance instructions

When should I take the canvas down? It's important to know what your canvas can withstand when it comes to weather and long stints of storage.

How do I take the canvas off and how do I store it? There is an order of operations when taking canvas off and putting it back on that makes it so much easier. I've seen so many people leave their dodgers, biminis, or enclosures up during a storm because it is too much of a hassle to get the darn things off. Your canvas shop will know the easiest way to remove the canvas and put it back on without

too much effort. They will also tell you the best place and way to store it.

How do I clean and maintain the canvas? Don't scrub Sunbrella! I just had to say that first, because I get asked—often after someone has already done it—how they should clean their canvas. It's important, because doing it incorrectly can break down the fibers. Your canvas professional will tell you how to best clean it—including what products to use—so that you won't harm the fabric or vinyl.

Are there any warranties I need to register myself? Warranties for certain products start at the time of installation, and it is important to know if the canvas shop is registering you, or if you need to do so yourself.

Is there a time period during which if I find issues, you will still address them? Your canvas shop should offer a warranty, but they should also be available in the first couple of weeks of use to address anything that is not working as it should. We installed a full enclosure on a trawler and were trying desperately not to use Velcro, as we did not like the look of it for this application. During a rainstorm, though, when the storm flap flew up and rain entered, it was clear that we had to add it. It's important for you to feel comfortable telling your loft to come back and address something if it isn't exactly what you both agreed on and to feel confident that they will, even after the check has cleared.

With these final questions asked, you should be left with long-lasting, beautiful canvas that functions exactly the way you expected it to. There should have been no surprises throughout the process, and in the end, you will have chosen a shop that provided excellent service and worked best with you and your boat.

Breena Litzenberger sailed for more than 10 years on seven different boats before she and her husband bought Inner Banks Sails and Canvas in Oriental, North Carolina. Sewing and sailing have been Breena's passions, and now she works in her dream job in one of the most wonderful sailing towns she's ever visited. She and her husband accumulate boats, work on boats, and sail boats, all from their backyard and all outfitted with canvas from their shop.

Marine canvas shops often do more than biminis, dodgers, and enclosures. They often do exterior and interior upholstery as well.

A Stitch in Time

A steep learning curve on a Speedy Stitcher eventually yields happy results.

BY MAURISA DESCHEEMAEKER

Most sailors have seen a Speedy Stitcher or sewing awl. How many have used one? My first time was such a flop I would have happily thrown it overboard. But since my second attempt, using the sewing awl has been a success, and this tool will have a place on board evermore.

My first try, in retrospect, was all wrong. I'd tucked the tool away in an emergency sail repair kit, and a day came when, after many miles underway, our headsail developed some chafe near the bow pulpit. I tried to add leather chafe material to the sail's tack, an area already thick with layers of material and webbing and likely saltier than I realized. It was too much for the stitcher—be that myself or the tool is debatable. Sweating and cursing with each stitch, I broke the stitcher's needles and rendered it useless. I finished the job with what I should have started with: a palm, waxed thread, needle, and a small piece of wax.

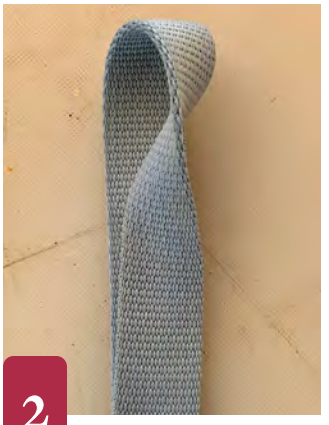
Years later though, with a mixture of hope and hesitancy, I pulled out the Speedy Stitcher again to tackle several areas that needed patching on our dinghy chaps. This time, I carefully took it apart and reassembled it. I read the instructions multiple times and visualized each step. I measured and prepared my first patch, stuck it down with some 3M double-sided tape along the folded edges, and followed the instructions.

Success! I learned I could control the tension on the top and bottom of the fabric to create a strong and even hold. I discovered the importance of finding the best path for the needle, and how to size a patch so the awl is not overtasked. Like many tools, the Speedy Stitcher has a niche and a sweet spot, which in my experience lies in the number of layers and the types of material being joined.

I've since used the Speedy Stitcher to make new sail ties. Following are my step-by-step instructions for this small project. Hopefully this can serve as a much better way to learn how to use the tool than the way I did it!

1

Gather the desired length of webbing for sail tie plus 6 inches. Cut and burn both ends.



2

Create a loop in one end and stick it down with 1 inch of 3M double-sided tape.

3

Insert the needle into the awl so the thread nests in the groove along the needle in a straight shot from where it exits the awl and enters the eye of the needle. Measure out 30 inches of waxed thread.

4

Make the first puncture with the awl with the leading edge (also the groove) of the needle facing the direction you will sew. Before pulling back, pull the entire measured length through (30 inches in this case) to the back side.

6

Once through, pull back on the awl slightly so a loop forms off the non-grooved side of the needle. Insert and pull the cut end of the thread all the way through this loop. Take care of the cut end of the thread; it may want to fray. The less it does, the easier it will go through the loop with each stitch. Holding the backside thread close to the sail tie, pull the awl back out the frontside of the sail tie. The balanced tension of the stitch occurs here when the stitch tightens and you apply even pressure pulling the front and back sides of the thread at once.

5

Pull the needle back, and while holding the cut end of your thread and the thread nearest the needle, pull half the thread back to the front side so that half the thread is coming out of the backside and half is coming out of the frontside of your stitch. Each puncture thereafter through to the last stitch, puncture with the leading edge facing the direction you are sewing. I hold the awl with my thumb on the thread leading from the bobbin to the needle so that no more thread is added to my measured amount.

7

For these sail ties I sew a box formation with a diagonal between two corners.

Occasionally, the thread on the front side will twist on itself as you pull it all the way through. Sometimes it will seem to bugger up just shy of actually making the stitch. If this happens, loosen the hold on the backside thread to allow the frontside thread more room to come through. It is OK if a backside loop comes through to the frontside. Once the frontside thread is pulled taut, put enough tension on the backside thread to pull the loop back into the webbing. Then apply even tension to both front and back threads.

Once the last stitch is reached, puncture through to the backside and pull back slightly as before. When the loop forms, pull the stitching side of the thread all the way through. I cut it to the same length as what is left of the backside. Pull both threads tight and secure with a surgeon's knot. I have had square knots slip out when I cut the threads back.

Maurisa Descheemaeker lives and sails with her husband and two kids aboard an Alajuela 48 ketch, Whirlwind. *Their firstborn was but a peanut when sailing became a family adventure. Boat by boat, they have put many miles under a handful of keels throughout the Salish Sea, down the Pacific Coast, and south to warmer latitudes.*

Sewing Success

The family business that sparked a DIY sail- and canvas-making revolution.

BY FIONA MCGLYNN

When I call Matt Grant, vice president of Sailrite, to interview him for this article, I'm surprised to find myself on hold, the third person in line. I listen to a minute or two of classical music before he picks up, and I learn the reason why.

Matt sits next to the customer service pool, the people who answer the phones, so that he's accessible when a customer has a particularly difficult question. I'm impressed that the VP of a business with nearly 100 employees still takes calls from customers.

"I'm a boater myself," says Matt. "So that's part of the enjoyment of the job. I like talking to the customers." (This story mingles interview quotes with others from the Sailrite website, used with permission.)

It's a hands-on approach that's been a cornerstone of Sailrite since Matt's parents, Jim and Connie Grant, founded the company in 1969. Today, Sailrite is the be-all and end-all among sailors when it comes to DIY fabricating in canvas; many a Sailrite machine has circled the world onboard. It remains a strongly family-based business, with Matt and his wife and Sailrite president, Hallie, now leading the company, Matt's brother, Eric Grant, spearheading the company's how-to online videos for DIYers, and a third generation of Grants injecting new energy and ideas across departments.

Matt says he and Hallie counsel the young Grants frequently that, "You don't have to be enormous. You just need to be happy and helpful. And that's really what we're all about. Can we be happy and helpful? And I'm happy to say, at this point we've accomplished that."

Headlong into Hands On

As the story goes, it all started with sailing. Jim Grant needed a new set of sails for racing in the Cal 20 Nationals, but the local sailmaker couldn't make them in time. So, Jim bought the materials and made the sails himself. Not only did he finish them in time for the regatta, but he also won second place.

Naturally, other sailors were interested in doing the same. Jim, who until that time had worked as a college professor, wanted to provide sailors with instruction and materials for DIY canvas and sailmaking. In 1976, he launched a correspondence course on sailmaking called the "Sailmaker's Series" so amateurs could learn how to make their own sails.

It was a pioneering concept at the time, and Sailrite began to grow rapidly. That same year, needing more affordable space for the business as well as a more centralized location, Jim and Connie decided to move the Sailrite headquarters

The idea for Sailrite was born when Jim Grant needed a new set of sails for a race and decided to build them himself.

Sailrite's loft in the old days.

from California to a remodeled barn in Columbia City, Indiana—also the Grant family's hometown.

As Jim delved deeper into sailmaking, he realized that there weren't many good amateur sailmaker sewing machines on the market. Sailmaking requires a heavy-duty sewing machine with a zigzag and a long stitch length, an ability to handle heavy materials and feed fabric easily, all while being portable.

It was a tall order, but Jim was determined to build a sewing machine tailored to amateur sailmakers. He modified an existing sewing machine, the Brother® TZB651, increasing its power by adding a larger diameter balance wheel with an idler pully and a two-belt drive system. Launched in 1981, this improved Brother sewing machine, known as the Sailrite Sailmaker Sewing Machine, "became the most well-known and respected portable zigzag sewing machine for sail and canvas workers," Matt said.

The Second Generation

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Matt was attending college studying business, but he worked at Sailrite, tuning and shipping sewing machine orders when he wasn't in class. It proved to be an education in its own right.

"I learned that sewing machines can be fickle to tune consistently to get equal performance from one unit to the next," Matt said. "It took me years to hone my skills."

He was also fine-tuning his business skills. Matt felt that a $1,999 sewing machine was too expensive for most boating DIYers.

"I wrote a college paper on the subject and convinced myself that I could come up with a less expensive model to supplement the Sailrite Sailmaker model," he said. "I had theorized that a price point of $499 would increase the market by 500 units annually."

Using the same approach his father had taken—building up an existing machine—Matt developed a new, more affordable, model. Though some trade-offs were necessary to keep the cost down, the Yachtsman sewing machine was a hit and achieved Matt's original goal of selling 500 machines in a year.

However, he wasn't yet satisfied.

"We reached the conclusion that we needed control of the manufacturing process to create machines to serve our niche," Matt said.

Working closely with his colleague and head sewing machine technician, Duane Crisp, Matt set out to custom design a sewing machine for sailmakers. It would be a machine with a zigzag stitch, walking foot, and feature a longer stitch length (important because it reduces puckering in canvas making). It also had to be lightweight and portable.

"It was an arduous process," Matt said. But in the end, they developed a sewing machine so unique that they decided to patent the design. According to Matt, it was the first machine designed as a portable, heavy-duty sewing machine for sewing sails, canvas, and upholstery.

One of its key features was the grip and pulling strength of the feeding mechanism, so the machine was dubbed the Ultrafeed.

They found a manufacturer in Taiwan, though Matt did the final tuning and adjustments on each machine before shipping to the customer.

"The process was slow, and I soon found that to produce a quality product I would be spending day and night at work," Matt said. "For a few years I remember dreading Christmas, as I basically lived at work in order to ship machines to arrive on time."

The Ultrafeed launched in 2000 and was a huge success. Sales boomed and Matt continued to refine his design. "The machine really became a marvel," he said.

Matt with a Ultrafeed sewing machine, designed specifically for sailmakers and canvas workers. The concept proved to be a huge success.

The Sailrite warehouse is a DIY canvas worker's dream come true.

So marvelous, that it spawned a slew of copycats. Matt discovered that their manufacturer in Taiwan had been selling Ultrafeed sewing machines to companies producing reproductions.

"The machine looked like it was going to be so successful that look-alike units hit the market before our patent had been completely issued," Matt explained. "It took a few years for us to figure this out, but the damage was done."

Sailrite sued and eventually drove many of the look-alike producers off the market, but years of legal battles took their toll.

Matt was happy when he could finally get back to innovating. In the period that followed, he created several custom Ultrafeed parts, like the Posi-Pin ® Safety Shear and Monster II Balance Wheel. The parts were manufactured in the U.S.

"Our decision was partially predicated on keeping our ideas from being copied, but it was equally because we cared about jobs in America," Matt said.

During this time, he also hired and trained staff to fine-tune the machines and built a team of full-time sewing machine technicians.

The Ultrafeed became Sailrite's flagship sewing machine and continues to evolve. Most recently, in 2021, Sailrite launched a new quarter-horsepower motor, the WorkerB® Power Pack motor system.

"No other portable machine has this amount of power, starting torque, and slow speed control," said Matt. He's proud of what they've built.

The Family Grows

In 2021, Sailrite expanded its headquarters by 31,200 square feet to accommodate a growing workforce and inventory. The expansion came with a change—a chance for Matt to have his own office. Until very recently, he shared his office with Sailrite's president and a pivotal figure in the company's history: his wife, Hallie Grant.

"I wouldn't have wanted to do this, nor could I have done this without Hallie," said Matt. "She's been instrumental to the growth of the business."

Matt and Hallie were high school sweethearts. The two met in Columbia City and both went to Indiana University, though neither of them graduated there.

"We got so involved in the business," said Matt. They decided to return to Columbia City to work at Sailrite full-time. "We would work eight to five and then jump in a car and finish our classes in the evening."

Hallie has an uncanny gut for business and the seeming ability to predict the next big thing. Long before most businesses had a website landing page, she proposed selling Sailrite's products

Six Grant family members currently work full-time at Sailrite: Front row from left to right: Tanner Grant (purchasing manager), Hallie Grant (president), Zach Grant (marketing manager). Back row from left to right: Seth Grant (lead videographer), Eric Grant (project specialist for videography), Matt Grant (vice president).

online and found a company that would build them a website for $20,000.

"I thought she was crazy," says Matt. "My wife, myself, my mother, and father sat in a hot dog stand in downtown Columbia City. The three of us were like, 'This is never going to work,' and Hallie's like, 'Trust me.' So, ultimately, we said, 'Okay, give it a shot.'"

Sailrite.com went live in 1997, a whole three years before Walmart launched its e-commerce store. "All of a sudden, the internet took off like wildfire," said Matt.

Jim and Eric Grant, Matt's brother, were some of the first to see the potential of online videos for DIYers. The Sailrite team had found it challenging to explain complex concepts and techniques over the phone to customers. So, they began publishing videos on Silverlight, an early Microsoft product for web videos.

When YouTube came along, Hallie was the one to convince the team to switch platforms. Matt thought that Silverlight was the way to go, but Hallie was certain that YouTube was the future.

"We went to YouTube and I thought, 'Oh, this is a horrible idea because all of our content is owned by them,' " said Matt. "Well, obviously, you know how that story played out. You've probably never heard of Silverlight."

Sailrite joined YouTube in September of 2010 and has since grown to over 350,000 subscribers. Their extensive catalog of how-to videos is a DIYer's dream. You can learn just about anything from making a simple throw pillow to building an asymmetrical cruising spinnaker.

Matt's brother, Eric (aka "The Project Guy"), is often the one you'll see in the videos, teaching sewing techniques (how to sew a zipper) or demonstrating a project step-by-step (how to make a sunshade). The videos are extremely well produced and deeply researched. Matt says that Eric will sometimes build a project two or three times for a video, learning and fine-tuning his approach.

"Eric uses our equipment probably more than anybody in the world, so he knows it extremely well," he says.

Stitching a Future

In 2004, Jim and Connie retired. With Matt and Hallie at the helm, Sailrite now employs 85-95 employees, including several Grant family members.

Jim, who has always been passionate about computers and programming, enjoys tinkering with Sailrite's Fabric Calculator.

"He just loves working on that fabric calculator," Matt says. "It's very accurate and it gives you the ability to figure out exactly how much fabric and everything else you need to make your cushions, whether it's for a boat, patio, or bench seat. He sort of sees it as his legacy at this point."

The third generation of Grants is also involved. Eric's son, Seth Grant, does a lot of the camera work for the YouTube videos. Matt and Hallie have two sons and a daughter. Their oldest, Zach Grant, has been working for the company for seven years and is Sailrite's marketing manager. Tanner Grant has worked in the business for four years and is the purchasing manager, and their youngest, Sierra, who is still in college, picks orders in the shipping department part-time.

"They have huge ideas and big dreams for what we can do in the future," Matt says. "We'll see. We tell them, as long as you're happy doing what you're doing and as long as you feel like you're providing a service that is good for your customers, you will succeed in business."

Matt says he also enjoys encouraging first-timers who have a project but are new to the skills and the machines and uncertain how to begin.

"I always tell people, you just start. Watch a few videos. They'll teach you more than you know. Watch a few videos on relevant projects—we should have a video on just about anything. Every project you do, you will get better. And don't be afraid to make mistakes. Sometimes you'll end up redoing things," he says. "But the emails that I get from customers who have purchased machines, who have asked that question in the past, usually go this way: They say, 'I am so thankful that I decided to try this, and I have paid for this machine ten times over with the stuff that I've done.'

"And if you do that it's hard to argue because it's really not that complicated when you get right down to it...And everything you learn seems to transfer over to the next project."

Fiona McGlynn, a Good Old Boat *contributing editor, cruised from Canada to Australia on a 35-foot boat with her husband, Robin. Fiona lives north of 59 degrees and runs WaterborneMag.com, a site dedicated to millennial sailing culture.*

The Sailor's Code

When a fellow sailor is in trouble, you help—no questions asked.

BY D.B. DAVIES

It has been more than 10 years since that warm summer day when I first saw a new boat at our yacht club, moored rather loosely. It drew my attention not only because I had to tighten her lines and rearrange the fenders, but because it was the same boat as mine, a Grampian 30.

However, this new boat sported some interesting alterations. A bowsprit accommodated a larger jib. An odd-looking boom carried what appeared to be a roller-furling mainsail system. The cockpit was totally enclosed in a custom-made dodger/bimini. I made a note to come back when the owner was here to look her over more carefully.

A week later, I spotted activity on the boat and went over to introduce myself to the two men aboard, who explained how they'd come by the boat almost by default. The original owner was an avid racer but had little time for fixing things. He'd hired these two to address mechanical and electrical issues, and later, when he had trouble selling the boat, he offered her to them for a reduced price.

Although neither knew much about sailing, it seemed like too good a deal to pass up, so they bought her and joined our club. Now the boat sat at the dock while they tried to figure out how to sail her.

I looked the boat over and couldn't figure out how the reefing system was supposed to work. Neither could they. They explained that their day job was installing and wiring computerized systems for commercial use. They weren't even sure if they'd rigged her properly.

I assured them that they'd done a reasonable job except for the mainsail reefing system, which I suggested we convert to a more conventional and practical system. I corrected a few minor things and encouraged them to go sailing. They seemed hesitant, so I went with them the first time and helped them figure things out (although their boat did hold some mysteries for me).

Then I took them out on my boat and showed them what was possible. They enjoyed the ride and vowed to take a sailing course, learn more, and get out on the water.

One day later that summer, I was stuck inside on a writing deadline, watching the trees bending under a blustery wind and wishing I was out sailing in it, when my cell phone rang.

Today it wasn't a sailboat, it was a tug.

It was one of the boat's owners, and he was calling from the helm of the Grampian. They had ventured out in calm weather before this big wind came up. Quickly overpowered, they dropped all the sails. They started the diesel, but the transmission linkage had broken, and they couldn't get it into gear. The building waves were pushing them toward the rocks.

I tried to explain that with a wind this big, all they had to do was tack back and forth to get away from the onshore gale and make it back to our harbor. But in a trembling voice, he told me that his son was below throwing up, his co-owner was on the foredeck too scared to crawl back to the cockpit, and he'd just been slammed against the wheel and might have broken a rib.

I was 20 minutes from the club, and even if I got to my boat, they were another 30 minutes down the lake and drifting. Still, there was no denying that voice—a voice I and most every other sailor could recognize, a voice tense with that moment when you know you've gotten in over your head, when you feel everything is out of control, and you pray that if you just hold on, you might make it through.

I told him I'd get there as soon as I could.

When I got to the club, an experienced sailor who was puttering on his boat readily agreed to come with me. We headed out of the harbor and took off down the lake wing-on-wing under a working jib and double-reefed main with a limiter on the boom, flying before the wind and a big following sea.

We spotted them in no time, only a quarter mile from the rocks and drifting quickly. As we closed on them, we came head to wind, dropped our sails, and fired up the Atomic 4. The swells had risen to about 4 feet and both boats were pitching and rolling.

I called on my cell phone and told them to toss us a line. The man on the bow was clinging to the lifeline, still too frightened to crawl back to the cockpit. But he caught the line his helmsman tossed, secured it to a bow cleat, and prepared to throw it over to us.

I motored close, the chop throwing my boat around, my stern coming perilously close to their hull.

The first throw missed, and I feared the line might foul my prop and both boats would end up on the rocks, but the fellow on the bow quickly reeled it in. His second attempt was more accurate, and my crew member, right next to me in the cockpit, caught it. But as it snugged up, he yelled, "I can't hold it!"

I didn't want to make the approach again, so I grabbed the line, he grabbed the tiller, and I held on, though the line threatened to pull me into the lake and my palms burned.

ILLUSTRATION BY FRITZ SEEGERS

I yelled for my mate to put our boat in neutral. With that, the line slackened, and I secured it to the stern cleat.

In forward again, we began to pull away from the shore into deeper water, but the going was slow against the driving waves and gale-force winds. All the way back, I kept an eye on my gas gauge as it bounced between a quarter and empty. The engine strained under the weight of the towed boat, and I regretted those times earlier that summer when I'd said, "That's all the gas I need. I only use the engine to get out of harbor and back in. It's a sailboat, after all."

Today it wasn't a sailboat, it was a tug, and I was going to be lucky to make it back to harbor with this disabled sister ship dragging behind. For a moment we contemplated raising the sails, but the wind was right on the nose, and we didn't know if sailing would give us enough power to tow the other boat along.

It took over an hour to get abeam of our harbor, and then we had to motor well past it to line up for the entrance and not be blown too quickly downwind. The gas gauge needle now danced between an eighth and below empty. We had to get the right angle; we'd only get one shot at this.

We guessed right, and once we turned, the waves helped us along. We slid between the rocks port and starboard and were suddenly chugging along in calm waters.

A few club members saw that we had the boat under tow and caught our friends' lines as they coasted into the dock. On my boat, we exchanged relieved high fives as we motored to our dock.

A few days later I opened my cockpit locker to find a case of beer amid the lines and harnesses.

There've been many summers since then, and my friends have become much better sailors, enjoying fixing and sailing their boat. We've gone down the lake together on cruises, even late in the season when the winds are strong and a chill is in the air.

One season, they checked the electronics on my mast as it lay on the horses before raising it. All the lights worked. Then when the mast was up, none of the lights worked. I left the boat moored and took some time to think about what might be wrong. When I returned a day later, the lights were back in working order—they had traced everything back, found the short, and made the repair.

And that's the way the seasons passed, until last year when, in the middle of summer, a medical condition completely derailed me. I lost mobility, and it looked like my recovery would take me long into the winter. I worried about haulout and putting my boat on the hard; derigging and demasting, prepping the engine, getting her on the slings, and settling her on her cradle, putting up the frame, and getting the tarp over her. It all seemed daunting, and I was in no shape to do it.

Then I got their email: "Whatever you need...whenever you need it... we'll take care of it for you."

And that is exactly what they did.

My friends had come to sailing later than most, but they understood the sailor's code: If someone is in trouble and needs help, you help them. If a vessel is in distress, every sailor within distance will alter course to go to its aid. It's a tradition, a part of the sailing culture for as long as humans have left shore and ventured out to sea. Amid storm, wind, and seas, we don't stop to ask about religion, nationality, race, sexual preference, or political persuasion. We just help each other.

And if we all just followed the sailor's code, across all walks of life, this world would be a better place.

D.B. Davies is a sailor and writer who is a frequent contributor to Good Old Boat. *He sails* Affinity, *his 1974 Grampian 30, around Lake Ontario. After extensively researching the men and sailing schooners of Canada's Maritime provinces, he wrote a dramatic screenplay about the famous* Bluenose *and her skipper, Angus Walters. You can find out more at thebluenosemovie.com.*

Gift Guide

Even though the sailors in our lives might think they have it all, we know there is always something they need. Their preferences can vary as much as their boats. Read on for suggestions for many types of sailors in your life.

The DIYer

These sailors often find themselves troubleshooting in lazerettes and engine rooms. Finding the next missing puzzle piece for this sailor's boat may be a challenge, but a gift card to your local chandlery or hardware store is always a treat! Wrap it up in a ditty bag made from old sails handcrafted by Sea Bags.

$35, *seabags.com*

Try an endoscope camera to help them see those hard-to-reach places and a rechargeable headlamp to light the way.

$40, *amazon.com/depstech-Waterproof-Inspection-Megapixels-Smartphone/dp/b01mythwk4*

Refresh their tool kit with a new set of drill bits, sandpaper, zip ties, white rigging tape, small paint brushes for varnish, and a kit of stainless steel split rings and pins.

For the sewist sailor, consider a Sailrite kit to kick off their next project. Options range from sewing your own canvas coverings and sails to other accessories, such as bags and fender covers.

$40–$1,100, *sailrite.com*

For the DIYer who loves to read, consider *The Sailors Sketchbook* by Bruce Bingham.

The Weekender

Consider making their good old boat a little cozier. Rumpl blankets add a soft, durable warm layer that can join you at the beach or in the cockpit too.

$99, *rumpl.com*

Foam mattresses can be purchased inexpensively and cut down to size with a serrated knife.

Quohog Bay Bedding makes custom sheets for berths and has standard sizing for tricky-to-fit V-berths.

$179, *quahogbaybedding.com*

The Robocup turns any stanchion or other handle into storage for beverages, fishing poles, or other gear.

$13–$27, *therobocup.com*

Keep the party going after dark with nice lighting. We love Luci Lights for the soft ambience and easy solar-powered set-up.

$24–$65, *mpowerd.com*

For the sailor exploring locally, consider purchasing a local guidebook for the waterways, shoreside attractions, or flora and fauna. *The Boat Galley Cookbook* by Carolyn Sherlock and Jan Irons is also an excellent addition for good eats in a small space. **$10–$40**

Boat bathrooms are notoriously small. Help your sailor stay organized with a hangup organizer for all their essentials. **~$39** Toss in a quick-drying towel too. **~$18**

The Racer

Safety on the water is always important, and on the race course things move fast. Skullers baseball cap inserts provide light protection from wayward booms and spinnaker poles.

Keeping tracking of time precisely is invaluable at the starting line. How about a countdown watch? Basic models with a five-minute countdown will suffice, and the sky is the limit on additional options from Garmin, Omega, Casio, Timex, and others.

The Frostbiter

Snag a *Good Old Boat* beanie for the cold weather sailor in your life.

$18, *goodoldboat.com/shop*

For inspiration on surviving in the elements, consider *Endurance* by Alfred Lansing.

Cold winds are tough on skin. Phytoplex by Medline helps repair and prevent wind damage. **$5–$29**

Help keep their mitts warm on the rail or between tacks with rechargeable hand warmers from Hot Snapz.

$22, *hotsnapz.com*

The Offshore Sailor

Heading offshore requires increased safety systems. Consider helping out your offshore sailor by purchasing jacklines and tethers to help them stay on board.

We like tethers with two clips for staying connected while moving fore and aft. **$99**, *westmarine.com*

We then run jacklines along the boat for attachment points. Be sure to purchase the correct length for the vessel. If the worst happens and your sailor ends up overboard in an ocean or large lake, an advanced life jacket is essential. Look for options that include integrated leg straps and D-rings to attach your tether. **$199–$399**

For those who dream of distant shores, try *Swell* by Liz Clark, *The Care and Feeding of Sailing Crew* by Lin Pardey, or a guidebook to their dream destination.

A fresh set of gloves is always welcome for the avid racer. We love the full-finger Ronstan gloves for their extra grip. When the fingers wear out, simply trim them off to give your gloves new life.

$40, *westmarine.com*

For the racer who loves to read, consider *Sail Trim: Theory and Practice* by Peter Hahn.

Everyone can use a fresh pair of socks, especially in the colder months. Our technical editor, Drew Frye, recommends Gill Boot Socks for the chilliest days or The Showers Pass Cross Point Mountain Sock for more slightly warmer days.

$25, *gillmarine.com* or **$45**, *showerspass.com*

Layers are the key for any day on the water. Consider refreshing their options with wool layers like Capilene base layers from Patagonia.

$99–$149, *patagonia.com*

Still stumped on what to give the person that has it all? Consider a subscription to *Good Old Boat* magazine or donating to a sailing organization near you.

A fully saturated copy of *Good Old Boat* dries out in the sun and is no worse for the wear.

the winch properly, then release the second line from its winch and then untie it from the jib sheet. No need to go forward with a knife on a pitching deck!

—**Carolyn Shearlock,**
The Boat Galley,
Marathon, Florida

Durable GOB

A week ago, a midwest gullywasher rainy period laughed at my boat cover and flooded the innards. I thought you'd appreciate that dry-out day, with jib, jackets, and lines strewn over the boom, including a saturated issue of *Good Old Boat*. The milk jug bailer plus an 8-knot breeze in full sun dried and aired out all the deepest recesses in my 1960s 15.5-foot Snipe camp cruiser. Worthy of note: Your issue recovered fully, no pages glued together, all copy readable, full colors intact (see photo above). Now each page has a ripple across it like cat's paws on a summer lake, adding charm. Nice to know your magazine stands up proudly to the perils of the sea.

—**Gary Gronberg**
Wauconda, Illinois

A Chesapeake Squall

I've sailed the Chesapeake for 40 years, beginning in 1972 when I purchased my first cruising boat, a Morgan 28. I had raced one-designs before that. I was cautioned very soon about watching for late afternoon line squalls that would appear in the northwest sky and move toward and rapidly across the Bay. The recommended drill was to drop sails, start the engine, and motor directly into them. I followed that advice several times with no mishaps. Motoring directly into the storm would provide about 20 to 25 minutes of the storm "blowing stink." Then the line would pass over and the sun would reappear. A pleasant evening of sailing would follow.

Thanks to Craig Moodie for recalling that Chesapeake Bay weather phenomenon in his article "Young Hands on Deck" in the May/June 2022 issue of *Good Old Boat*.

—**Ken Thorn**
Carrboro, North Carolina

An Uplifting Repair

I wanted to float an idea past you. I thought my fellow *Good Old Boat* readers might enjoy this brief repair story. I must say my idea was rather brilliant! "There was a loud CRACK and the jib fell to the deck." That's how certified sailing instructor Captain Russ Rosenzweig described the moment the top jib furler swivel broke aloft during his Delaware River sailing class on a Hunter 33. Captain Russ explained, "Of course the problem became, how do we reach the top of the jib foil to pull the broken part down?" After discussing several expensive options with me, they floated an uplifting idea. "What if we make a locking metal loop from a coat hanger, tie about 70 feet of string to it, and attach three large helium balloons?" As we walked past slip owners wondering whose birthday they forgot, Captain Russ tried to explain our repair strategy. On the third attempt, much to the astonishment of all, it worked! The balloons carried the loop to the top of the foil, the ring captured the broken furler, and the string was pulled, lowering the entire assembly to the deck, arousing a jubilant rise out of the astonished onlookers!

Rigging the balloons to reach the top of the jib furler.

—**Mike and Nanare Slepian**
Hunter 356 *Thankful*
Forked River, New Jersey

Boats for Sale

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

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

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

Carter 33
1974. Two-owner vessel. First owner limited production ¾-tonner racing series hull 5/10, Henry Scheel's boatyard, NY; second owner Chesapeake Bay cruiser. Original papers, all manuals print or electronic. 6' hdrm, spacious, VG condition, fully equipped, she loves to sail. Innovative architect, search "Dick Carter Fastnet." Pics at ritual.piwigo.com. Lancaster, VA. $18,500.

Jeffrey Seed
804-690-2214
jaseed@jaseed.com

Pearson Wanderer 30
1970. Plastic Classic. Freshwater boat in great shape. Northport, MI. $9,000.

Jim Zevalkink
Jbz@poplarridgepartners.com
616-970-7070

Cape Dory 25
1985. Prof maintained. New: head, Edson wheel steering (completely rebuilt), Schaefer furling, through hulls. Verizon VHF; Garmin monitor; safety package (life jackets, whistles, mirrors, etc). Clearwater, FL. $12,000.

Ed O'Brien
727-785-8634

Irwin 30
1974. Shoal-draft sloop. Owned by a rigger for 20 years. Many rigging upgrades. RF genoa, reefable mainsail w/Dutchman system, new Harken traveler, halyards led aft, self-tailers, new boom, wheel steering. Harken blocks, spinnaker gear. Split backstay. Newer head, folding prop. VC-17 bottom annually. Atomic 4 gas engine has fresh ignition parts. Very complete boat ready to sail. Bring offers. On cradle in Eastern Lake Erie, NY. $5,000 OBO.

James Berry
716-867-7388

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

Leslie Andrew Trott
201-523-1570
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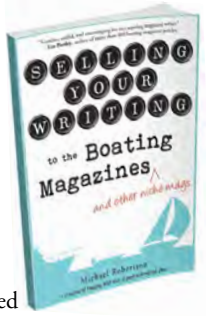

"When I get queries from sailors wanting to know how to get started writing for the sailing press, I'll recommend this book."
--**Karen Larson**, ***Good Old Boat***

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As the Crow Flies

A raven-winged friend helps a sailor count his blessings.

BY MIKE CICALESE

During the decade we sailed our 38-foot Cabo Rico, *Triana*, a sizeable black crow marked the days from season to season and year to year. I thought it was gone after that first spring—after the bottom was painted and the boat left the crowded, dusty yard to its favored home, mooring #E-7, staring at the cove's bend and into the greater bay where wind, sail, and sea beckoned adventure.

I was mistaken. As the July 4 weekend approached and I prepared *Triana* for an extended excursion, the crow appeared, sitting peacefully on the bowsprit as I loaded supplies. That summer it was a frequent visitor to our mooring, appearing from somewhere within the state forest that bordered the cove. Time of day seemed irrelevant, as a sudden cry welcomed a morning coffee or an evening beer after a daysail with friends.

When autumn arrived, after the boat was hauled and placed among its many saddened brethren on the hard, once again the crow appeared as if overseeing the removal of gear and application of shrink wrap to ensure it was done correctly to withstand the approaching New England winter.

Many types of birds occupied the cove off Greenwich Bay in Rhode Island. Sea gulls, ducks, geese, and blue jays were among the species that might adorn that new canvas with a love note—of sorts. But only my frequent visitor had the distinguishing feature of its right wing delicately highlighted with what appeared a dab of white paint.

ILLUSTRATION BY FRITZ SEEGERS

He seemed to be a peaceful creature, so we coexisted through the years. Over the long winter, I would look forward to spring and a shift in the weather when the days warmed enough to sand the brightwork or begin to wax the cabintop. As the sailing season would start anew, I wondered if he would appear and cry out.

The years passed frightfully fast, and my family's sailing adventures were peppered with everyday life. Surgery for me; the death of our beloved dog; a change of jobs for my wife, Julie; moving our primary residence; illness and death of our elderly parents; and our retirements.

Still, we sailed on, kindly assisted at times by friends who enjoyed the day underway and whose help minimized my hauling on the sheets, limiting the possibility of reinjuring my midsection after surgery.

But the coup de grâce was a brain bleed, which impacted my sight and balance. Over many murky months, I took note, counted my blessings, and eventually sold the boat to a young couple with two growing boys. The sale hurt, but I thought it best to pass the adventures along, as someone had previously done for me and Julie.

Yet, I often wondered about my friend, the black crow, until one morning when I was walking our newly acquired rescue dog. I walked him to the end of our block where a tidal marsh rises from a lazy sheltered bay. I looked out over the marsh, its mix of fading straw and budding green colors transitioning from season to season. In the distance, a quiet blue bay gave way to the barrier beach that disappeared into a belt of blue sky. Puffy white clouds raced above, casting quickly moving shadows on the marsh. On the horizon, a single white sail beat to windward, the mainsail fluttering as if waving hello. I wondered, might it be the young couple and their children?

Interrupting my thoughts came the cry of a crow, sitting proudly atop a nearby telephone pole that served a lonely cottage where the dirt road flooded with a full moon and high tide. Yes, I miss the boat and the many days and adventures my family had on her. But the voice of this black crow, perhaps a distant cousin of my friend, reminded me that I'm lucky to have had any adventures underway and even luckier now that I can still walk our dog and see the horizon over the marsh, enjoying all the memories.

Captain Michael A. Cicalese is retired from the U.S. Coast Guard, as the executive director of Mariners House, Boston, and as a columnist for a New England-based newspaper. Read more of his stories in Spindrift, *available at amazon.com. When not writing, he continues to assist seafarers and veterans via several maritime organizations.*

WHAT OFF-SEASON?

WINTER PROJECTS AHEAD

As sailing season comes to an end, it's time to check your sails and canvaswork to prep for winter projects. Sailrite has dozens of free canvas and sail repair tutorials, full enclosure refits and much more. Whatever your boat's fabrication needs, Sailrite has you covered. We're your DIY authority for all things sailing.

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