Good Old Boat

Inspiring hands-on sailors

Issue 150: May/June 2023

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Good Old Boat

Issue 150: May/June 2023

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

ON THE COVER

Kayleen VanderRee and her partner, Tyler Turner, left Campbell River in British Columbia in the summer of 2022 to sail to Mexico on their 1981 Tartan 42, *Footloose*. They are avid surfers and scuba divers, and Tyler is a Paralympic gold medalist in snowboarding. "After hopping down the western coast of California, we made it to the Baja and it felt wild and free in comparison," Kayleen told us. "When we weren't anchored in rolly open anchorages, we were transiting between them with wind on our stern, pushing us south." You can follow their adventures on their YouTube channel, AllAboutSpray.

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The sailing magazine for the rest of us.

Contributing Boats

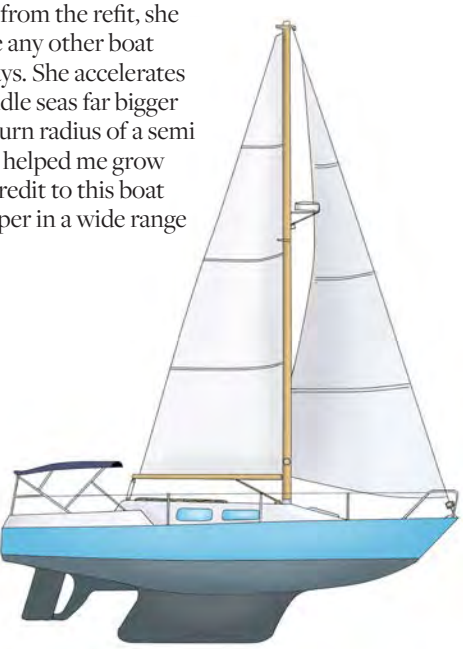
A few boats behind the stories in this issue.

Little Wing, 1974 Jachtbouw Noord Nederland Zeiljacht Seahawk 31

"Besides the emotional attachment I have from the refit, she has so much character, and doesn't sail like any other boat I've sailed before, in both good and bad ways. She accelerates in gusts instead of heeling and she can handle seas far bigger than I ever expected, but she also has the turn radius of a semi truck. The uniqueness of her handling has helped me grow immensely as a sailor, and I'll always give credit to this boat for helping me gain the confidence to skipper in a wide range of conditions."

Designer: J. B. Hoogland
Owners: Kelsey Bonham and Nic Bailey
Home Port: Norfolk, Virginia
Fun Fact: Despite being built with ¼- inch to ½- inch of steel, *Little Wing* displaces the same as a Catalina 30.

Saving a Rare Steel Cruiser on page 20.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRITZ SEEGERS

Plan B, 1982 Canadian Sailcraft 36T Deep Keel

"We love how the boat handles heavier weather, gets her shoulder in and goes!"

Designer: Raymond Wall
Owners: Jill Beis and Graham Collins
Home Port: Halifax, Nova Scotia
Fun Fact: The name does point back to the previous boat, *Secret Plans*, but is actually from the movie *Rare Birds* where the character Fonce says several times, "Plan B, Dave, always have a plan B." It seems like good advice.

Panel Power on page 52.

View From Here

BY DEBORAH BACH

It wasn't two-foot-itis, but bluewater-itis, that sent us on a search for a new boat more than a decade ago.

The desire for a seaworthy cruiser launched a quest that would take us across state and international borders, lead to hope and frustration, fuel a grand adventure, and stretch out for several years before we found the right boat.

When this all started, we had an Islander Freeport 38C that my husband, Marty, had been living on for several years when we met. It was a well-designed and pretty coastal cruiser, but we wanted a slightly larger sailboat that was built to take us to the places we dreamed of going. So we put our boat on the market, and it sold almost immediately. The search was on.

Not long after, we found a Tayana Vancouver 42 for sale at our marina in Seattle. It was a well-built offshore cruiser and we liked its center cockpit, roomy main stateroom, and ample storage. The initial survey went well, but when the boat was hauled out for the out-of-water survey, we were horrified to see that it was covered in large blisters below the waterline — not dozens, but hundreds of them. The boatyard gave us an estimate of $20,000 to fix them. We bailed on the deal.

We spent the next weeks and months scouring boat listings. By then it was summer. The weather was glorious and the spectacular cruising grounds of Puget Sound and the San Juan Islands beckoned. But we were, miserably, boatless in Seattle.

We went to San Francisco twice to look at boats for sale, then to Michigan. All three boats needed considerable work and were more worn out than they looked in online photos. Discouraged, we agreed to take a break from the search and just accept that it was going to take us a while to find the right boat.

In the meantime, we'd ... do what? Go on more hikes, maybe, or on a few road trips. We tried to focus on other activities besides sailing, but both of us longed to get back on the water in our own boat.

Not long into the boat-shopping hiatus, I was visiting my parents in British Columbia when Marty called, excited. He'd found what he thought might be our boat, an Island Packet 38. He'd talked with the owner, and it sounded like the boat was in great shape and had been meticulously cared for. It was also a great price.

"There's just one issue," Marty said. "It's in Mexico."

"NO," I said.

But before long we were in San Carlos for the boat survey and sea trial. All went well, and we flew back a few months later to decommission the boat and prepare for it to be trucked to Seattle. Those weeks in Mexico, an entire saga for another time, were exhilarating, stressful, illuminating, and among our most memorable boating experiences so far.

We renamed the boat *Three Sheets*, sailed it for a couple of years, and then sadly, reluctantly, came to the realization that it wasn't the right boat for us. She was a lovely boat; we just didn't love her. The layout didn't work for us, at least not enough for us to invest the time and money needed to outfit her the way we would have wanted to.

Around the same time, we became friends with a couple who lived on their Passport 40 across the fairway at our marina. As soon as we stepped aboard their boat, there was something about it that spoke to us. We loved the spacious galley and the inviting saloon, the sleek lines and sturdy construction. We knew it was the boat for us.

We bought our own Passport 40 in 2012 and are now nearing the end of an extensive refit. There is of course no perfect boat — every boat is a compromise — but *Rounder* is perfect for us. Among the features I love most in *Good Old Boat* are the boat reviews and accompanying comments from owners about why they love the boats we feature. That perspective might have helped steer us away from boats that wouldn't work for us and toward the one that ultimately did.

But I can't say I regret anything about our boat-search odyssey. Like most worthwhile pursuits in life, the path to the right boat isn't always a linear one. Like finding the love of your life, it can take some time. And that's perfectly fine.

On left, **the author's previous boat, *Camelot*, an Islander Freeport 38C.**

On right, ***Rounder* at anchor off the west coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia.**


ROUNDER

Tribute from a Friend, A Sinking Feeling, and Odes to a Legend

Crossing the Bar

Homer Shannon (1952-2022)

Longtime friend and contributor to *Good Old Boat* Homer Shannon passed over the bar on Sept. 7, 2022 at the age of 70. Homer was one of *Good Old Boat's* first subscribers, going way back to issue #1 in 1998. He made significant contributions of articles and photographs over the years, including technical articles and cruising stories, always delivered in his unique style of self-deprecating humor.

The articles Homer wrote for *Good Old Boat* were: *Cinderella and the Dutchman*, (January/February 2004), *Our Community of Sailors* (Reflections May/June 2011), *Silence those Halyards* (March/April 2015), *Holding Tank Harmony* (September/October 2015), and *Waste? Not* (March/April 2022).

His photographs were featured on the cover of the following issues: *Prime Time,* an Ericson 26 on the Essex River in Massachusetts (July/August 2010) and *Lyrical,* a Tartan 30 in Newburyport, Massachusetts (May/June 2017.)

Homer and his wife, Dee, were known to cruising sailors from Cape Cod, Massachusetts, to Penobscot Bay, Maine. Anywhere and everywhere the couple traveled they made friends by offering hospitality aboard their beloved *Cinderella*, a Bristol 29.9. Whether it was a sumptuous meal (Homer was a great cook), a thoughtful and fact-filled discussion on marine topics, or a friendly round of cribbage during a rainy day, everyone was made to feel welcome and treated like family.

Homer was always prepared to help a fellow sailor with anything, and I mean anything! He and I were once anchored close by in Sandy Bay (Rockport, Massachusetts) and we had finished replacing his nonfunctioning knot meter transducer when we spied a cabin cruiser seemingly adrift. On the bow was a heavyset man straining to lift his only anchor. The lone person looked

Above left, **Homer Shannon and his wife, Dee, embraced the cruising life.**

On right, **Homer and Dee are pictured aboard their beloved Bristol 29.9, *Cinderella*.**

like he was also drifting rapidly toward a heart attack. We took Homer's dinghy over to see if we could help. I climbed aboard and took over hauling the anchor rode and managed to bring up a mess of weed-entangled lobster traps in a chaotic spiral around the anchor. Homer, still in the dinghy, grabbed hold of the mess and carefully unwrapped the Gordian knot. Anyone else would have cut that mess to pieces but Homer, being the consummate gentleman, cared as much for the lobsterman as he did for the fellow on the drifting boat. The now-relaxed boat captain powered his way home. I don't think Homer even so much as mentioned that good deed to anyone.

Last year my wife and I finally scraped up a week for a first short trip to Casco Bay on our Mystic 30. Homer had been too ill to launch *Cinderella* but was very experienced in Maine waters, so we called him for advice on anchorages. Not only did he give us several great ideas, but followed our progress by calculating our time, speed, and weather conditions from home. He called us several times each day to check on us; he was cruising in absentia. It seemed as if he and Dee were on the same cruise, just out of sight. Homer will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

—Jim Grenier
Newburyport, Massachusetts

Bayfield Love

I really enjoyed Benoit Fleury's story of his trip on the St. Lawrence aboard his Bayfield 25 (March/April 2023). I can attest to the capabilities of the small Bayfields. My dad joined the 1997 Newfoundland Flotilla in his Bayfield 23. He left from Beaconsfield Yacht Club (right next to Benoit's home base PCYC) and went as far as Bonavista, Newfoundland. I had the pleasure of sailing with him from Matane to Burgeo via the Magdalen Islands. Great memories!

I've attached a picture (left), taken from another boat, of my dad and his buddy fishing iceberg bits out of the ocean for their drinks that night.

—Matt Koch
Beaconsfield, Quebec

Current Confusion

I wanted to bring something of importance to your attention that may affect many boaters in the Gulf Island area of British Columbia.

We use Navionics on our devices now to plan, or in some cases, to navigate during our cruising endeavors. Last fall we noticed that at least three current prediction stations were taken out of the electronic charts. These are Dodd Narrows, Gabriola Passage, and Porlier Passage. These passages are very well used by commercial as well as recreational boaters, with one pass showing current speeds close to 9 knots.

Another abnormality with Navionics software is an issue with time zones. As one travels north along the British Columbia coast, tide stations start to switch to Alaskan time zones. This happens approximately 186 nautical miles south of the Alaskan border (just north of Calvert Island). This has been an ongoing issue for perhaps five years.

I have notified Navionics of both these issues, with no response. Perhaps notifying your readers and a gentle push from your magazine would help fix the issues.

—Harvey Hall
Nanaimo, British Columbia

Good Old Boat **contributor Marty McOmber shot this image of a buoy marking the entrance to Eagle Harbor on the east side of Bainbridge Island, Washington, where boaters can enjoy views of the downtown Seattle skyline to the east and the Olympic Mountains rising up to the west.**

continued on page 56

Canadian Sailcraft 30

A quick racer/cruiser from Canada

BY BERT VERMEER

When Jack and Marilyn Williams moved west from their home province of Ontario in 1977, settling near Victoria on Vancouver Island, one of their priorities was to get out on the surrounding ocean.

They sailed their first boat, an O'Day 27 purchased in 1978, extensively through the spectacular cruising grounds of British Columbia, including a voyage out to Barkley Sound on Vancouver Island's wild west coast. With an appetite for more distant horizons, the couple decided they wanted a bigger boat. A friend of theirs sailed a Canadian Sailcraft 36, a significantly larger boat and a bit more than they were prepared to take on. But they were impressed by Canadian Sailcraft design and workmanship and found a 1986 CS 30 that met all their expectations.

Jack and Marilyn were soon the owners of *Musashi*, named for a historical Japanese folk hero of the samurai era — an author, artist, philosopher, and swordsman. An artistic rendering of the hero remains framed on the cabin bulkhead.

With *Musashi* their sailing life expanded, including a 1991 Vancouver Island circumnavigation, a 30-day, 800-nautical mile adventure proving the CS 30 capable of open ocean seas and winds. Winds on the west coast can easily reach 40 knots at headlands, with whitecapped following seas under blue skies — a sailor's dream. In the following years, they cruised Washington state's Puget Sound, the Broughton Archipelago to the north, and the Canadian Gulf Islands.

Design

Leaning toward the IOR-influenced designs of the 1980s, the CS 30 is essentially a slippery hull that also features a comfortable cruising interior. Created by transplanted British designer Tony Castro, the CS 30 complemented the Canadian Sailcraft lineup between the 27 and 33. With an extensive background in developing race boats to current rules, Castro created a go-fast cruising boat that excels on all points of sail. A slim bow, beamy midship, and tapered stern all point to a hull that will sail well on the wind. The tall rig and deep keel complement that ability, and Castro

Above right, ***Musashi's*** **stern carries an abundance of safety gear, plus a barbecue, swim ladder, anchor rode reel, and bimini with solar panel.**

Next page, **the CS 30 sports a fairly flat sheer, raked bow, reverse transom, and a tall rig. Jack and Marilyn purchased a new full-batten mainsail and 110% genoa. These, along with an asymmetrical spinnaker in a sock and a seldom-used 150% genoa, complete the sail inventory. Lazy-jacks make easy work of lowering the mainsail.**

LINE DRAWINGS BY FRITZ SEEGERS

Canadian Sailcraft 30

Builder	Canadian Sailcraft
Designer	Tony Castro
LOA	30'0"
LWL	25'5"
Beam	10'3"
Draft	5'6"
Displacement	8,000 lbs
Ballast	3,440 lbs
Sail Area	462 sq ft
Sail Area/Displ	18.54
Ballast/Displ	43%
Displ/LWL Ratio	217
Comfort Ratio	20.79
Capsize Screening No	2.05


MUSASHI

Halyards are led aft from the mast base through turning blocks.

designed both wing-keel and shoal-draft keel versions.

Construction

Canadian Sailcraft had a well-earned reputation for quality construction and finish. The company built 500 CS 30s at its factory in Brampton, Ontario, between 1984 and 1990. The single-skin hull with balsa-cored deck produced a comparatively light hull strengthened by a bonded fiberglass substructure under teak-and-holly floor panels.

The hull/deck joint is an inward-turned flange bolted through the anodized toerail on 4-inch centers with butyl tape used as a sealant. Interestingly, while most aluminum toerails of this era were slotted, the CS 30 has evenly spaced holes that serve as handy attachment points for turning blocks or fenders.

The 3,440-pound lead fin keel draws 5 feet 6 inches. The optional wing keel adds another 140 pounds with a 4-foot 6-inch draft, and the shoal keel is 400 pounds heavier with a 4-foot 3-inch draft. All three keel options are attached directly to the hull with a double row of stainless steel bolts. There is no keel stub as part of the hull, which results in a very shallow bilge sump under the floorboards, too shallow for the installation of a standard immersion-style bilge pump. A factory-installed manual pump is easily accessible from the helm position in the cockpit locker. Jack reports that the sump is generally dry, but with such a small capacity in the bilge before the floorboards start floating, I would install a remote bilge pump with a high-water alarm.

Deck and Rigging

The Isomat keel-stepped, double-spreader anodized aluminum mast has all shrouds terminating at single chainplates set well inboard of the toerail. This leaves a clear, unobstructed passage forward. However, without lower shrouds spaced fore and aft there is a risk of mast pumping in heavy seas. A jackstay has been provided as a preventive measure. The

The bow is clean, with ground tackle stowed in a locker and cleats mounted quite far aft and near the rails.

Above, **the use of numerous fiberglass moldings and composite panels is evident in this view of the saloon and forward cabin — most significantly, the pan that forms the sole and berth foundations. Note the molding that covers the bulkhead/deck join.**

On left, **a dedicated nav station is unusual in a 30-foot boat; the swing-out stool permits easier access to the quarter berth.**

chainplates are bolted to the internal bulkhead, tucked behind removable fiberglass covers. On our review boat there was some evidence of water leaks in this area, so sealant around the chainplates should be checked regularly.

The mast has an integrated spinnaker track on the forward side, with control lines for the car included.

The compact galley has everything a cook needs to prepare tasty meals, and the U-shape provides security in a seaway.

The backstay is secured to a chainplate mounted low on the slightly reversed transom. Adding an adjuster would require some thought, as the attachment point to the chainplate is almost out of reach. A remote hydraulic system would work well here.

The deck has a molded non-skid texture that has survived very well over the years. Contrary to the tradition of the day, the cabintop handrails are stainless steel, not high-maintenance teak. *Musashi* has four opening portlights on each side of the cabin trunk, a large deck

However, without bearings on the car, it would be difficult to move under load. All running rigging is internal to the mast and exits at the base, turning out to deck organizers and aft to line stoppers with Lewmar 30 self-tailing winches. This is a perfect setup for the cruising family or singlehanded sailor, but not ideal for the racer as it's going to get crowded in the cockpit.

The stem fitting at the bow is cast aluminum, incorporating a single bow roller and fairleads for docklines. The anchor locker lid has a molded arch at the forward edge for an anchor shaft reaching back from the roller. Unfortunately, this setup does not lend itself to easy installation of a windlass, something Jack is seriously considering as his next project.

Plumbing for a shower is included in the head, which is simple to keep clean. With an opening port and deck hatch, ventilation is good.

hatch over the V-berth, another over the main cabin, and a smaller hatch over the head. For inclement weather, a single Dorade vent provides circulation in the main cabin. This is more than adequate ventilation for a boat sailed in Canada, where it's more important to keep the rain out than let a tropical breeze in! That said, I am somewhat surprised that an opening port was not installed in the galley to help ventilate cooking moisture.

Sail tracks long enough for virtually any size headsail hug the cabin trunk, allowing for close sheeting angles. The mainsheet traveler is mounted on the cabintop over the companionway sea hood, keeping the traveler out of the cockpit. Although the cabintop would not be considered cluttered, the multiple hatches, sail control lines, and sea hood leave little room for feet.

Unlike more modern designs with shallow cockpits (allowing for tall, roomy aft cabins), the CS 30 has a wonderfully deep and secure cockpit. Seating is long and wide, with cutouts to accommodate the 36-inch wheel mounted on a guarded pedestal. Coamings are tall enough to provide excellent back support. Although the full height bridge deck ensures that any seas flooding into the cockpit won't run into the cabin, it does make climbing into the cabin a bit more cumbersome.

For storage and access, there are three cockpit lockers, as well as a deep portside locker in the cockpit, that the average person can easily climb into for servicing the back end of the engine, transmission, hot water tank, and various electrical paraphernalia.

The shallow bilge doesn't allow for much water accumulation, nor installation of a large pump (note the small black pickup). The keel bolts, however, are easily inspected and adjusted.

Accommodations

As I climbed over the bridge deck and into the companionway, my first impression was of bright, efficient use of space, with off-white interior panels that complement the teak trim.

The U-shaped galley is immediately to port. A deep single sink with both pressure and hand-pumped water is near the centerline. A good-sized icebox is next to it against the hull. For longer sailing adventures, Jack has added a portable Dometic cooler/freezer. A gimbled two-burner propane range with oven is against the hull, with storage behind it. There is also excellent storage in a cabinet under the countertop.

To starboard is a small navigation station with a pull-out stool. There is limited room for navigational instruments, but the chart table will hold a typical-size chart book. Aft of the table is a double-wide, and very long, open quarter berth. Where many quarter berths are restricted in width by the engine compartment, on the CS 30 the engine is forward of this berth, and the mattress stretches all the way to the cockpit locker on the port side. There is certainly no sitting headroom under the cockpit sole, but lots of shoulder room.

The starboard settee can be pulled out into a double berth. The 30-gallon freshwater tank is located underneath. Additional storage is available behind the seatbacks. A fold-down table on the bulkhead easily seats four. Handholds include oiled teak rails that run the length of the cabin under

Access to the engine compartment is behind the bottom half of the companionway stairs, which are built into a large, removable fiberglass box. The Beta 20 has all major servicing points at the front of the engine, and access is excellent.

the portlights, and a stainless steel post at the galley island.

Moving forward, the head is a separate compartment to starboard. Opposite it is a substantial hanging locker. The locker door performs double duty, also serving as a door for the V-berth, which is relatively small. Although there is a fill-in panel to create a wide mattress at the shoulders, the berth is relatively short for a 6-foot person.

Mechanical

Although the CS 30 was originally equipped with a two-cylinder Volvo Penta 2002 18-hp diesel engine, *Musashi* is now powered with a three-cylinder Beta 20 installed in 2020. Jack also replaced the 18-gallon aluminum fuel tank mounted behind the engine and the hot water tank in the cockpit locker.

Heating the interior to a comfortable level is critical in British Columbia, particularly in the shoulder seasons. An Espar diesel forced air furnace was added during a recent upgrade.

The electrical panel and battery switch are located behind the companionway, easily visible and accessible. Two 6-volt AGM house batteries are located under the portside settee, with two 12-volt starter batteries under the starboard settee. A solar panel atop the bimini frame over the aft end of the cockpit keeps the batteries topped up.

Underway

Sailing conditions were challenging when I climbed aboard *Musashi*, with not a breath of wind on a calm fall day. Control under power was exactly as expected, the deep rudder in the prop wash providing precise directional control even at low speed. Backing down was dead straight. I was expecting prop walk in one direction or the other, but that was not evident. Jack cruises at about 2,500 rpm with 5.5 knots of boat speed. Engine noise in the cockpit was acceptable.

Motoring out over mirrored water, we found a patch of wind, then hoisted the main and pulled out the genoa. The Harken roller furling performed well. Both the full-batten main and 110% genoa were about 5 years old, with excellent shape. *Musashi* accelerated smoothly in the light 7 to 9 knots of breeze, heeling nicely and pointing well. The cockpit coaming on the leeward side was ideal for watching sail trim and reaching the genoa sheet winch. She tacked easily through 100 degrees and would likely do better with a bit more wind. The Whitlock geared steering was very sensitive to the touch, with excellent feedback and no noticeable slack — no cables to adjust or maintain. The wind was too light to cause any weather helm, but Jack reports that even in heavier air, with the sails trimmed properly, the CS 30 can go hands-off for long distances.

Although we didn't have an opportunity to sail through any seas, Jack and Marilyn report that *Musashi* had no undesirable characteristics while sailing in ocean waves during their Vancouver Island circumnavigation. The boat was not squirrelly in heavy following seas, and they were quite confident in her capabilities.

The PHRF ratings for most fleets in the U.S. and Canada are 150 seconds per mile. A J/30's numbers are very close at 144, while an O'Day 30's are around 189.

Conclusion

I believe the CS 30 is exactly what Tony Castro intended all those years ago: a fast coastal cruiser designed without the constraints of racing rules. Fast under all points of sail, efficient under power, and nimble under both, the CS 30 exemplifies quality design and production. Fastidiously maintained, *Musashi* is a fine example of the heyday of volume production boats. I would have no hesitation taking this good old boat for extended coastal cruising, including open ocean sails off the West Coast of British Columbia.

A recent search for CS 30s for sale found only two, priced at $23,000 and $25,000.

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

CS 30 Owner Comments

I own a 1985 CS 30 shoal-draft version with a 150% roller-furling genoa. That and the mainsail work well up to about 12 knots of true wind before the boat feels overpowered with excessive weather helm. In the 12- to 20-knot range, I furl the genoa to the size of a 110% genoa. I also put a reef in the main. The boat is quite stiff. At about 45 degrees of heel, the rudder loses grip in the water and the boat rounds up.

I consider the build quality better than the typical production boat such as a Catalina, but not as good as top-level boats. The boat is probably on a par with a C&C, Pearson, Sabre, or Tartan. The hull is on the light side and it has more sail area than most 30-footers, so I consider it more of a bay boat or a coastal cruiser than an oceangoing boat. The boatyard needs to be careful in the placement of the jack stands, as the fiberglass is on the thin side and there are no solid bulkheads aft of the companionway.

The packing gland on the propeller shaft is hard to adjust unless you remove the rear side of the engine compartment. The batteries are located under the galley sink, making them somewhat hard to remove or replace.

I once had a leak between the keel and the bottom of the boat due to the sealing material deteriorating after 30 years of use. The keel had to be dropped and new sealant applied. The boat is susceptible to gelcoat blistering. When I purchased the boat in 1993, the previous owner had just had the old gelcoat removed and a barrier coat applied. I found that if I kept the boat in the water year-round, some blistering reappeared. I fixed those spots and started hauling the boat out each winter and have had no further problems.

—Wade Moler,
Linthicum, Maryland

I am the owner of a 1988 CS 30. She has the deep keel and points very well. I sailed for many years with a 150% genoa, but when I purchased new sails I opted for a 135 as I was often sailing with a partially furled #1. These boats like to be sailed fairly flat. They love 10 to 15 degrees of heel, and you will easily see why if you get overpowered. She isn't generally considered tender, but finding the right amount of sail area is key. The bottom is on the flat side forward, which can lead to some pounding when the going gets rough.

In my opinion, the boat is very well built. There are plenty of articles about blistering of the gelcoat, but I did an epoxy bottom job on her and have never experienced blistering.

I like the cockpit shape, and in particular the height of the cockpit seatbacks. The coaming isn't the most comfortable, but the trade-off is the comfort of the cockpit seats.

The fact that one has to step up onto the cockpit seats to get around the helm isn't a big inconvenience. I bought a Lewmar folding steering wheel, which is absolutely wonderful when lounging in the cockpit at the dock or cleaning the boat.

—Mark Bridges,
Shediac Bay Yacht Club,
Shediac, New Brunswick

There is very little exterior wood to maintain, only the companionway trim. There is no core in the hull or the

Slip Stream **is a 1985 model, Hull #25 of around 500 built between 1984 and 1990.**

Mark's wife, Carole, skippers *Silhouette* in their home waters of New Brunswick.

stringers, except the one behind the holding tank. Only the deck and coach roof have core. The keel is lead, so it doesn't rust. There is no core in the rudder (the bottom is hollow and sacrificial in case of grounding). You do need a drain hole for winter storage, however.

I like the ease of regular maintenance and the build strength — after two groundings, one at more than 5 knots hitting a vertical rock to a dead stop with no hull damage, I can attest to that. There's very good engine access and singlehanding is easy. The interior is spacious, with standing headroom everywhere.

The space behind the nav table and breaker panel is very limited. It's hard to overstate how difficult it is to run new pipes and wiring. There's very little space between the hull and interior finishing. If you like to tinker with systems, spend a day drilling multiple holes in the fiberglass stringers on the port side (remember, there is no core to rot; water actually circulates in the stringers anyway) that go from the galley sink all the way to the head sink, and are large enough to run wires. I did manage to add an electric bilge pump, forced air heater, modern autopilot, and an inverter, but it required a lot of creative use of space and drilling large holes through multiple layers.

The extremely pointy V-berth is only usable for a single typical adult. Most owners use the rear double berth.

—Benoit Grégoire,
Montreal, Quebec

When we were shopping for a sailboat in 2001, the beautiful lines and features of this boat captured our attention. However, the 5-foot 5-inch fin keel was a concern for our home waters in northern Minnesota. After consulting with Mars Metals in Burlington, Ontario, we decided to purchase the boat and modify the keel. We reduced the draft to 4 feet 3 inches (with a chain saw) and added a bulb custom made by Mars Metals.

The hull has remained solid after 38 years, with minimal blistering. The bilge is shallow, making it difficult to maintain a dry bilge. Occasionally the deck-and-hull joint will leak, especially when beating to windward in heavy winds. The stanchions would be improved with a better design for connecting to the deck.

—Paul and Diane Losinski,
Cold Spring, Minnesota

Below left and right, **Benoit Grégoire's *Exode Urbain* is well equipped for cruising with a swim ladder, a life ring ready for deployment, and a barbecue grill.**

Cinema at Sea

A DIY teak box built onto a compression post enables movie-watching in style.

BY MARISSA NEELY

When we bought *Avocet* in 2018, we knew we were in for a world of projects. From doing a total external refit, rewiring the entire boat, and building our LiFePo4 battery bank to items as small as redoing the upholstery, we have touched nearly every inch of this boat. Yet some of the most impactful projects have been the simplest.

When choosing to live aboard, it may seem like you have to embrace a simple life and leave creature comforts on shore, but that's not always the case. You weigh what is important to you and welcome aboard most of those things, making room for what you deem necessary — and removing what you don't. *Avocet* was fairly comfortable from the outset and offered ample space for our few belongings, but even as proper

The movie enthusiasts use their mini projector almost every day.

Above left, **the teak box Chris and Marissa built does double duty, also providing a space to mount an oil lamp.**

Above right, **a piece of line holds the door open at the perfect angle for the projector.**

cinephiles, we could not justify mounting a television aboard, so we found a simple and aesthetically pleasing solution — after a quick modification, of course.

Despite our boat's carefully thought-out footprint and accommodations, the previous owner had added some of his own touches that didn't serve us in any way. One of these was a lamp, complete with shade, that my husband deemed "hideous" during our first five minutes aboard. It stuck out like a sore thumb, protruding from the compression post with no real purpose, as the light it emitted was weak and better substituted by the overhead light directly above it. It also used AC power, which meant we wouldn't be able to use it offshore without sucking a lot of power. Times had changed, and it had to go. But in its absence, what would replace it?

Chris and I researched what other boat owners had done with their compression posts and came across a lot of great ideas, such as wrapping the post with three-strand rope (which our cat, Cleo, would surely love). But after some consideration, we decided to do something unique that would also give our scrap teak a new purpose.

We got to work measuring and sketching out the concept for a teak box that would wrap partially around the compression post, covering the spot where the lamp was once mounted. This was not just a box, though. One of our gimballing oil lamps would be mounted on it, adding a touch of class and ambience, especially when hosting large parties around *Avocet*'s table, which seats up to 10 comfortably. Even with no additional guests or crew, a romantic, lamplit dinner is always a pleasure. And though having a proper spot for one of our oil lamps would be wonderful, the real star of the project is what would sit inside the box itself.

Beneath the oil lamp, we created a compartment that folds out to hold our pocket projector, which projects onto a stowable screen that hangs on the bulkhead

forward of our settees in front of the opening to the V-berth. To make life aboard even better, Chris installed USB outlets directly into our table, which is less than a foot from the compression post, so the projector can plug right into them without any unnecessary extension cords strung about the cabin.

The project took a total of four hours using materials we already had, plus a latch and hinge we purchased for the fold-down door. If you are considering a similar project, here is how we did it:

First, we measured how long our oil lamp was, including the smoke cap, then measured what we thought would be a suitable door to accommodate our roughly 7-inch-long projector. With these two measurements, Chris could make sure the box would be long enough to cover the mounting holes left over from the (hideous) lamp, but not too big that it would prevent us from using the compression post as a grab-hold while underway.

Since the compression post was round and we needed to make a box with 90-degree angles, Chris created three wedges that wrapped around the post with semicircle cuts that butted up to the post and flat outside edges that gave us a way to mount the box to the post. He spaced the wedges along the span of the box lengthwise (one each located on the top, bottom, and middle), attaching them by using the threaded holes in the post left over from the old lamp. Then Chris measured for the teak planking that we would use to construct the box and varnish on their outside surfaces.

Using some nice brass countersunk screws, we attached the teak planks to the wedges, giving us the nearly completed box. Then Chris cut the front-facing side of the planks to make a fold-down door for the projector. We connected the three pieces of teak he cut out by attaching two 4-inch-long pieces of teak across them on the top inside edge of the door, which also made a good place for the front of the projector to butt up against when in use. A door is nothing without a hinge and latch, so we visited Mike's Consignment Shop in Ventura, California, to find a hinge-and-pull type latch that would nicely accentuate our work.

With the pieces needed to finish the job, we mounted the box to the pole, then cracked open a can of our favorite spar varnish, Man O'War, applying seven coats to give the teak a dark and warm honey tone. When the varnish was dry, we installed our oil lamp and used a piece of line to hold the lid of the door at the perfect angle for the projector to display on our screen.

This was one of the very first carpentry projects Chris tackled, and he was armed with only a Harbor Freight hand saw, jigsaw, and Makita drill and impact driver. The simple box was a great way for Chris to cut his literal teeth (saw joke) at woodworking — which he subsequently introduced me to — and set him up for success with the numerous carpentry projects that followed.

In retrospect, we would have either bunged the brass screws or forgone screws entirely, opting instead for a wood glue, which would give the box a more finished look. Additionally, we would have used a router to eliminate the harsh 90-degree angles; that step is now a routine part of our woodworking projects, but at the time it was very foreign to us.

It's been four years since we installed the projector box, and we use it nearly every day. Although a simple project, it has made a significant impact on our life aboard, ensuring we get to watch our favorite shows in style. Perhaps the best part is that we don't have any permanently mounted screens or boxes lying about when they are not in use. Everything can be stowed at a moment's notice, so if the sea is calling, we can pack everything up for safe travels to wherever the wind blows.

Keep your eyes peeled — the *Avocet* theater might be coming to an anchorage near you. Just follow the smell of popcorn!

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

Saving a Rare Steel Cruiser

When the pandemic scuttles her study abroad plans, a college student undertakes an extensive boat refit.

BY KELSEY BONHAM

You might think that after growing up on old boats, I would have opted for something newer when I got a boat of my own. The opposite was true.

I spent a lot of time on a big, fat, gaff-rigged wooden ketch as a kid. My bunk was practically in the anchor locker and my feet often shared a blanket with the muddy chain. The teak decks overhead leaked no matter how much oakum my dad stuffed in between the planks. Around age 10, I was climbing up the mast to varnish or crawling behind the engine to hand a wire to someone on the other side. Launched in 1963, *Sea Spirit* was a constant project. She was slow, an incredible challenge to dock, and lacked most of the amenities that are nearly ubiquitous on modern vessels.

These experiences may have quickly led others in the direction of shiny new plastic boats, but growing up on *Sea Spirit* only inspired my love of the opposite. Because despite

The exterior of the author's 1974 steel boat, before the extensive refit began.

the gargantuan effort required to keep her afloat, there was never a day on the water that she didn't turn heads, and whenever we pulled into marinas all the kids begged their parents to let them go see our "pirate ship."

I knew that someday when I got a boat of my own, I wanted her to stand out like *Sea Spirit* did, and what better to accomplish that end than another good old boat?

Before the pandemic, I was deliberating about whether to commit to a study abroad program in Russia or one in Trinidad for the spring of 2021. My dad suggested that if I went to Trinidad, I could spend the following summer sailing home to the Chesapeake — the thinking was that I could find a boat and have a family friend deliver it to Trinadad so I could sail it back. Never mind the logistics involved; I was sold.

In March 2020, two months after I committed to the Trinidad program, the pandemic sent me home to Maryland and I went searching for my boat. I scoured classifieds and drove around yards, eyeing "for sale" signs from the safety of the car. And then, through sheer happenstance, the boat found me. My family was selling a farm in southern Maryland, and the buyer asked if the tractor could be included in the sale. My dad, knowing I was in the market for a boat, said they might be able to work out a trade — if the buyer just so happened to have one. He did.

***Little Wing*'s cockpit was a work zone as the refit got underway in spring 2020.**

I saw the boat once before the trade was finalized, and only from the outside because the cabin had been locked and the key lost nearly two decades prior. But from a first glance she fit my criteria — quirky — so I went for it. Plus, I have a soft spot for yard queens, and this was my opportunity to save one.

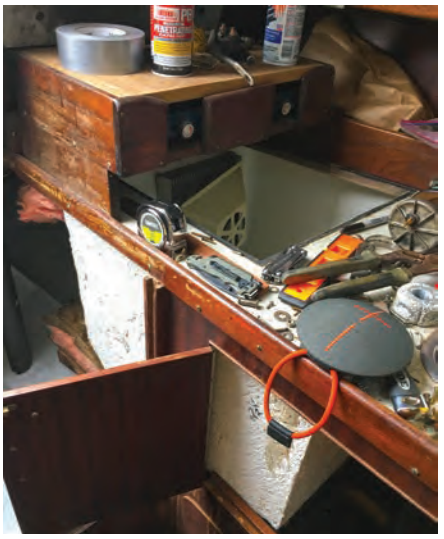
As it quickly became apparent, the boat that I now owned was far quirkier than I had imagined. Built in 1974 in the Netherlands by a company that only existed for a few years, she is 30 feet of steel and designed for ice. Her overbuilt rail and rough edges remind me of a ferry, and her hard chines vaguely resemble those of an Opti. She has a shoal-draft full keel that measures over a foot wide at the leading edge and a barn door rudder. And after sitting on the hard for 20 years, nothing aboard worked — not the engine, the electrical, the plumbing, nothing. I already had mental plans to take this nameless piece of steel on some sort of adventure, study abroad or not, so the full-scale refit was on.

Phase One: Demolition

Step one was finding a spigot for the power washer. That ate up 30 minutes, providing my first lesson in the nature of DIY projects. With the deck free of its thick layer of pine needles and bird poop, I began to formulate a plan, starting with throwing out moldy gear, evicting wasps, and mapping out internal systems. After discovering that the manufacturer of the boat's head no longer existed and parts would be impossible to come by, the head was among the first items to go, along with the rest of the decades-old plumbing.

The old holding tank beneath the V-berth was, for reasons unknown to me, full of what I initially identified as rainwater. With pump-out services unavailable, I used a crème brûlée torch sourced from my family's kitchen to loosen the uppermost hose and a siphon to drain it enough that I could lift the plastic box, then I dumped what remained into a bucket. At that point, it became apparent it probably wasn't rainwater.

The icebox was also on the docket for removal. Initially, I



Top to bottom on left, **the boat's original icebox was glued to the underside of the galley counter.**

The icebox was cut in half and removed.

All of the 1970s-era insulation around the icebox was removed as well.

hoped to remove the ancient glue barely holding it to the underside of the galley counter and seal it back in, but even after ripping out its thick layer of insulation it was stuck on a steel rib and refused to come out. In a moment of frustration, I cut the thing in half with a Fein Multimaster tool. Later, I chose a Dometic electric cooler secured in front of the engine step as a refrigerator. My dad and I selected the cheapest utility tub at Home Depot, sealed it in place where the icebox used to be, and designated it as dry goods storage.

Rotten wooden bunks, veneer siding, and insulation were removed as well, sometimes violently. The 30 gallons of diesel that had mysteriously found its way into the water tank, a compartment in the keel, were removed with a hand pump. The corroded 10-gallon fuel tank loosely supported by plywood and nails was discarded without a second thought, as were the two batteries that my dad and I failed to revive. Then there was the engine.

This rust bucket of an engine was a 2-cylinder iron block diesel with a crank start and a flywheel about 2 feet wide, weighing around 600 pounds, and my dad and I were not inclined to pay for a crane. The plan we devised involved strapping a come-along to the boom, lifting the engine with that, and then using the boom to swing it over the side. The trouble was, the cabin lacks a sliding overhead hatch, so once the engine was hanging in the companionway, it had to be muscled out the opening. But the plan worked, even if it was nerve-wracking.

Phase Two: Reassembly

With the cabin now essentially empty, I painted the storage lockers and inside the engine compartment, working bow to stern. Despite warnings on forums and paint data sheets proclaiming that exposed steel would rust within 24 to 48 hours, most of the exposed steel I found was only lightly rusted or rust-free, save a few unfortunate corners. I still haven't figured out exactly why that was, but my guess is that the entire hull was flame-sprayed with zinc or even aluminum, a critical step in the boat's construction that may be the only reason she was salvageable at all.

Most compartments had at least some surface rust, however, so I started by removing as much as I could with a wire brush and treating it with Ospho, a rust converter. The next day, I applied a coat of Rust-Oleum clean metal primer, and the next, Bilgekote. I worked in phases, so on any given day I would be painting one compartment, priming the next, and treating rust in the third.

With the interior mostly painted, it was time to start reassembling everything. We hired a welder to add some through-hulls, cut a hole for a shorepower plug, and addressed some other odds and ends. The nice thing about steel boats is that you can create holes or attach accessories just about anywhere — if you can weld.

One of my dad's top priorities was getting the Dometic air conditioner in, so we installed it in one of the storage compartments and later ran a vent next to the mast support. We ordered a custom 30-gallon aluminum fuel tank that was oriented vertically to fit into a space closer to the boat's center of gravity, rather than far astern as the old one had been. Despite all our careful measurements, we still had to grind off a few millimeters of a steel rib to squeeze it in. We also installed the binnacle — which came unattached to the boat — back into the cockpit and wired a B&G Vulcan chart plotter on top of it.

Getting the new engine in was more nerve-wracking than taking the old one out. We had no desire to bump the brand new 30-hp, 3-cylinder Volvo diesel against the hull, so although we used the same operation in reverse to move it aboard, we were much more cautious. Luckily, it was less than half the weight of the original, so maneuvering it into the cabin was far easier. Once it was inside, we snapped more than a few drill bits and taps creating new holes for the engine mounts in the inch-thick steel engine rails. Then my dad adjusted the mounts while I crawled behind the engine with a feeler gauge to align it with the new shaft.

After a full day, we thought we finally got it aligned, only to realize that the engine was so steeply angled that it appeared to be nosediving into the bilge. After some deliberation and close inspection of part numbers, it became apparent that the wrong transmission had been delivered — we

Far left, **the old engine was removed by strapping a come-along to the boom, lifting the engine with it, and swinging the engine over the side of the boat.**

Right, **the empty engine compartment after the old engine was removed.**

ordered one with a straight angle but had received one with a 7-degree down angle.

While waiting for the correct transmission to arrive, I worked on painting the exterior. Sandblasting and starting from bare metal was not an option, given the $20,000 estimate we got, so instead, I sanded and crossed my fingers that the bottom layers of paint were well adhered. My research suggested that I should use Amercoat 235, a two-part epoxy primer made by PPG, for areas on the outside of the hull that lacked paint. I called dozens of distributors to locate it and had many conversations that included a representative asking what shipyard I was associated with. I ultimately drove a four-hour round trip to get my hands on 2 gallons of it.

After applying the Amercoat 235 where necessary, I rolled and tipped the freeboards a bright sky blue — Pettit's EZ-Poxy Bikini Blue, to stand out — and painted the bottom with steel-safe Pacifica Plus. The night before the launch, while she was hanging in the straps, a mere four months after the project began, I frantically scraped and painted the bottom of the keel and put her name on: *Little Wing*.

The Launch and First Sea Trial

With fresh paint (minus the deck), a new drivetrain, fuel tank, air conditioner, and a starting battery, *Little Wing* went back into the water for the first time in 20 years. With the straps still hovering beneath the hull, I climbed aboard and was greeted by 6 inches of water in the cabin and a firehose gushing from the V-berth. She was promptly lifted back out of the water. Soaking wet and on the verge of tears, I found the culprit. We had put new seacocks on all the through-hulls that didn't have plumbing attached yet, and one of them was too large to be screwed on without removing the handle. When the handle was put back on, it was 90 degrees off, meaning that all the times I double- and triple-checked that it was closed, it was actually wide open. I pumped all the water out, closed the offending seacock, and *Little Wing* was carefully lowered back into the water — with no leaks.

The engine compartment looks fresh after being rust-treated, primed with Rust-Oleum, and painted with Bilgekote.

A few days later, my dad and I moved her up to Annapolis from southern Maryland, a long-awaited moment. I had been sleeping on the couch of my family's increasingly barren farmhouse until the agreed move-out date with the buyer, then in a hotel behind a gas station for the month afterward, and I was looking forward to a change of scenery.

It was quite the sea trial — despite being August on the Chesapeake Bay, a stiff northerly breeze brought temperatures in the 50s and some serious chop. But after an overnight stop at Solomons Island to wait out the weather, we arrived safely and Annapolis became *Little Wing*'s home for the remainder of the refit.

Phase Three: Rigging, Systems, and Everything Else

For the duration of the fall, I lived aboard my family's new boat (*Sea Spirit*'s fiberglass replacement) one marina over from *Little Wing*, worked on the *Woodwind* charter schooners to support my West Marine habit, and took my college classes remotely. My enthusiasm for academia fell precipitously as the pressure to finish the

After much work, *Little Wing* is put back into the water for the first time in 20 years.

refit increased. I started the semester judiciously attending my online classes at a real table with a notebook in hand and ended it listening to lectures like podcasts while I painted the deck. I had to email a professor at one point asking to be excused from class for a morning appointment to get the mast pulled — luckily, all of my professors were supportive of the project, and he found humor in the absurdity of the request.

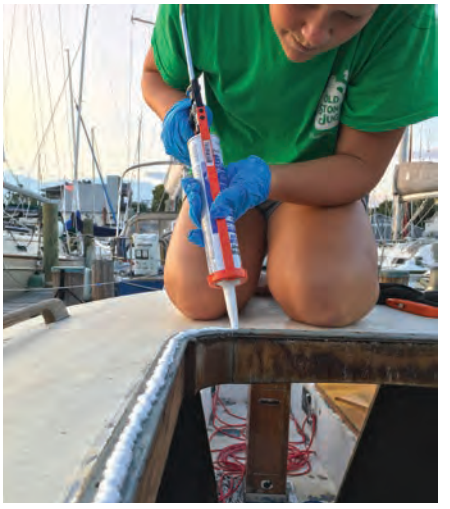
After the mast was pulled, I was fortunate to be working with a rigging company run by family friends who allowed me to come to the shop and do some of the labor myself to reduce costs. I installed mast steps while they internalized the halyards, replaced the standing and running rigging, and wired masthead electronics — OK, yes, they did most of it.

I frustratingly sprained my ankle on the *Woodwind* in September, forcing me to focus on less labor-intensive tasks for a while. I laundry-stripped the cushions in a bathtub, serviced the winches, rebedded the hatches, replaced the handrails, and crutched my way into chandleries to hunt down miscellaneous parts while my dad wired up the lights, outlets, and other electronics, and reinstalled the plumbing. He added four house batteries and strapped them down to a marine plywood platform underneath a small nav desk that he built in the quarter berth. The dish rack, with its original Dutch china, was moved from one side of the cabin to the other to make room for his flip-down electric panel design.

A friend sewed dividers from a shower curtain to replace the cumbersome door previously separating the head from the V-berth and saloon. My dad and I settled on a Plastimo flexible water tank to drop down into the compartment in the keel, because painting the old one with water-safe materials and properly resealing it would have been nearly impossible. I got new sails cut by North Sails — a main and a 130% genoa, both decently heavy with two reef points, and thrifted a sail cover.

Painting the deck spanned most of the fall, as I worked piecemeal around rain and dew. Unlike on the freeboards and bottom, there was a significant amount of bare steel, so I opted to roll two coats of Amercoat 235 over the whole thing. After applying the first section of polyurethane topcoat to the starboard side of the cabin, I returned the following morning to find it hadn't adhered well. I paused the operation until I could find a paint stripper that would remove it without affecting the epoxy Amercoat underneath, and Citristrip was the winning candidate.

I could have sanded it off, sure, but it was my aversion to any excess sanding in the first place that led to the polyurethane failing to stick.



On left, **the freshly painted freeboards pop with a bright sky blue.**

On right, **the author applies sealant before reinstalling the hatches.**

***Little Wing*'s revamped saloon looks cozy and inviting.**

I sucked it up and sanded the second time around, and the problem was resolved. Applying the non-skid, the last step, took the longest of all of the painting stages due to the amount of taping involved, and it wasn't completed until the last minute.

The Final Days

In the final days of the refit, we came to terms with the fact that if I really intended to go somewhere before I had to return to school, I had to leave now. Between four months spent working on the hard and five months working in the water, it was now December of 2020. *Little Wing* was essentially a new boat aside from the hull and mast, with all new running gear, fresh paint on almost every square inch, the latest electronics, and entirely new electrical, plumbing, and rigging. Still, she wasn't done — the new veneer siding wasn't stained, random corners of the deck remained without a topcoat, the handrails weren't varnished, and above all, I had barely actually tested anything. I'd never anchored her, reefed the sails, set up the radar or autopilot, or used the VHF for more than a single test call.

But the choice was made for me. My study abroad program had long ago been canceled and I had already submitted the paperwork to instead take the spring 2021 semester off from school. I had until August 2021 to go cruising and get back in time for my senior year, and if I waited any longer, I wouldn't get far. So on Jan. 4, 2021, I stayed up until 4 a.m. moving tools and scraps onto dry land and stowing clothes, cookware, and other equipment in their place.

The following morning, months behind the rest of the snowbirds but less than a year since I first laid eyes on the boat, I officially christened her and cast off the lines with a friend. On the cold winter day that we left, I had only ever sailed her twice. Maybe it was the lack of sleep, maybe it was the cold, or maybe it was the fear that I didn't allow myself to linger on, but it took a while to register that I'd actually cast off. It didn't hit me when I popped the champagne, nor when we pulled out of the slip, and not even when my family, who buddy-boated out of Annapolis Harbor with us, finally turned around.

It was when I was peering out of the forward hatch that first night, staring intently at the pitch-black shoreline of Tilghman Island to gauge whether the anchor was dragging, that it started to sink in. Over the next few months, my little piece of steel carried me more than 1,500 nautical miles on paper, but in reality, *Little Wing* took me much farther than that.

Kelsey Bonham has been cruising the Chesapeake in boats of various sizes for two decades. She is currently based in Norfolk, Virginia, where she and her partner, Nic Bailey, continue to upgrade and sail Little Wing, *a 1974 Jachtbouw Noord Nederland Seahawk, year-round throughout the southern bay. Follow them and* Little Wing *on Instagram @ littlewing_sailing and TikTok @ littlewingsailing.*

Sail Trim

A little nip and tuck on a used spinnaker makes for an inexpensive upgrade.

BY JOHN CHURCHILL

One of my most memorable sailing days was crossing the broad mouth of the Chesapeake Bay's Potomac River in my Cape Dory 26, *Skua*. In a light and fickle breeze, I set a new-to-me crosscut spinnaker that someone had recut to an asymmetric. Ghosting along in 5 knots of breeze in flat water, with a soft gurgle from the bow wave and sails full and gently tugging, *Skua* skimmed along as the sun faded into dusk. It was a perfect finish to the day.

I have had a love affair with spinnakers ever since. I learned to fly a symmetric chute solo on my 28-foot Bristol Channel Cutter, *Bucephalus*, but it was a handful even with her great stability and self-steering gear. While racing on my current boat, *Nurdle*, a Bristol 35.5, I've learned a lot about spinnakers from my experienced crew. But what about singlehanding? I was certain that a symmetrical spinnaker wouldn't be feasible on this bigger boat.

Looking for a single-handing option, I found a used, well-priced, triradial spinnaker on Craigslist that was about the right size. Its 1.5-ounce cloth seemed like an advantage for cruising, and it came with a snuffer, making it a manageable proposition.

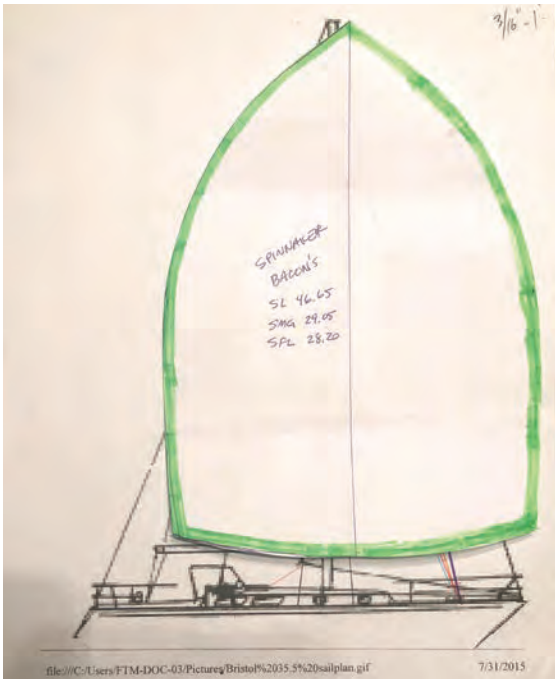
But after using it a few times, I realized that it was just a little too long on the luff, which meant it would not set well except at deeper reaching angles. Also, the heavier cloth nearly doubled the weight and bulk, making it harder to use and stow. The triradial pattern precluded shortening the luff, which wouldn't solve the weight problem in any case.

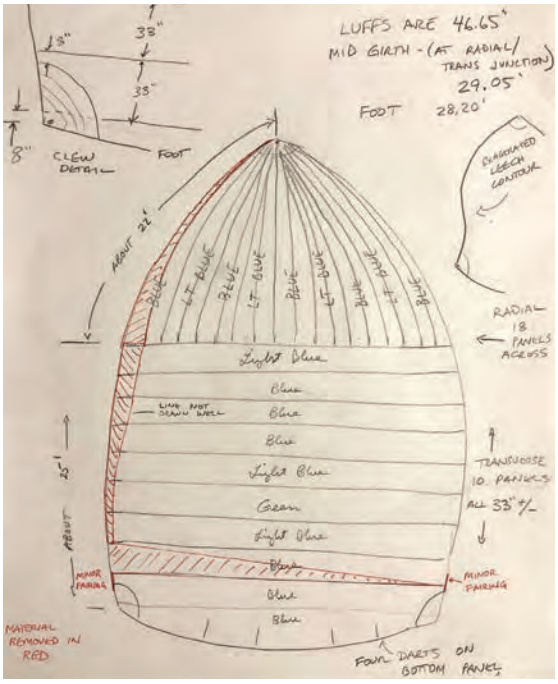
A new sail wasn't in the budget, but my memory of that evening on the Potomac inspired a solution: recut an old spinnaker to suit my current needs.

I wanted this to be a quick and easy project, which meant not building new corners. I thought I could take the excess material out of the middle, and the experts at Sailrite gave me some good advice. I wanted the luff to remain undisturbed, so correct initial luff length was important. The usual formula gives a luff length a bit over the forestay length, but I wanted it a little shorter to clear the pulpit, allow better visibility, and enable me to snug down the luff for tighter reaching.

I found a good potential candidate at Bacon Sails & Marine Supplies in Annapolis, an elderly

John raised the chute before cutting it to get a sense of what it might look like when he was done.





On left, **before purchasing the sail, John made a pattern based on the dimensions of his boat to be sure it would work as intended.**

Below, **before picking up tools to start disassembling the sail, John created a detailed diagram of it. This shows the proposed recut of the lower transverse panel and leech marked in red.**

¾-ounce radial-head spinnaker with crosscut bottom panels for $204, including shipping. Before confirming the purchase, I cut out a scale pattern of the sail and laid it on a drawing of *Nurdle*'s sail plan. This was a little tricky, because unlike flat working sails, spinnakers are built with a lot of draft, and there is some guessing involved in the shape. But it seemed to fit luff length as well as clew position for sheeting.

Sail in hand, the first step was to stake it out and confirm the measurements, make a detailed diagram, and fine-tune my scale model cutout. I had considered taking the wedge out below the radial head area, but the model suggested that a lower wedge a bit above the clew would give a better shape.

Next, I took the sail down to the boat on a near-calm morning and hoisted it to check the fit. As expected, the luff length was good. I bunched up the clew to approximate the new, shorter leech dimension to confirm that the sheeting angle would work. The overall shape appeared OK, although there was excess depth in the leech, especially up high, which I thought I should trim. This would flatten the aft edge, move the draft a bit more forward, and make a slightly better reaching shape.

I then repeated my diagram and scale drawing. I planned to use existing seams as a cutting guide. I would remove one radial head panel on the leech and one half of a transverse panel above the clew reinforcement, fairing in the shortened leech between the two points. All three corners would be essentially undisturbed.

I used Sailrite's guide to find the correct needle and thread size. Sailrite carried the required V-30 thread in a 16-ounce spool of 12,000 yards, costing $38 and enough to last several generations of amateur sailmakers. As an alternative, on the internet I found Gutermann Tera 80 thread as a high-quality, same-size equivalent, 100 percent polyester, UV-resistant, and available in a reasonable 800-yard spool for several dollars.

Once I had ordered the thread, it was time to overcome my innate reluctance to disassemble the sail. Using a seam ripper, I removed the edge tape from the entire leech. Leaving the main part of the leech for the time being, I then removed the radial head panel up to the reinforcing layers near the head. It was easiest to remove the multiple layers of head reinforcing with a hot knife, using the seam as a guide.

I took the seam apart above the transverse panel as well. Conveniently, the sail is 343 inches wide here, and I was removing a 34-inch-wide panel. I marked the panel in 10-inch increments and placed a cutting mark 1 inch higher at each successive mark, tapering the removed sailcloth from 0 at the luff to 34 inches at the leech. For this section, I used a 60-inch drywall ruler as a guide when cutting with the hot knife.

Since I was taking out a triangle, the new hypotenuse edge was longer than the adjacent edge. Pulling both edges

On right, **John used clips to hold the leech edge tape in place before putting it back on the newly sewn edge.**

On left, **in the radial head area of the sail, John used a hot knife to remove multiple layers of reinforcing, with the seam acting as a guide.**

snug, I made marks so the fabric tension would be correct at the seam. As the leech is a complex curve rather than a straight line, I calculated the incremental change between the radial area and the transverse seam, and after marking in from the existing leech, trimmed this away with a hot knife. Some minor fairing was required at the new transverse seam to achieve a smooth curve.

Putting seamstick tape at the marks and pins in between to ensure correct fabric tension, I started reassembly by sewing the long transverse seam back together. While it seemed good when I checked at the beginning, it wasn't until the end that I saw that my thread tension was incorrect, requiring me to resew the whole 27-foot-long seam. I then put the luff edge tape back in place, holding it temporarily with bulldog clips before sewing. The leech tape was too long, so I cut and overlapped it at the new transverse seam for strength.

I had hoped that the luff would not require any attention, but after sewing the transverse seam, the 10-to-1 taper was too much for a fair curve, so out came the seam ripper, allowing some edge tape removal for a little hot-knife fairing of the curve. After I sewed the luff edge back in place, it had a better shape. A small piece of the leftover fabric patched a small tear, and I was done sewing.

Above, **the recut spinnaker now has a better shape for reaching, and is lighter and easier to handle.**

Time for the test hoist. It seemed to set well; the tack and clew were where I wanted them, the curve of the luff and leech were fair, and the overall shape and draft were what I had hoped, given the limitations of the test.

The aft-most part of the transverse seam may need some touch-up, but that can wait until after sea trials. Back in the snuffer and sailbag, the sail's weight and bulk are greatly decreased. It's easy to get on deck and no longer monopolizes the cockpit locker.

Overall, this was a satisfying project that wasn't as daunting as I'd anticipated. And now, I'm ready for the next perfect sailing moment.

John Churchill grew up a boat-crazy kid in Indiana. He built a raft at age 6, sailed Snipes as a teenager, and worked his way toward salt water and bigger boats. He has sailed a Cape Dory 26 singlehanded to Bermuda and back, and a Bristol Channel Cutter transatlantic with his father. Now in Florida, John sails Nurdle, *a Bristol 35.5 (and former repo) that he's rehabbing for extended post-retirement cruising.*

Hanging Around

DIY rope hooks to keep your coils organized

BY DREW FRYE

Hooks are designed to snag. But that is the polar opposite of what I need in a rope locker. Installed in a sail locker, for example, hooks might shred a nylon spinnaker, snag a piece of clothing, or painfully stab my back if I fall against them. Wide open designs also make it possible for a rope to fall off during extreme heel, requiring a bungee or other means to secure them. Finally, they must be strong enough to hold body weight, should I step on a suspended coil.

My solution was a semi-closed hook, with an opening designed to easily accept a sling but deflect accidental snags, yet with room for several slings and the capacity for a lot of weight. I've been using this design for 15 years and

On right, **the finished hooks, fabricated from ⅛-inch by ¾-inch by 5-inch aluminum flat bar.**

Below, **countersinking the holes for #8 fasteners. After the holes are drilled, the corners are rounded and smoothed with a sander or file.**

On left, **step-by-step fabrication of the hooks, which are bent slowly, using cut broom handle pieces held by a vice.**

have no reason to change it. Here's how it works:

The hooks are fabricated from ⅛-inch by ¾-inch by 5-inch aluminum flat bar. Round the corners with a disk sander or file, drill and countersink for #8 flathead fasteners, and polish with a wire wheel. The hook is formed using a simple jig created by clamping two broomstick stubs in a bench vice about ⅛-inch apart. The mouth of the hook should be just wide enough to admit the ⅜-inch slings that will be used to hang lines and PFDs; any wider and they will snag ropes and sail bags.

This is a super simple project. Once you get rolling, you can bang out a dozen in 20 minutes. The hooks can then be mounted with screws, of course, but most often I have mounted these to the hull sides, and a screw sticking out through the side of the boat would draw stares ... and moisture. Instead, I mounted them either to a precast fiberglass sheet, which was then bonded to the hull, or to an ⅛-inch by 2-inch aluminum bar that I attached to the hull with glue-on studs (*Good Old Boat*, November/December 2022) and knobs, making the whole business modular and removable.

Every boat I have owned had scars from where plastic hooks have broken off. These have never failed or even strained. Give them a try and you'll probably find the same.

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 the author of* Rigging Modern Anchors *(2018, Seaworthy Publications).*

Art in Slow Motion

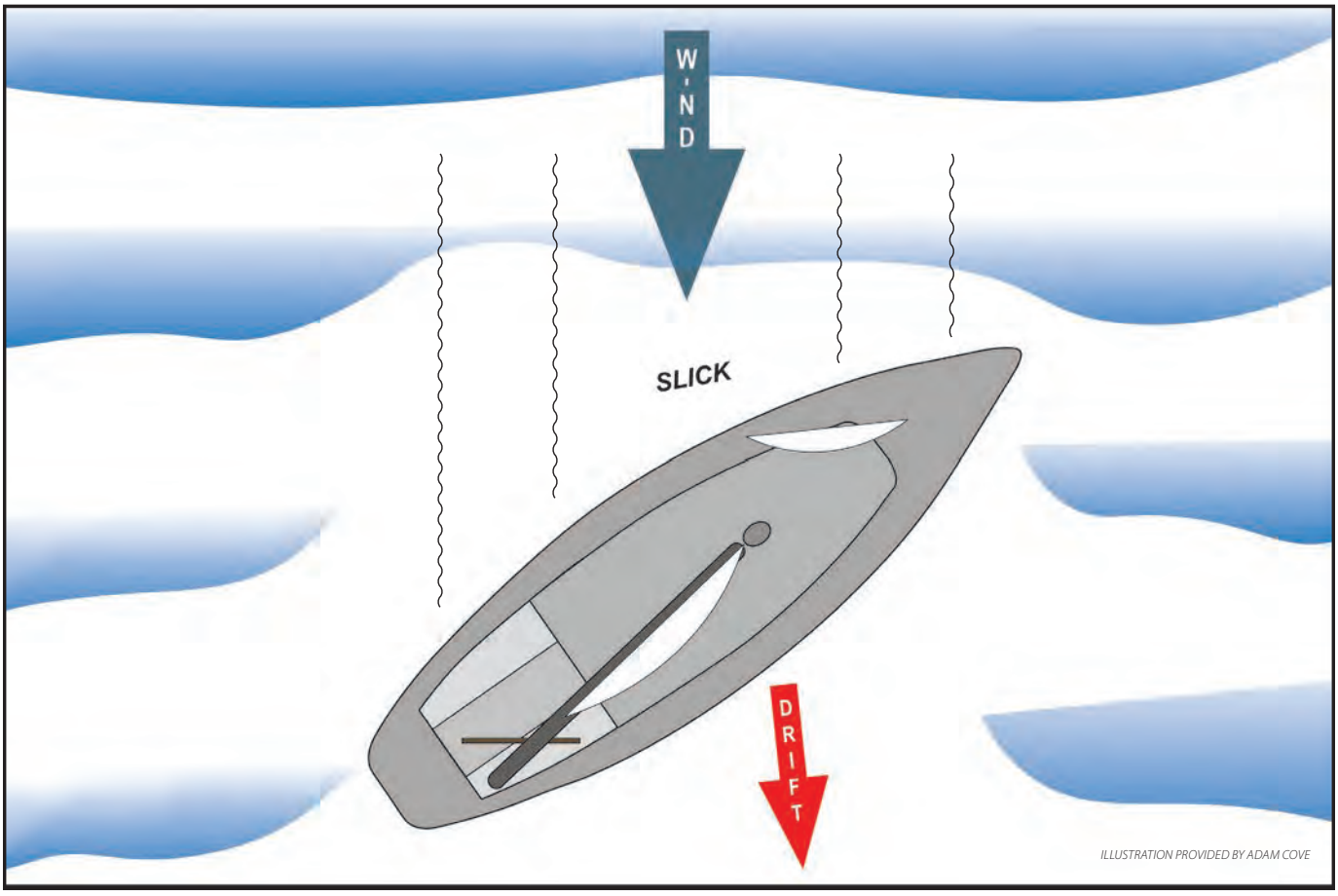
To rest or wait out weather, heaving to remains a tried and true tactic at sea.

BY ADAM COVE

Some seafaring traditions are worth carrying on, especially those based on knowledge and techniques derived from thousands of years of misfortunes and triumphs. The art of heaving to is such a tradition.

No matter what body of water we sail on, heaving to helps us tame a sailboat in a ruthless environment. It provides calm when we need it and can let us focus on other tasks. It is the closest we can get to parking a sailboat in the middle of a squall on a lake or a tempest on the ocean. If we have the sea room to do it, that slow, predictable drift can let us pass a few minutes or hours to wait for better conditions, to tuck into a reef, or to simply make a cup of coffee. No technology has yet to match the power of wind and waves, but this proven technique can help keep us safer and make our time on the water more enjoyable.

On our 1969 Luders 33, *Ben-Varrey*, our typical hove to configuration is a back-winded jib or staysail, with the main traveler slightly above center and the tiller lashed to leeward. In this setup, the mainsail and tiller are trying to steer the boat up into the wind, but the jib is driving the bow back down. With these opposing efforts balanced, *Ben-Varrey* ceases to make any noticeable forward progress as she sits about 55 degrees to the wind. The boat slides downwind, typically between



Hove to configuration for *Ben-Varrey*. A slightly modified arrangement may be required for other sailboats as a result of alternate sail plans and underwater hull shapes.

ILLUSTRATION PROVIDED BY ADAM COVE

Ben-Varrey **hove to near the portion of the Gulf Stream off the Chesapeake Bay. Despite the wave action, the motion on board is gentle:** ***Ben-Varrey*** **is stiff on the roll axis and only heaves vertically with the waves.**

a half-knot to 2 knots, creating a slick to weather that protects the vessel from breaking waves.

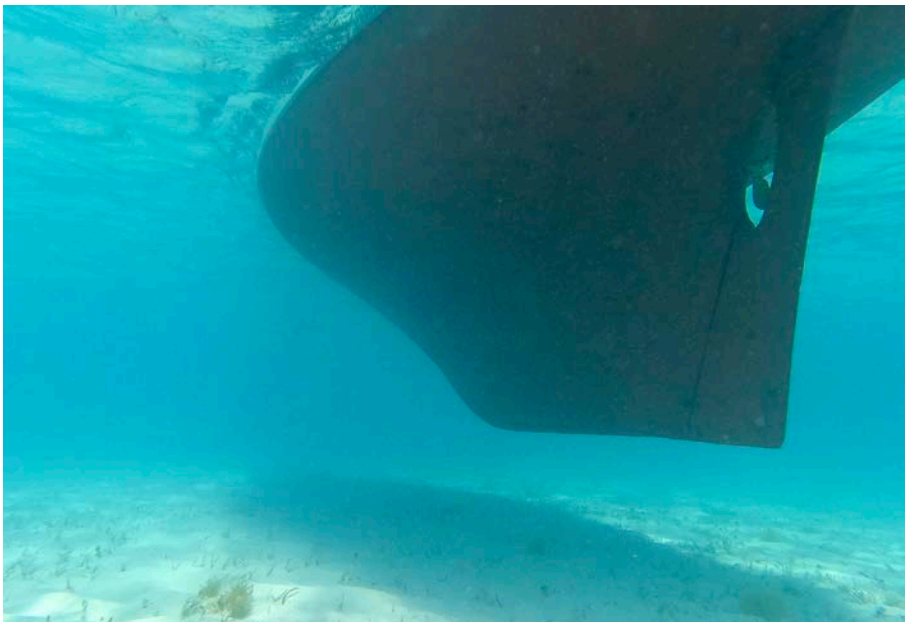
Older boats, especially those with full keels, easily lend themselves to heaving to. The underwater hull form is more forgiving with low aspect ratio foils that are difficult to stall. They provide consistent influence, or grip, on the water around them, enabling a position to be more easily held to the sea. A traditional hull shape also provides more drag when moving sideways through the water, controlling the rate of drift and developing a more influential slick to weather. Furthermore, older hulls feature more wetted surface area. This creates added resistance to moving forward, keeping the vessel hove to instead of forereaching.

These traditional design aspects are the same reason older designs track better but struggle to hit the same top speeds as modern designs. It is a design trade-off, but one that carries a considerable advantage in rough conditions.

The hull shape is only half of the equation, though. A properly hove to boat also requires equilibrium above deck. The sail plan must be appropriately sized and balanced. Too much canvas will result in excessive heel and undue load on the vessel. As sails are shortened to match the conditions, that process must happen equitably behind and in front of the mast. In a more technical sense, it is maintaining an appropriate longitudinal center of effort. This is affected by every sail flown. When a main is reefed, not only does its center of effort drop to a lower height, but it also moves forward (because sail area is subtracted aft and above). With high roach mainsails, this change becomes more pronounced as the reefs get deeper.

To balance out this shift, the center of effort of the headsail must move aft. That is why a staysail on an inner forestay is helpful as weather becomes heavier. That same sail, farther forward on the headstay, would drive the bow of the boat down to leeward. Yawls and ketches have other options, but still need to solve the same problem — maintaining sail plan balance. This is where time should be spent experimenting. Try heaving to on your own boat in a variety of wind strengths and sea states to see how it handles. Learn how to balance the center of effort of the hull shape with that of the sails. Remember, fine-tuning is managed with the rudder position as well as the main sheet and traveler.

Aboard *Ben-Varrey*, we've successfully used this technique to manage heavy weather, delay a landfall, and to calm the boat for rest or cooking. It is a practical skill in any sailor's seamanship tool kit, and can be especially helpful for those who sail shorthanded. Here are a couple



***Ben-Varrey's* hull shape is a traditional full keel with an attached rudder, easily lending itself to heaving to.**

stories to bring you on board our boat when we have opted to heave to.

Galesville, Maryland, to St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands — Singlehanded

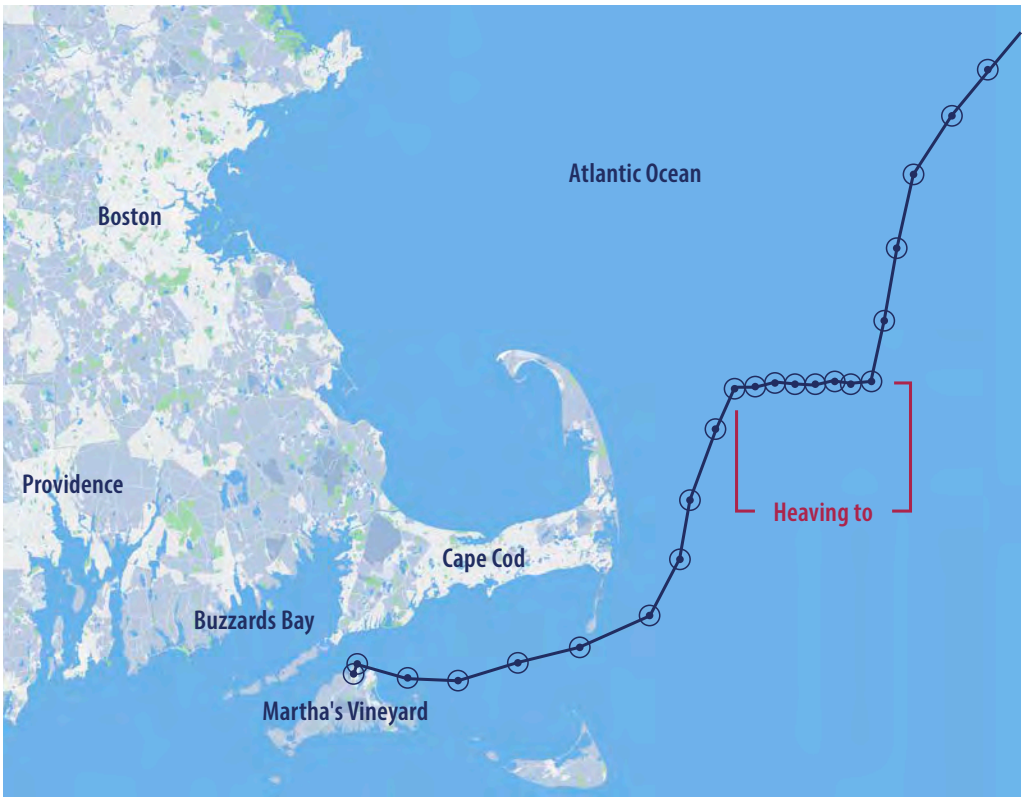
While watching weather windows to sail southeast from the East Coast of the U.S., we noted that the first front to roll through carried a steady 60 knots out of the north. Place that against a possible 3-knot current in the Gulf Stream and I was likely to encounter conditions that resembled magnified Class V whitewater rapids because the period of waves is shortened by adverse current. With this much current, the faces of the waves were bound to become so steep that they would break regularly. Rolling the boat in those conditions was not only a possibility, but a strong likelihood. The forecast had only been for 45 knots, and I didn't trust the northerly direction, so I was glad to have waited in Galesville to avoid a disastrous departure from the Chesapeake Bay, although the tail end of the system did provide a nice push to start down the Chesapeake.

There didn't appear to be a decent weather window — it was one front after another, followed by a large high pressure system moving in that would suck all the air out of the area for well over 100 miles. So when the next front was accompanied by a southerly wind, it was time to head to sea. I could make enough progress on the next system that would follow, and those would be westerly winds anyway.

I cleared Cape Henry around 4:30 p.m. and still carried the 130% genoa to make my way through the remnant swell in a 10-knot breeze. It was expected to build, and by 6:30 p.m. I had switched to the 90% jib and set up the staysail. The wind was only 13 knots at this point, but it was far easier to make these sail changes when stepping up to the foredeck didn't mean participating in a rodeo.

The wind reached 20 knots around 2:00 a.m., and by 6:30 a.m. it was pushing 26 knots from the south. I put in a second reef, and then at 6:50 a.m. I lashed down the 90% jib and hoisted the staysail. Thirty minutes later it was a steady 40 knots, with gusts touching 45 knots. *Ben-Varrey* was sailing too fast and jumping off the backside of the waves, and water was dumping into the cockpit. It was time to slow things down.

I sheeted the staysail to weather, lashed the helm to leeward, sheeted in the main entirely, and adjusted the traveler until all but the smallest amount of forward speed was gone. A slick developed on the water to windward and *Ben-Varrey*



Position plot of *Ben-Varrey* as she hove to off the coast of Cape Cod, on her way from Roque Island, Maine, to Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts. Adequate sea room is needed while using this technique to allow for drifting to leeward at slow speed.

Top right, **Adam Cove with a reef in early on *Ben-Varrey* as incoming weather approaches.**

Below, ***Ben-Varrey* sailing fast in the Atlantic as the weather builds. She hits a top speed of 16 knots over ground minutes before this image is taken.**

began to drift downwind at a slight angle, the waves unable to touch her, with no more spray and a steady heel of about 15 degrees. The breeze felt like it had been cut in half. A calm breakfast, followed by drying off the cabin sole and taking a nap, filled the morning.

The winds abated by the afternoon, and *Ben-Varrey* and I were once again on our way. I gradually added canvas, and then a shift of the breeze to the south-west pushed boat speeds to an 8-knot threshold. Making progress east meant continued breeze by getting ahead of a looming high pressure system. I avoided any damage to *Ben-Varrey* and felt well rested — both crew and boat were ready for the next 1,200 miles of the passage.

Roque, Maine, to Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts — Doublehanded

My wife, Alison, and I finally lost sight of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Cobia* that had been near us for most of the night as we crossed through the southern Gulf of Maine waters. It appeared they were doing some routine patrols in the rough weather — maybe breaking in some rookies? We were outside the shipping lanes that run north by northwest off the eastern coast of Cape Cod and were even in latitude with the middle of Stellwagen Bank. Aboard *Ben-Varrey*, we were sailing much faster than expected and closing in on Pollock Rip Channel. It would still be dark when we rounded the first mark, and although we had navigated it only a week earlier, the sands shift quickly around Monomoy Island.

A strong current sweeps across the shoals, in excess of 2 knots at peak. A visual fix, to verify the required course correction against the GPS, is tough to achieve in this frequently foggy area. There are two lighthouses (one abandoned) to reference and a series of lit markers, hopefully in position, that were hiding in the 12- to 15-foot seas, and the otherwise dark space of a wildlife refuge. The waves and the shoals also don't mix well, and we could expect lots of breakers ahead.

The decision to heave to was made before we even got a quarter of the way down our list of reasons. We also knew that the current would switch shortly after dawn, making for a more peaceful transit of these waters and a building push through Nantucket Sound.

We were on a screaming broad reach, already had a single reef in the main, and had shifted down to the 90% jib the afternoon before. Our apparent wind would noticeably increase as we turned into the wind. At the time, we were already feeling a steady 30 knots, and with the forecast calling for the wind to build, we should have already shed more canvas. Before we moved into a hove to position, we put a second reef into the main, set up our storm jib, and proceeded to create a few more miles of sea room. We were already 35 miles offshore, having cheated another 10 miles offshore earlier when we thought this might be a possibility. With an onshore breeze, sea room gave us flexibility and safety.

At this point, neither of us had been able to get much sleep. When we finally tacked the boat over and hove to, it was bliss. We took turns napping and popped our heads out of the hatch every so often to check for anyone else crazy enough to be out there with us. Only a couple of fishing boats were in the area, as far as we could tell, and they never came closer than 7 miles. The breeze built to 40 knots, with gusts into the upper 40s. We saw a few waves in the high teens, but most stayed around 15 feet.

As dawn came, the wind remained, and we stayed hove to for a few more hours. Once the breeze dropped into the low 30s, we peeled off and began making progress to the southwest. A pod of dolphins swam with us for 20 miles while we surfed our way to Nantucket Sound. Well rested and under control, we passed though Pollock Rip Channel and began to add sail as we pushed for some well-deserved ice cream in Vineyard Haven.

If you have sea room and are in need of rest, or want to comfortably cook a meal or wait out some weather, heaving to is an ideal tactic. It calms the situation and provides a gentler motion for the boat and her crew. I have often forgotten the true conditions when I have been below deck while hove to. It is a form of magic that we can only thank previous generations of seafarers for passing along. If you haven't already, try it out on your next sail, and add it to your seamanship tool box for future passages.

Adam Cove is a naval architect, marine consultant, and former CEO of Edson Marine. Follow his travels on Ben-Varrey *at covesailing.com.*

Above, ***Ben-Varrey*** **underway in the North Atlantic. After heaving to, a warm glow from the sunset breathes in comfort as the waves subside.**

Below, **dolphins swam along beside *Ben-Varrey*, guiding her to Pollock Rip Channel where she can safely navigate through to Nantucket Sound.**

Morning Coffee in Maine

A cherished daily ritual helps a passagemaking sailor transition to cruising.

BY ANN HOFFNER

Waking up in the V-berth of my Sabre 30, *Ora Kali*, I can tell by the sun shining through the companionway hatch that we are facing west. There's always a slight frisson of fear at this moment; Did the wind shift in the night and turn our anchorage into a lee shore? But all appears to be well.

Without disturbing Tom, I swivel and slide my feet onto the cool cabin sole. My motion makes the boat rock, destroying the illusion that we are somewhere else. The Maine air is chilly, and I grab a fleece jacket before climbing the few stairs to look through the cockpit at the boat behind us, then ashore where I can see the floats of the Winter Harbor Yacht Club and hear early morning traffic. A sense of well-being floods my heart as I duck below and start making coffee.

On land, my routine includes boiling water in an electric kettle and heating milk in an electric frother. This doesn't work on 12-volt power, but as a passage-making sailor at heart, I long ago learned to manage coffee on a boat. Living and sailing aboard our Peterson 44, *Oddly Enough*, in the Pacific for 10 years, we were either underway, when I had the 5 to 8 a.m. watch, at anchor, or in a marina, with whole coffee beans, a hand grinder and stovetop espresso pot, and a large, comfortable galley.

Leisurely coastal cruising, however, is unfamiliar territory, and *Ora Kali* is a small boat whose limitations I'm still getting used to. But this is a time of day I can ill afford to miss, when I write, listen to the weather, look at charts, and plan the day while Tom enjoys extra time in bed.

The Maine coast is said to be at its best late in the season, when visiting yachts head south and the locals come out. So Tom and I waited until all our summer house guests had gone before dropping the mooring line in Frenchman Bay the last week in August, and with plenty of food and water on board, sailed out to explore as far into the heart of Maine's coastal cruising grounds as possible in three weeks. Though I learned to sail here as a child on small boats, we never cruised outside this big, sheltered body of water to the north and east of Mount Desert Island. And the year before, when we delivered *Ora Kali* up from New Jersey, we did so in large hops, so most of this will be new grounds.

After leaving our anchorage near the yacht club, we slip into the Gulf of Maine and head southwest. I hoped by not pushing for an early start that the wind would soon pick

***Ora Kali* anchored off Trafton Island.**

Above, **the disused lighthouse on Mark Island guards the entrance to Winter Harbor.**

up, but as we cruise along the rugged south coast of Mount Desert Island we are still motorsailing, with *Ora Kali*'s rattling 3-cylinder engine drowning out my thoughts. We plan to stop at some of the offshore islands, including the Cranberry Isles, a cluster of five islands that are only a couple of miles south but loom large for Frenchman Bay sailors as an offshore destination. Islesford, a harbor town on Little Cranberry Island, has shops, galleries, and a museum and sounds inviting, but with the National Weather Service forecasting strong southwesterly winds in 24 hours, the harbor looks a little too exposed.

We know from delivering *Ora Kali* the previous summer that the big bight on the north side of Swan's Island provides excellent protection from the southwest if we anchor well inside off Roderick Head. Roderick Head is quiet, great for observing diving birds and an eagle fishing, but isn't quite the island experience we'd hoped for, so in the afternoon we reanchor in the mooring field off the ferry dock.

The anchorage is wide open to the south and the chop is too fierce to stay long, but we row ashore, talk with the woman who runs the ferry office, and then explore a couple of miles of island road, our sea legs causing us to roll as we walk. There are "for sale" signs around and we know from real estate listings and our chat with the ferry manager that Swan's Island is changing, with newcomers buying up land at a furious pandemic pace. But the picturesque houses don't yet reflect the change, and the locals in pickup trucks take time to wave at us.

Whichever way the author makes coffee onboard, it always goes in this mug.

Maine's inhabited offshore islands have a mystique partly because, like Darwin's finches, they evolved differently in their isolation. Residents formed unique communities that served their physical and social needs. Our short walk is not enough to tease out this one's individuality. We'd like to spend a full day exploring, perhaps walking to Burnt Coat Harbor where the fishing fleet lives, but we catch a glimpse of *Ora Kali* bouncing frantically at anchor in the exposed ferry harbor and hurry back to return her to safer anchorage.

When the weather clears, we ask each other, Where do we go next? What should determine this?

On a boat, I have always thrived on the need to get

Mighty Mite, the author's dinghy, on a beach at Wreck Island.

somewhere. At sea, a crew meets the day's challenges as they come. You have the choice to leave port on a good weather window for your next destination, then afterward you meet what comes head to head. Nobody will appear miraculously to extract you when something happens. Some might find this terrifying; I like being in charge of my destiny.

Last year's delivery trip started the shift away from passagemaking. We stopped every night, but the trip was broken into individual day voyages whose goal was driven by the need to get to Sorrento while the weather was good. But what drives a sailor when there's nothing one HAS to do? This current cruise feels like the amorphousness of retirement.

It doesn't take long before I find some answers. To be successful, a leisurely Maine coastal cruiser has to choose destinations that provide shelter for the boat and crew in changeable weather. Cruising the Caribbean in winter didn't throw up such challenges. All that was required for a secure anchorage was a shallow bay on the lee side of an island, which almost always had boats in it as identifiers. Here I'm not comfortable in an open bay with the wide ocean at my back, and the changeability of the wind direction makes it imperative for morning route planning to identify not just one well-sheltered anchorage for the night, but also a backup.

Then there's the pursuit of pretty rather than just spectacular. The two nights we spend in a tiny cut in the shore of Wreck Island provide both. Before heading there, we stopped at Billings Diesel & Marine in Stonington, at one end of the Deer Island Thorofare, where we picked up a mooring, washed clothes, and took showers. Last year from that spot we had front row seats to a constant parade in the channel of big and small boats. The Billings Marine harbormaster tells us this year's yacht traffic is way down, as people who went sailing in the early days of the pandemic were now back to other activities. Even the large local fishing fleet is less active, with the price of lobster depressed enough that fisherfolk made the hard choice early in summer not to set their traps.

Wreck Island is two miles south of Stonington in what's known as Merchant Row, a series of over 50 mostly uninhabited islands between Deer Isle and even more remote Isle au Haut, which got its name from the French explorer Samuel de Champlain. When

The author steers the boat as *Ora Kali* passes under the Deer Isle Bridge in Eggemoggin Reach.

he arrived the island was home to the Abenaki people, a good reminder that most of the places we visit were once inhabited and worked by native peoples.

Wreck is on a small lagoon surrounded by islands that offer protection from most summertime winds, though the openness of passes means I would not want to be here if the wind increased from the north. It is Labor Day weekend, our weather is perfect, and by getting here early we have secured the prime anchorage in a tiny notch. The occasional boat passing by slows down, decides we haven't left enough room for two boats, and passes on. Several families tried to homestead here a long time ago but gave up, and now it is a Maine Coast Heritage Trust island with well-marked trails that end in untended wilds, providing plenty of exciting exploration of the forest and occasional views of fleets of holiday boats sailing in the various passes and anchored at other islands.

Tom in *Ora Kali*'s cockpit at Bean Island on the last morning of the trip.

After leaving Wreck Island we head back to Deer Isle, anchoring on its west side under gray skies. The wind was predicted to swing around to the west and this looked like our best bet for protection, which seems contradictory since Northwest Harbor opens to the northwest. But we are well up inside, and the wind shift that occurred overnight hardly made itself felt in this peaceful bay. The day before I rowed to its head, where a huddle of historic-looking buildings marks the town of Deer Isle. Though connected by a bridge to the mainland, in recent history it still functioned as a separate island entity with a store. But sadly, like many other coastal towns, this place has lost its center.

Since it doesn't look like we have to leave in a hurry, I pull on jeans and a sweatshirt and gather my coffee-making supplies from the locker behind the stove. Usually while the water boils the sun is climbing and turning yellow, then white, but today the light stays evenly low. It is warm enough for me to set my mug on the cockpit table, where I will plan the day's sail up to Eggemoggin Reach, which runs between Little Deer Isle and the mainland.

This part of the Maine coast is a patchwork of rivers, bays, peninsulas, and islands. An offshore passage misses 90% of the coast, but an inshore route takes advantage of various channels that cut through island groups. Even with small-scale paper charts it's difficult to get an overall lay of the land. On a typical summer day with southwest winds, a sailboat can reach either way in Eggemoggin. Today, an unusual northeast wind allows us to reach, though the wind is light and puffy. Fog makes the trip challenging and cuts down on boat traffic; we only pass four boats and can wander on the changeable winds.

We spend two nights in 10-mile-long Eggemoggin

The shower facilities at Blue Hill's Kollegewidgwok Yacht Club were rustic, but a welcome sight for cruisers.

A full moon rises over Black Island.

Reach. There's an art to choosing destinations that are not too far apart for the predicted wind and knowing when to leave to allow for the maximum amount of sailing, rather than motoring to the next destination. In coastal waters, this often means compromising between my instinct to leave early for the most daylight time, and the fact that winds near shore often don't come in until late morning.

Our first night, in landlocked Benjamin River 4 straight-line miles from Northwest Harbor and nearly 15 as we had to sail it, we can't raise anyone to take our mooring fee. On the following afternoon, within sight of our exit from Eggemoggin, we anchor in the lovely wide cove off the WoodenBoat School at Brooklin, the very tip of Blue Hill Peninsula. This is one of the few anchorages we have visited from ashore on a winter day, which provides contrast with the bright sunshine and clouds of small wooden boats learning to tack around us.

When we go ashore, the grounds are alive with groups of people. We gather ripe apples from old trees that line the walks and talk to the new manager of the school, where the first crop of hopeful boatbuilders since the pandemic started is on-site. We then walk several miles to a reportedly good food store that turns out to sell no fresh food, only canned goods with nice coffee to go. This is a disappointment. Fresh food reprovisioning is always a goal in cruising, and we have already been thwarted in several of these peninsular towns where the residents have cars and can drive to the big shops on the mainland.

Almost three weeks into our trip, it's mid-September and the weather is forecast to turn blustery with easterly winds, making home and our mooring seem appealing. But

The author rowing at Trafton Island.

The weather starts to turn in the anchorage at Trafton Island.

conditions are magical in the triangular bight of shallow water formed by Black, Opechee, and Sheep islands at the base of Blue Hill Bay. We are less than a mile from Casco Passage, a tortuous path between rocks and banks that funnels all boats taking the inshore route from Mount Desert Island to the Deer Island Thorofare, but at anchor we could almost be back in the South Pacific.

We threaded this passage under sail going west 10 days ago, which means we have completed a circumnavigation of Deer Isle. Though ultimately we spend three weeks aboard on this trip, our furthest distance from home as the crow flies is barely 30 miles. This geography of closeness well defines the intimate nature of our cruise.

The sun is coming up later now, and I try to decipher from the angle of the golden patch above my head which way we are facing, but I can't. I slide onto the cabin sole, which seems to be even colder than before. As I reach for the coffee supplies, I feel a stab of nostalgia for what has been overall a glorious cruise. I arrange the mugs, spoons, sugar, and small bottle of whole milk on a plate behind fiddles on the pulldown saloon table. I carefully measure out the drinking water, and when the coffee is ready, take it to the cockpit.

The light is hazy, as if promising a mid-summer day. I do my tai chi standing meditation behind the steering wheel, facing the pass and Black Island. A lobster boat rumbles loudly as it picks up pots, and it's hard to tell whether it's nearby or far away.

I recall an afternoon as a sailing instructor when I lay in the V-berth of a J-44 outside Camden, Maine, the saloon behind me filled with women who were excited to be out for a week learning to cruise. As I lay looking at the headliner, I thought, "This is it. If I never do anything else in life, it will be enough." I have that same sense of profound rightness with the world as I savor my now-cooling coffee in *Ora Kali*'s cockpit.

Then Tom makes a happy noise as he stretches in *Ora Kali*'s bunk, breaking into my solitary ruminations. Life on the boat comes crashing back; I still have to plan the day. And I am so happy to be here.

Ann Hoffner has been a sailor since she was 9 years old. For the last 20 years she's written about her adventures for a variety of sailing magazines. Along with Tom Bailey, her husband and a photographer, she downsized from their offshore passagemaking P-44, Oddly Enough, *to* Ora Kali, *a nimble, shoal-draft Sabre 30 that is teaching them the joys of Maine coastal cruising.*

Seeing the Light

Replacing a boat's halogen lights with LED ones is a satisfying, power-saving upgrade at a minimal cost.

BY ZORAN GLOZINIC

During long Quebec winters, while my small sailboat is covered on the hard and waiting for the next sailing season, I often amuse myself with various small boat-related projects.

A few winters ago, I decided to replace my halogen boat lights and go full LED. The first phase was to modify the cabin lights, which were traditional brass dome lights with halogen bulbs. My sailboat has a simple electrical installation and only one battery. I try to avoid unnecessary power drains whenever I can, so I often rely on my oil lamp on cooler evenings. By replacing halogen bulbs with LED ones, I hoped to further reduce my power consumption aboard.

An online search of chandleries showed that LED bulbs were readily available for the G4 sockets I had in my cabin lights. But prices of more than $40 Canadian per bulb prompted me to look for a more affordable option. LED lights are now less expensive, but even recently I've seen some costing around $20 CAD at my local chandlery. After some more online searching, I ordered a few different types of LED array lights from eBay, along with some small heat sinks and a bag of assembled LED drivers. LED lights must operate at a certain voltage, and if subjected to higher voltage than they're designed for, they will overheat and burn out. An LED driver is a small electrical device/circuit used to regulate power to the lights.

To explain this a little further, the voltage an LED light requires to conduct electricity and light up is called "forward voltage." As the temperature of the LED light increases, the forward voltage (volts) will decrease and the light will draw more current (amps). That will result in the light getting hotter and again drawing more current, repeating that until it burns itself out. This is called "thermal runaway."

To avoid that, LED drivers are used to provide a constant current to the lights and compensate for the changes in the forward voltage. There are many types of LED drivers available; some of them include a self-contained power supply.

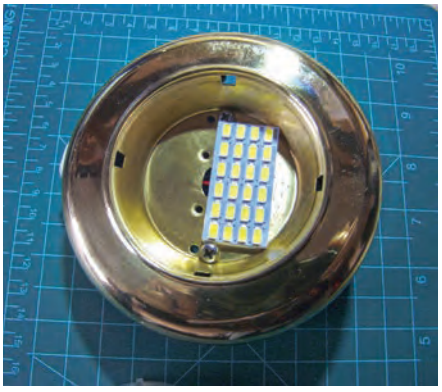
The LED arrays I purchased were designed to run on 12 volts, and the accompanying documentation did not mention a requirement to use a LED driver. Nonetheless, I tested a few of them by leaving them on for up to 48 hours, using a car battery as the source of unregulated 12-volt power. They did not burn out, but they were running so hot I couldn't touch them. After connecting the LED driver between the LED array and the battery, the loss of light output was negligible, but they were not getting so hot anymore; I could hold my finger on them without getting burned.

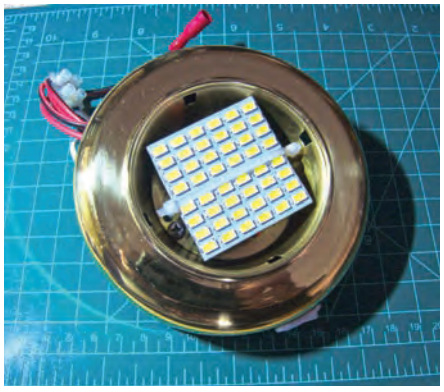
I removed the three cabin lights, and after taking off the lenses, I was able to unscrew the G4 sockets and remove them. I left the original switch in place and crimped a bullet connector to the end of the wire I had to cut. I mounted the LED array directly on the light housing under the lens, using double-sided tape. The light housing acts as a heat sink for the LED array. I connected the pins of the LED driver with 12-volt power wires, using small screw-type terminal connectors, and soldered connections between the LED arrays and drivers.

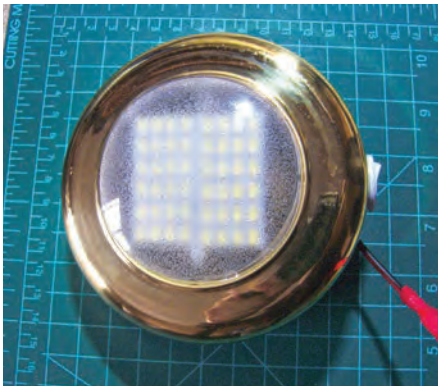
Left to right below, **a single LED array sits inside the brass housing for one of the boat's cabin lights.**

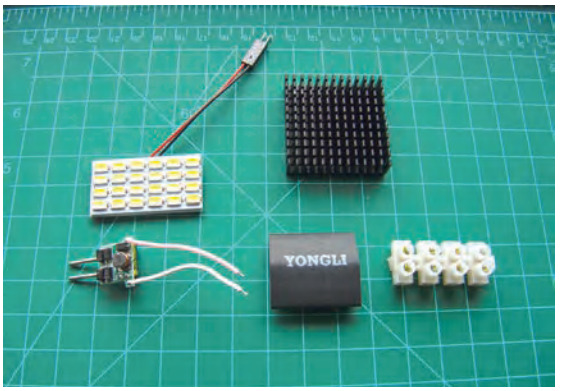
Two LED arrays inside the light housing are held in place with tie wrap.

The author installed two LED arrays in one of the cabin lights.









Components for the project included LED arrays, LED drivers, heat sinks, heat-shrink tubing, and screw-type connectors.

I used heat-shrink tubing where needed, and also over the LED driver to isolate it from the brass housing. When installing LED lights, it's critical to pay attention to polarity (positive/negative) because the LED array must be connected properly, otherwise the lights will not work. The same applies for LED drivers.

In one of the cabin lights, I installed two LED arrays. I was concerned about heat dissipation, so I used a small heat sink under the arrays. Luckily, there was enough room under the lens to mount everything. Each of the two LED arrays was connected to a dedicated LED driver, as the drivers I purchased could only handle a maximum of 3 watts of power each.

The project was interesting and occupied me for some time. One can argue that purchasing G4–compatible LED bulbs and installing them would certainly be much faster and easier. However, I believe this was a much more satisfying way to upgrade my cabin lights. As another benefit, the cost of doing it was minimal. These days, you can get a small heat sink for less than $1 and 10 LED drivers for less than $7, and prices for small LED arrays start at less than $3. Another option would be to use LED 12-volt light strips instead of arrays. The strips can be cut to shorter sections and installed in a similar type of light housing as described here.

Based on my measurements (see "Some Numbers" below), the LED cabin lights use four times less power than halogen bulbs. The amount of light in my cabin has increased while power consumption is reduced. The only complaint I have is the light color; I find most LED bulbs emit too cool of a white light, but that is really a question of taste, I guess. You can also get red LED bulbs, which are useful for night vision lighting.

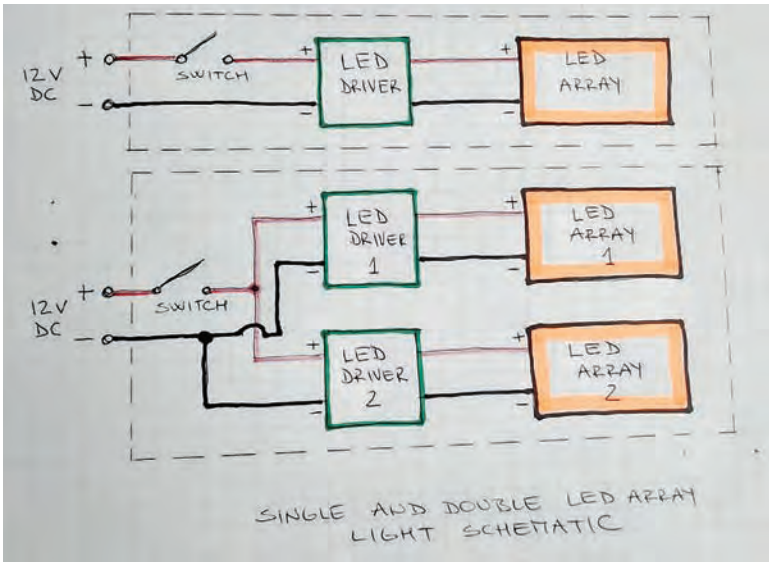
The amount of light has increased while power consumption is reduced.

Some Numbers

There are many different SMD (surface-mount device) LED chips used to make LED bulbs, and when I worked on this project the most popular were SMD 5630, 5730, and 5050. SMD means that the LEDs are mounted directly to some kind of surface without using wires. These chips differ in their characteristics, but for a non-critical application (such as replacing a boat's cabin lights) those differences will not be visible in most cases, although the light output could vary.

The typical output of a low-voltage halogen bulb is around 24 lumens per watt. Each of the 10-watt bulbs I replaced provided about 240 lumens of light output. In theory, at 12 volts, that 10-watt bulb should draw 0.83 amps from the boat house battery. For only one light this is not much, but even a small boat would most likely have more than one light in the cabin, and the battery power drain created by these lights should not be ignored. I replaced my halogen bulbs with LED arrays made from 24 SMD 5730 LED chips. The light output of each array was specified as 480 lumens and 2.9 watts of power. So theoretically, the current draw for one array should be 0.24 amps.

I verified the current draws, and the halogen bulb was right on spec with 0.83 amps. The LED arrays were doing a bit better than noted in the specification sheet, drawing only 0.20 amps each. Most likely the SMD chips used to build these arrays were not up to their exact specs, probably being less powerful and emitting less light. Since there are different generations of the same type or model number of SMD chips, you can never be certain about their light output or power draw. Considering today's low prices for LED lights, you can always order a few types and do some testing before deciding which one to use.



A drawing maps out the light replacement project.

Zoran Glozinic is a retired business professional who has been messing around in boats and on old cars all his life. He now divides his time between Quebec and Europe. If he is not out sailing, he can be most likely found on his farm in Croatia tinkering with one of his old cars.

Never Start a Voyage on a Friday

A sailor flouts an age-old superstition and pays the price.

BY CLIFF MOORE

After what seemed like a short, mild winter, I was ready to splash for the summer season. The boatyard didn't launch boats on weekends, and the earlier part of the week featured nearly gale-force wind, so the weather forecast made it seem like Friday, April 1, was the best day for it.

I didn't have too far to go. From the winter boatyard in New Bern to my summertime slip at Northwest Creek Marina was less than 5 miles, but it was circuitous; parts of the channel through the North Carolina swamp could easily be used for a remake of *The African Queen*. All was ready on the boat and I was good to go.

The Travelift picked up *Pelorus*, my good old (1980) 26-foot Paceship, and got it into the water with no difficulty. The depth indicator at the yard showed almost 6 feet of water, which would ordinarily be enough for her 4-foot 5-inch draft. The engine started perfectly. I cast off the lines and made it almost as far as the entry to the enclosed marina, when I ran aground on what turned out to be a new shoal, mostly mud.

Right, I thought. April Fool's Day. I get it. The Clerk of the Weather was having his little joke. Fortunately, I was able to get into a transient slip without further ado. When I talked with the yard manager, she said that when the wind blows hard as it had been doing from the southwest, it tended to blow the water out of some of the back creeks, like the one at this landlocked marina in the vast inland sea behind the Outer Banks, where the usual tide is at best a matter of inches; and yes, the shoal was new and thanks for finding it.

A few days later, after the wind fell light and shifted more into the north, the water level came back to usual and I was able to get to my summer slip with no problem, except that partway through the swamp the engine died. Someone I could name but won't had turned the fuel shutoff valve at the tank into the off position for winter storage. After a moment of panic, I opened the valve

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRITZ SEEGEERS

and the engine ran fine, no bleeding required.

That same week, there was a boat show and maritime flea market scheduled for Saturday in Oriental, North Carolina, about 25 miles away. I'd always enjoyed anchoring in what is called "the sailing capital of North Carolina" and decided to leave the day before, on Friday, to spend the next day at the event, returning on Sunday.

The forecast was for wind out of the southwest again, 15 to 20 knots with higher gusts possible — sporty but manageable, I thought. All I had to do was beat to windward on a starboard tack for about 10 or 12 miles, then turn to port to get around Wilkinson Point, the southernmost part of the peninsula that has New Bern on the northwest and Oriental midway up the east side of it, like Cape Horn in miniature. At that point the wind, if it held, would be over the transom. As I left the marina, the water was sparkling, the sun was shining, and the sky was blue, although temperatures were on the cool side, with upper 40s forecast for that night. What a good day for sailing!

All was well with two reefs in the main and my old workhorse 110% genoa until I was about 2 miles shy of Wilkinson Point. The boat was behaving wonderfully in the nasty, short chop that built up on those shallow waters, and although there was lots of spray, the dodger was keeping it off me. I was admiring the rainbow in the spray to leeward when I heard over the gusting wind a ripping sound and saw that the genoa had torn from a point midway along the foot to a point halfway up the leech and was only held together by tape along the foot and leech.

Oddly, the boat was still making way to windward, only slower, and through the gap in the two parts, a rainbow shone as I dropped what was left of the genny onto the foredeck. However, under double-reefed main with no headsail and the port shrouds festooned with shreds of torn sail, there was no headway to be made at all. I could always turn around and go back — tempting, but I was bound and determined.

Although it seemed like cheating, I started the engine and motorsailed the short distance around Wilkinson Point until I could turn downwind and shut the engine off. Even with two reefs in the main, downwind I could make better than 4 knots under sail, and the next 10 or 12 miles were a treat.

After I dropped the hook in the vest pocket anchorage behind the breakwater at Oriental, I took stock. It did seem hard that the genny failed on the first real sail of

the season, but it was roughly 15 or 18 years old and owed me nothing. So far over the time I'd owned my boat, I'd blown out the main twice and now the headsails twice. One more and I'm an ace!

In this kind of wind, I could make do with the storm jib, something about half the size of the foretriangle, which I bought 20 years ago and used exactly once, and which had been resting comfortably in the bilge these many years in who knows what condition. I hauled it out, and after I oiled the hanks, it seemed likely to be able to get me home, especially as the wind was forecast to back into the southeast over the next few days, again at 15 to 20 knots.

That night, thinking it over, I remembered the old sailor's superstition: Never start a voyage on a Friday. There are other superstitions said to bring bad luck — whistling brings a gale, never sail with a preacher or with women aboard, among other things. I'm not superstitious. Whistling? Really? Women sailors are commonplace these days and I know of a boat in Newport, Rhode Island, called *On Retreat*, said to be owned by a minister. When parishioners call, his answering machine says he's "on retreat."

True, I had sailed one afternoon with a friend who happened to be a minister; yes, he was seasick over the side and spewed heroically to leeward, afterward laying on deck apparently dead, only to be miraculously resurrected when we picked up the mooring. Nevertheless, I had started two voyages back to back on Fridays a week apart, something I had never done before, and now look what happened. Talk about luck, sheesh!

On Saturday, I went looking for a replacement sail among the nautical gear on sale at the flea market. There were several sails that would have worked, though they were small. I had better luck at the only store in town that sold boating supplies and was very near the dinghy dock; here I found a replacement genny 2 feet shorter in the luff and maybe 6 inches longer on the foot, perhaps 12 or 15 square feet smaller overall. Close enough, and it only cost $100. On the other hand, it needed work; the luff tape was torn and there were two hanks missing.

The next day there was a little less wind, so I sailed back to my slip at Northwest Creek with the storm jib and a single reef in the main. When I got the new genny home, I was able to replace the torn luff tape and hand-sew on the two missing hanks, salvaged from one of my old sails.

And best of all, when I got back to the boat to try it out, it fit perfectly well with a 12-inch wire strop at the tack, and I didn't have to move the sheet blocks. What luck!

Good Old Boat *Contributing Editor Cliff Moore sails* Pelorus, *an AMF Paceship 26 he acquired and rebuilt after Hurricane Bob trashed it in 1991. His first boat was a Kool Cigarettes foam dinghy with no rudder or sail.*

Cheater Tongue and Groove

Crafting a traditional interior look and feel with a little ingenuity

BY NICA WATERS

Calypso is the 1976 Bristol Channel Cutter we've owned since 1992. As you might expect, we've put her through a couple of different refits over the years, making her fit for our different needs. Some things — like the countertops and lighting — we've changed with impunity; others we've worked hard to bring back to a more traditional appearance. But matching finishes that were installed in 1976 when you're dealing with 21st-century availability can be challenging. Sometimes, though, it's not as hard as you might think.

We love the texture of the original woodwork below. All the bulkheads, at least the visible parts not hidden inside cabinetry, have a layer of 2.5-inch-wide tongue-and-groove cedar strips on top. Trying to match that look with off-the-shelf products proved almost impossible.

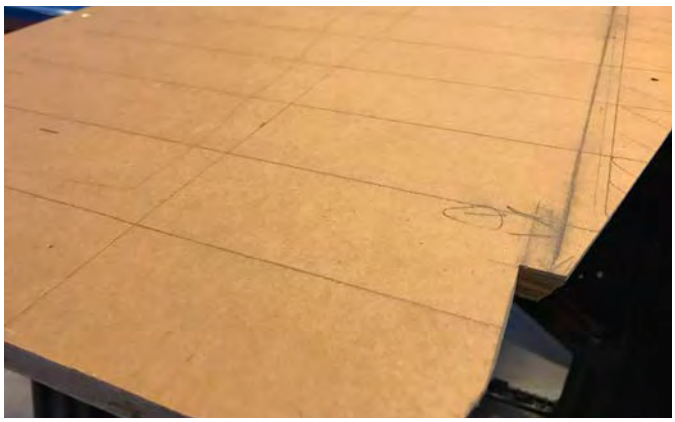
The standard BCC finish for these surfaces, when the Sam L. Morse company was offering completed boats, is a fiberglass liner with that same V-notch cut in. By any of our research methods, that was not available. The only off-the-shelf product that is remotely close is beadboard — and frankly, it's not even remotely close. When we did the first interior refit back in the early 1990s, we reluctantly put in that beadboard where we needed a finish, on the theory that something was better than nothing.

I now think nothing might have been better than the beadboard, which looks like someone ran a bead of sealant between two pieces of wood, leaving two threads on either side of a bulb. Besides the fact that any crack in a surface will gather dust on a boat is the other fact that it completely does not match our existing wood finish. Even when it's painted, it doesn't look the same.

Fast forward to 2018, when we started the latest round of "make this boat the way we want it." Out came the forward berth with its beadboard finish. Out came the galley and the engine cover and the quarter berth. Pretty much any of the surfaces we'd originally covered with beadboard were on the "redo completely" list. There were still a lot of original bulkheads with that original V-notch look. We definitely wanted to recreate that and match it as closely as possible. Now what?

The first thought was to use individual strips of wood. Jeremy ripped some poplar into strips, planed them to the right thickness, then angled the edge off to create a grooved look. A few small nails and a bit of glue later, we had a reasonable-looking match for the original cedar strips.

This took a while, though, between ripping the wood to the right thickness and routering each side, then affixing each piece individually to the bulkhead. We had a lot of this to do in the chart table/quarter berth, engine space, and galley — all areas where thankfully we're not having



Top to bottom on right, **bulkhead with lines drawn, ready for the router.**

Bulkhead with grooves routered.

to match the existing spacing. The idea of dealing with all those individual pieces of wood was not appealing, especially since we were installing all new bulkheads anyway. Why install new bulkheads and then add a whole other layer on top? We figured there had to be a way to combine the process.

It must have been when we were using the router for some other project that we hit on the idea. What about taking a piece of plywood (which will be used to make the bulkheads anyway) and running a groove through it with a router?

This shortcut turned out to be the perfect solution. By cutting the grooves at the proper spacing and setting the router bit to the correct depth, we wound up with a fairly close approximation of the original appearance. We did a test piece first, both to check the look and also to get the router depth right.

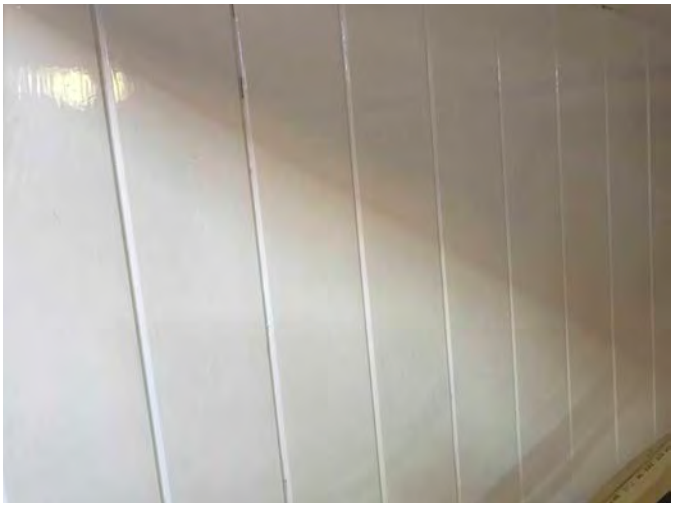
Like a lot of shortcuts, this one took some attention to detail and a few moments of trial and error. The biggest challenge was crafting a makeshift router guide so the grooves would be straight; this is not a place to test your freehand router skills.

Jeremy worked with the plywood for each new bulkhead separately, cutting it to size but leaving any cutouts until after the groove work. He laid each plywood piece on a table, then pulled out the 6-foot metal ruler he often uses as a straight edge; in this case, it served double duty as the router guide. He drew all the lines on the plywood before starting the router work.

There were a lot of clamps involved in the cutting stage. The plywood was clamped to the table. The metal ruler/router guide had its own set of clamps, and these needed to be placed in such a way that the router had space to finish its run. Sometimes it felt like it took longer to reposition the clamps than it did to make each router pass to create the grooves.

Once the grooves had been cut, we smoothed the notches out with a piece of sandpaper to remove any visible burrs.

Navigation locker bulkhead, grooves cut and access hole cut.



Top to bottom on right, **Jeremy installs one of the ash slats on the bulkhead.**

Original tongue and groove with new ash slats. Painted, it's a very close match even on adjoining surfaces.

Then Jeremy cut out any openings. Doing this before cutting the notches would make the notch-cutting harder, since you would have multiple router runs to do for each section. If we could paint before installation, we did; generally, our feeling is that it's a lot easier to paint a horizontal surface than a vertical one.

In the end, we came away with the interior we wanted and a faster way to make the boat beautiful inside. We'll take it!

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

Avoiding an Undocking Disaster

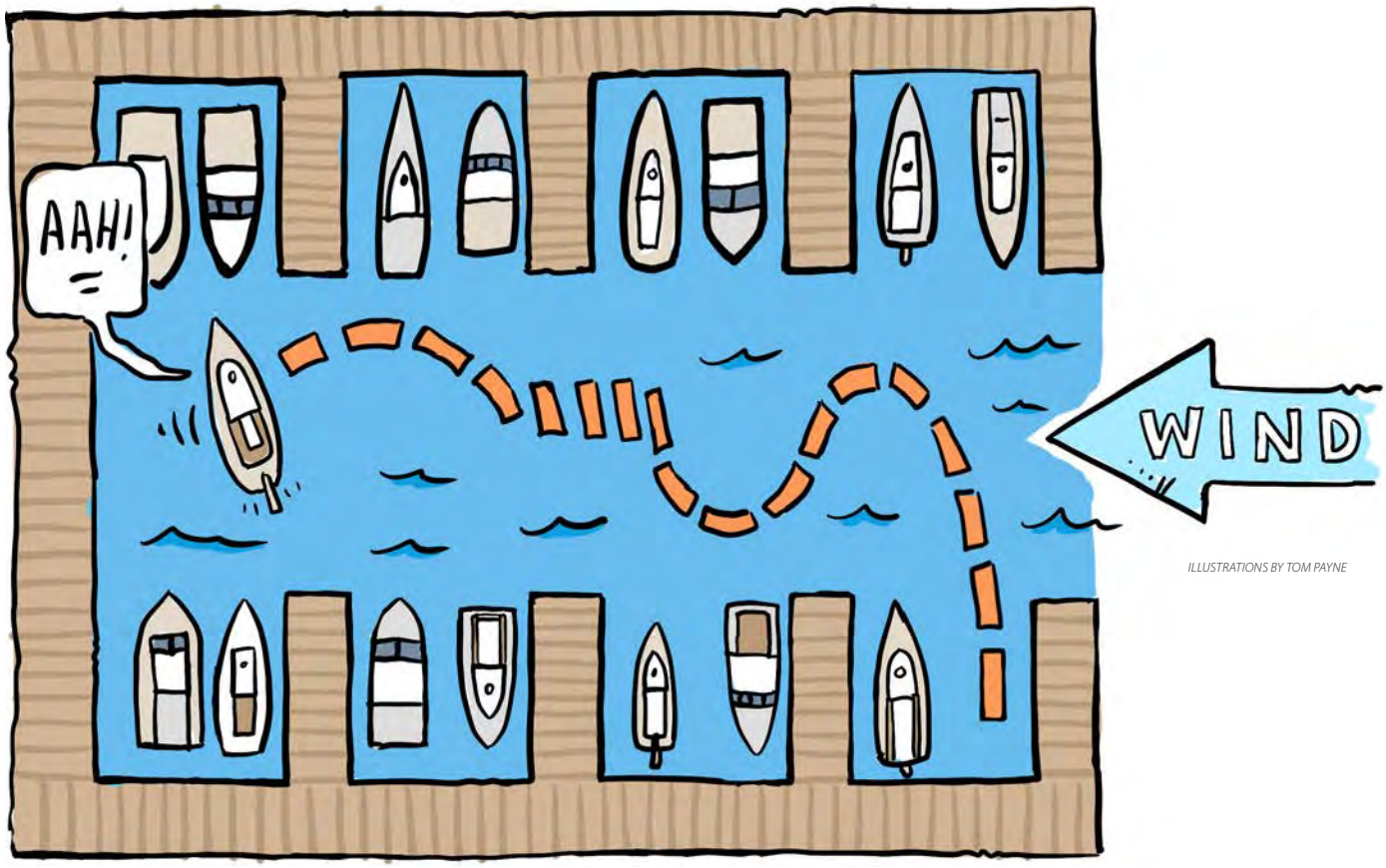
A drift down the fairway provides a lesson in boat handling and hubris.

BY MATTHEW PARSONS

I spent the first six years of my sailing life sailing my fin-keeled 1980 Hunter 36, *Gudgeon*, and for most of that time I was in a fairly tight marina space. After a bit of practice, I was able to spin the boat easily around in her own length and quite happily navigated all sorts of tight spots and unfamiliar marinas.

Thanks to this, I had a level of confidence and security in my own abilities at boat handling that were about to be firmly dashed.

My next boat couldn't have been more different — *Sooner* is a Rafiki 37 and was only a foot longer, but she was literally twice the displacement and had a very full keel. And when I say a full keel, I mean a *full* keel, with 6 feet of draft from the front of the boat to the back. The first time I hauled her out to bottom paint, standing next to the keel was like standing next to a brick wall. She also has a transom-hung rudder, which could charitably be described as having a barn door aesthetic and more realistically as horrendously inefficient. Compared with the balanced spade rudder of my old boat, it was like handling an oil tanker.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM PAYNE

The first time I tried to take her out of the marina solo with a bit of a crosswind blowing, my confidence in my abilities collided with reality. The marina where she was docked is notoriously a bit of a pain to get out of — the fairway between the slips is only a few feet longer than the boat, and a north wind blowing will push you further down the fairway. If you can't make the turn in time, you are blown helplessly down the fairway sideways.

Which, uh, is exactly what happened.

Full of hubris, I had waved away kind attempts to help me leave the dock with a perfunctory "No, I will be totally fine" (I wasn't) and "I've done this before lots of times" (I hadn't).

Reversing out went fine initially, as I had hand-bombed the boat so it was going to reverse at a slight angle, and I backed out enough to where my bow would clear the boat in front. Shifting into forward gear to make the turn, the bow swung around slowly, agonizingly close enough to make the turn, before the (quite gentle) wind caught it and pushed it back. I switched back into reverse and tried again, with more power to try to force it round. And again. And again.

At this point, all the noise and commotion had attracted the attention of everyone at the docks, which, as it was a lovely late summer weekend day, was quite a crowd. People began to shout advice, most of it wildly contradictory, as I slowly drifted sideways down the fairway while I busied myself moving back and forth on the throttle to avoid bumping into any of the boats on either side and throwing myself over the side in embarrassment.

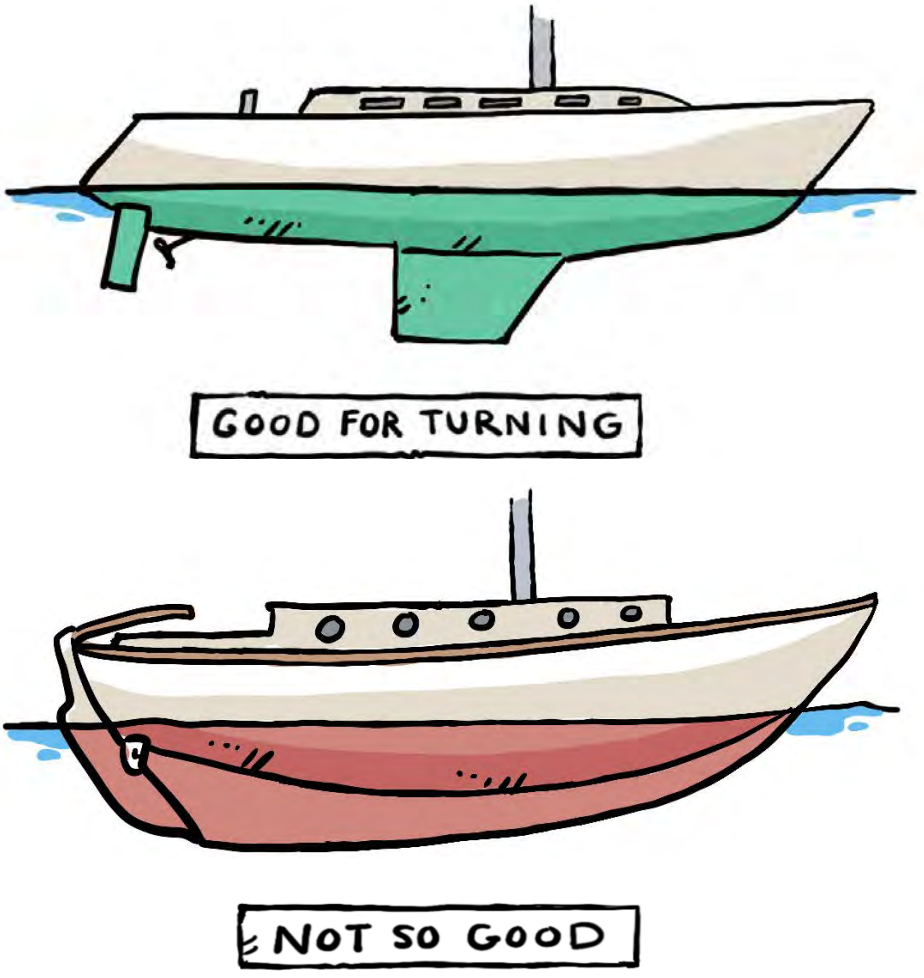
I eventually ended up resting gently against the end of the fairway and was immediately surrounded by an excited group of tourists, grizzled sailors, and a couple of hungry seagulls.

At this point I basically wanted to just go below and pretend that the boat belonged to someone else, but I needed to get off

the dock. Luckily, I spotted George, a neighbor who owned a very similar boat. He suggested backing down on a floating springline attached to the rear of the boat and looped around a cleat on the dock and rotating off a fender — which, combined with a hearty shove and a boathook on the bow, got me facing the right direction. With a burst of power, I was off.

I'd managed not to hit anything during my undignified sideways drift and the only casualty was my pride, which can be repaired a lot cheaper and easier than fiberglass or wood.

Matthew Parsons has lived aboard and sailed since 2014. He sails his newest boat, Sooner, *out of Victoria, British Columbia, and can be found on Instagram at sail_dive_fish or at saildivefish.ca.*



The Takeaway—MP

The main takeaway here (apart from the lesson in humility) is that the difference between a fin keel/balanced spade rudder and a full keel/transom-hung barn door combo is very pronounced. With her full keel, *Sooner* is impossible to steer in the same way my old boat was, and even in forward is a lot less maneuverable. She also has a lot less prop walk in reverse, which makes the "turning on a sixpence" maneuver virtually impossible. I'd read about this but had kind of filed it away and not really acknowledged it. This was made worse by the fact that the couple of times I had taken her out it had been on very calm, windless days, and I'd had crew with me.

I've sailed up to northern British Columbia and down the Canadian/U.S. west coast to Mexico on my old boat, all solo, so I am very used to doing things by myself, which meant I brushed off the offers to help without a second thought. It definitely was a wake-up call to accept help when offered, especially when trying new things (like undocking a new-to-me boat in a crosswind in a tight slip). Every boat is different, and while I would have made that turn in my sleep in *Gudge*, in this case I should have swallowed my pride and accepted the help.

On the plus side, all that experience allowed me to keep calm even when it was obvious that things were going off the rails a bit. That meant I was able to decide to abort and gently nudge the boat back and forth until I reached the end of the dock without hitting anything.

Since that day, I have gone back to the docking guides and instructional videos that I hadn't touched since I first started to learn to sail and have begun to incorporate some techniques that before I had brushed off as too much effort. Due to my previous boat's excellent maneuverability, I'd never had to use a springline to back down on, rotating around on a large ball fender, or any of the other more advanced techniques, all of which I have had to go back and learn. Even just using a (floating) springline attached to the stern and with a wrap around the dock piling allows me to pull the stern around a lot easier than relying on engine power alone, and learning that is helping me become a more well-rounded sailor.

Oh, and I have also since switched marinas, and with my new slip, I don't have to make any turns to come in or out. The best way to make a turn is to avoid doing it at all.

Panel Power

How to craft a DIY electrical panel

BY GRAHAM COLLINS

After our family's C&C 35-3 *Secret Plans* was stolen (*Good Old Boat* September/October 2022), we purchased a new-to-us old boat and named her *Plan B*. She's a 40-year-old CS-36 Traditional that has had at least four previous owners and logged some serious miles. As with most good old boats, *Plan B* came to us with an assortment of old and obsolete electronic bits, as well as some pretty dubious wiring done by the prior owners. The wiring was a rat's nest of unlabeled wires and slide-on terminals. As an engineer who builds military electronics for a living, I found this unacceptable; it had to be replaced.

Besides a boat's batteries, the heart of any electrical system is the main panel. From this, most electrical systems are controlled or at least power switched. I'd planned some extensive rewiring throughout the boat, so this was a logical starting point — bringing power from the batteries to the main panel and distributing it from there.

To design and fabricate a new panel, I planned the job in six steps.

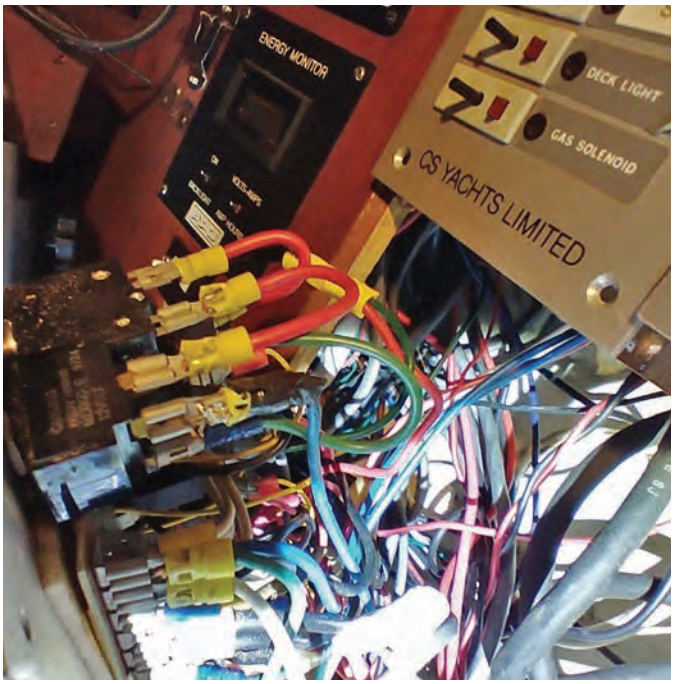
1. Determine the size of the new panel and what switches need to fit and where, then draw a mockup of the panel.
2. Obtain a blank piece of aluminum and mark it for drilling.
3. Drill the holes required.
4. Paint.
5. Assemble and prewire.
6. Install it in the boat and hook it all up.

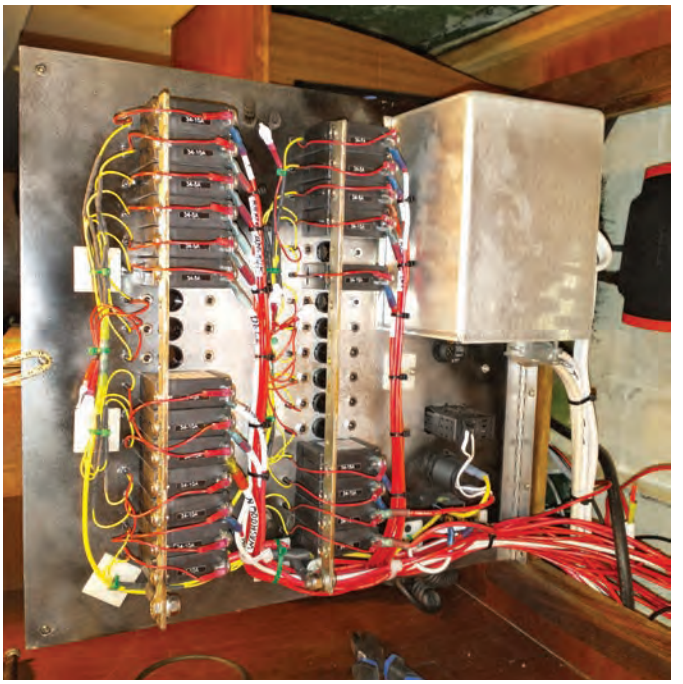
Sizing the Panel

Determining how big a new panel should be can presumably be done by using the existing panel as a pattern, otherwise you have a hole to fill. I sized the panel to cover the entire area that had been occupied by various panels and bits of electronics. Keep in mind you can also break things up into several panels, as had been done originally on *Plan B*. Next, make a list of all the circuits that will be required on the panel. A good idea at the same time is to note the amperage needed so you can buy the right size circuit breakers. Then plan for a bunch of extra circuits that you don't know you need yet — future you will thank you. In my case this meant a panel 16 inches by 15 inches, with AC main and three AC branches, 32 spots for DC circuits, a DC socket for accessories, a USB charging port, and a small N2K display. Do you want indicator lights? Any gauges? Now is your chance!

I then drew what the panel would look like at full size. It is easy to find the dimensions of components online. I had access to CAD software, but for our two previous boats I did this by hand on paper. Whatever your method, just be as accurate as possible, as this will be important later. The drawing doesn't have to be dimensioned like mine; the key things are the center marks for the holes

***Plan B*'s original electrical panels showing their age.**





and the outlines for any cutouts like the USB charger. My drawing also included locations for mounting hardware — in this case a hinge on one end and some captive screws on the opposite edge. Simple mounting holes will suffice.

Sourcing Your Panel

Finding an aluminum sheet of the size and thickness you'd like should be easy in most places where you'll be working on your boat. Our local metal supplier happily sheared an ⅛-inch aluminum sheet to the specs I needed. I chose this thickness due to the relatively larger size of *Plan B's* new panel. For a smaller panel, you can use a 1/16-inch thick sheet.

I then taped my full-size drawing onto the panel. Using a sharp center punch, I punched a mark through the paper for each hole that needed to be drilled. This is where a precise and accurate drawing comes in handy.

Drilling Holes

A job of this precision and scope is best accomplished with a drill press and sharp drill bits. Also, it shouldn't be rushed, so budget several hours for this part of the project. For critical fit parts like indicator lights, it is best to drill a test hole in a piece of scrap and test fit the part to ensure the size is correct. I started by drilling the smallest holes first and working up to the larger holes on the basis that if I drilled in the wrong place, it would be a recoverable error as the hole would just be too small.

Painting the Panel

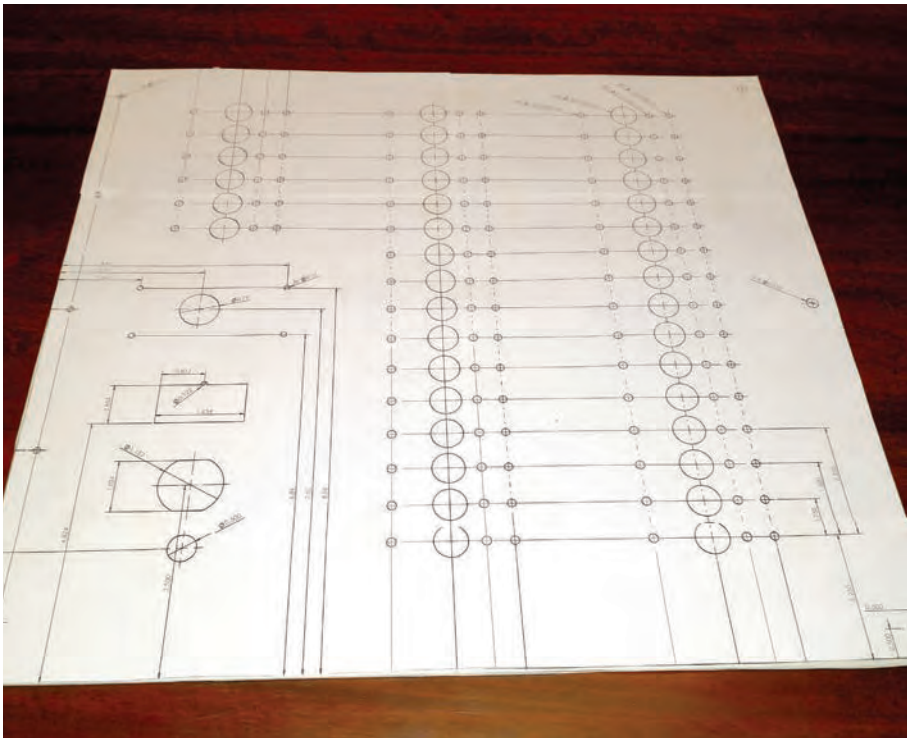
You can paint the panel with a paint type and color of your choice. I've previously used a hammered finish type spray paint and liked it; for this one I went more glossy.

Above left, **when reviewed, the old wiring did not sit well with the author.**

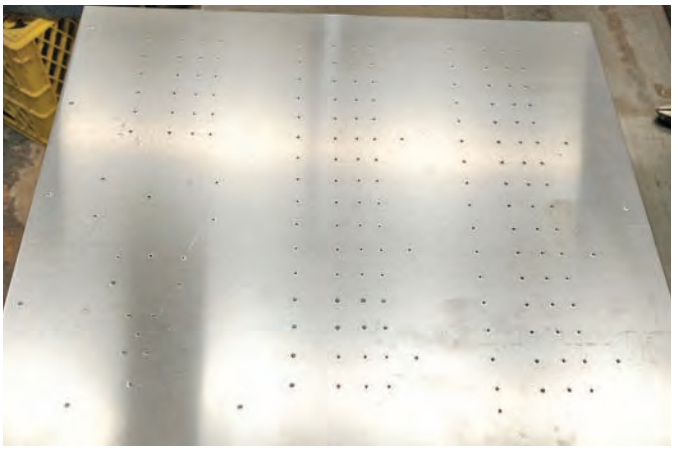
Above right, **after completion, a back view of the panel shows tidy wiring and easy access.**

Assembling Components

Once the paint had fully cured I assembled the components to the panel and prewired it. First, I fitted the hinge and the captive screws, then all the breakers,



Making a full-scale drawing of the panel layout is immensely helpful for the steps to come.



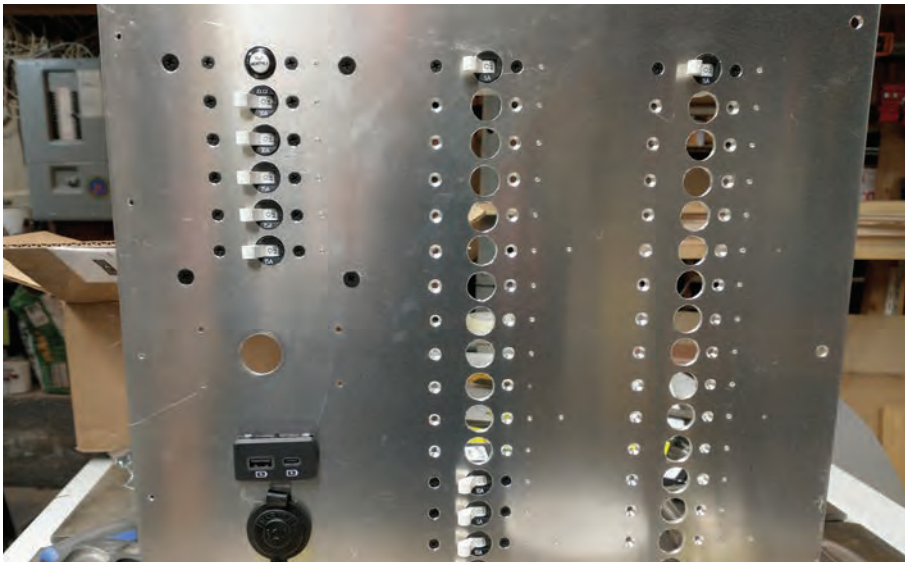
Top to bottom, **the new panel is prepared for drilling with center punches for holes.**

The drilled panel with some test parts fits well.

The panel and related bits are collected and ready for assembly.

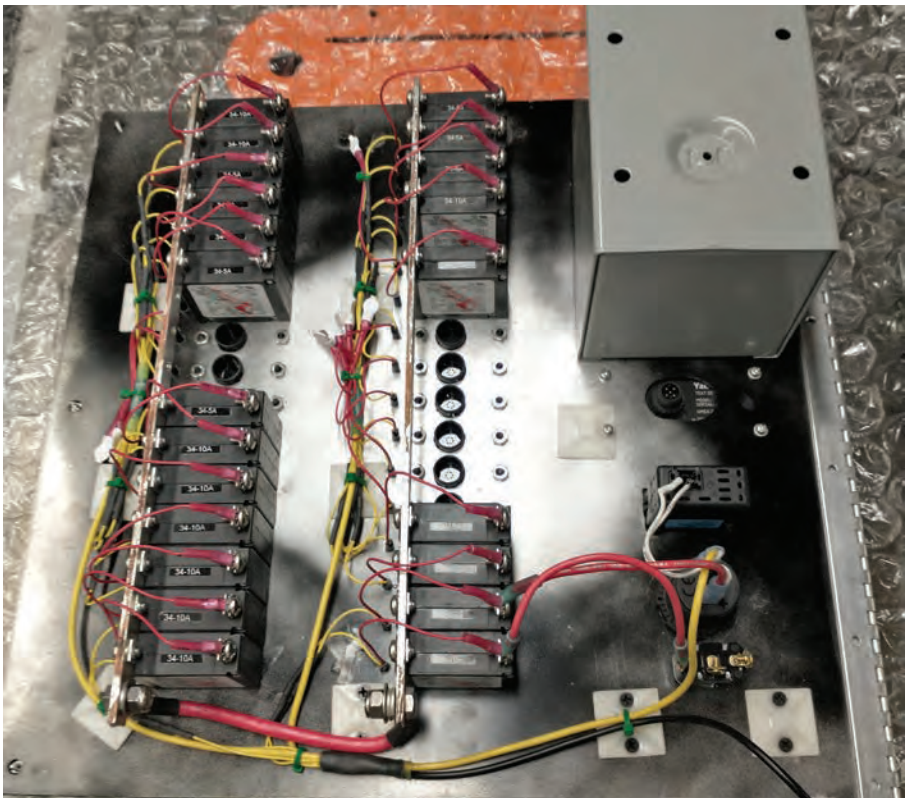
indicator lights, and accessories. From there, I prewired the panel, and there are a couple of things to note on this part. Best practice is to use a buss bar to connect all the "line" side terminals of the breakers. Line is the side of the breaker that power feeds into from the common source (the battery), so these terminals are all connected. A buss bar is a thick copper bar that acts as wires connecting the individual line side terminals. In my panel you can see two buss bars, one each on each column of circuit breakers. These are made of ⅛-inch by ⅜-inch copper, drilled so the screws for the terminals pass through. The lower end of the buss bar extends past the last circuit breaker and is drilled ¼-inch to allow attachment of a heavy-gauge power wire from the battery. These can be seen on the left side of the circuit breakers in the picture to the right, joined by the fat 8 AWG red wire. The connection to the battery will be made to the right buss bar, again with 8 AWG wire, at final installation.

On the red wire of each indicator LED I crimped a ring terminal; this is attached to the matching load terminal on the circuit breaker — the actual load wire will be installed later. The yellow



wires of the indicator LEDs have to be gathered together and combined into one wire (in the picture it starts yellow but changes to black as I ran out of yellow). Where an LED wasn't going to be attached to a circuit breaker I still put a ring terminal on the lead of the LED and then covered the ring with heat-shrink so that, when I need it later, it will be ready to go. If you do this, make sure you don't use heat-shrink with adhesive in it. All of this wiring was then zip-tied in place. The bilge pump switch, accessory plug, and USB charger were also wired at this time and I used clamps for zip-tying the wires for wire management.

Also of note is the box attached at the upper right; this covers the AC shore power wiring. AC wiring is beyond the scope of this article; if you wish to include an AC section on your panel then be sure to lay out the breakers' locations with enough free area around them to accommodate a covering box on the back of the panel. This is both



Note the lower ends of the buss bars extending past the bottom circuit breakers, drilled to enable larger wiring.

an American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC) requirement and is also common sense as the box is intended to ensure nothing short-circuits to your shorepower wiring. Connecting the actual shorepower wiring should be left to a professional.

Front view of the wired panel, ready for installation.

Installing the Panel

And finally, installation in the boat — the main event! I first installed the frame for my new panel and fastened the hinge in place; this allowed me to have the panel partially open as needed. I wanted the wires to come down along the rows of circuit breakers and then off toward the hinge. Starting at the bottom, I cut the wires to length, labeled them, crimped on the ring terminal, and then attached them to the circuit breaker. I did use temporary zip ties on the wire bundle to ensure I was happy with how it ran. In this case there are wires coming into the panel area from three different directions so there are always going to be wires crossing, but trying to keep it neat was a priority.

The new panel in *Plan B* has provided us with a season of trouble-free electrical work, and I'm already planning additions that will go in the empty spots.

Graham Collins is a mechanical engineer who builds anti-submarine detection equipment by day, runs a craft distillery after hours, and finds time here and there to work on Plan B, *a CS-36T, and sail her in the waters of Nova Scotia.*

Continued from page 7

That Sinking Feeling

My on-the-hard "panic" story involves a last-minute air conditioning installation. I was present on launch day, doing a few small things and waiting for the travel lift. The boat had been hauled for a major keel revision (fairing and size increase), plus bottom paint. I got a text from a friend asking me how the through-hull installation went for my upcoming AC installation, and realized that in the midst of the keel revisions, I had forgotten the minor business of installing the water intake. In fact, I had the backing plate with me, complete with installed studs, ready to bond, drill through the hull, and install the flanged valve. I called the yard and rescheduled the launch, bonded the backing plate, and drilled through the hull, and then walked to the local West Marine (on the yard's property) to get a flanged seacock. When I came back, not 20 minutes later, the boat was in the slings and moving toward the slipway, with a gaping 1-inch hole in the bottom! The yard office had never told the workers.

Disaster was averted. I installed the seacock, launched the boat, and finished the AC installation in the water; the full article of the project was published in *Good Old Boat* March/April 2018. But the tale of a near-disaster was not included.

The takeaway: if you have a hole in your boat, hang a sign saying "not ready for launch!"

— **Drew Frye**
Deale, Maryland

Following on Social

Good Old Boat's Facebook and Instagram pages are sources of lively conversation about all manner of topics, from our "Masthead Mondays" to featured good old boat sailors. Here's a collection of topics that readers sounded off on.

Bow Thrusters

Good Old Boat, March/April 2023
https://www.instagram.com/p/CpS8jSDNAlj/

TourconkaleiIt: Was a game changer for us, given we are a smidge larger. Turned a three- or four-handed vessel into an easily two-person-handed, 40,000-pound full-keel cruiser that no longer fears squeezing in between vessels on a fuel dock. We opted for a torpedo-style one for ease of install and have barely noticed a drop in speed under sail (~.25kts) and fuel efficiency remained constant. The dedicated 24-volt battery bank was less than ideal.

Dyneema Lifelines?

Good Old Boat, January/February 2023
https://www.instagram.com/p/Cnscj5prjmu/

Svredshiftayana37: We installed Dyneema lifelines to replace our failing vinyl coated wire. It is soft, easy to inspect and replace. I won't go back!

Fouleduplife: We recently replaced our vinyl-coated lifelines with Dyneema. It was a relatively easy project to do ourselves and so far, we are really pleased with them.
https://web.facebook.com/goodoldboat/posts/560874446057855

Lizzy Grim: Mom and I are replacing the single row of white vinyl coated lifelines on our 1973 Catalina 27 this year including new stanchions so we can go to much safer double stainless lifelines. She's having quite the 50th birthday year.

Larry Miers: I replaced all the lifelines on my boat with Dyneema. It's an easy "do-it-yourself" project that requires no special tools. The special fittings can be used again (if still serviceable) and just replace the line the next time they need to be replaced.

Dan Razzell: That's a good, thoroughly comprehensive article. It echoes my own experience and adds some new insights as well. I will comment that there's nothing wrong with serving over potential chafe areas with light Marline or seine twine. If the lifeline creeps a bit, put on a new serving and cast off the old. It only takes a few minutes.

Odes to Brion Toss

Good Old Boat, January/February 2023
https://web.facebook.com/goodoldboat/posts/549415757203724

Jonathan Raney: A great rigger, an inveterate punster, and a good friend. I miss him every day.

Dennis Todd: Brion replaced the running rigging and later, the standing rigging of our Kelly-Peterson 44, *Tango*. He was a delight to work with. The breadth of his knowledge about many topics was amazing. His humor and gentleness were extraordinary. His workmanship was impeccable. When we needed a referral to the best craftspeople in Port Townsend, he always sent us to the best. I miss him!

Scoobscobie: Four years ago Brion assisted me with setting up a new-to-me boat. He was extremely helpful, went beyond expectations in getting a few items fixed while at the same time teaching me how to keep the rig tuned and in tip-top shape. He is missed!

Sv.saudade: Miss seeing him at the Seattle boat show every year. When I first bought my sailboat, he was one of the first people to help with a rigging inspection. I learned so much and he was always open to explaining even the most basic things to help me understand.

Cover Love

Good Old Boat, January/February 2023

Janet Gannon: I love this cover. In fact, I've loved so many GOB covers recently! It's nice when a magazine finds beauty in places like a boatyard, rather than featuring a new boat with professional staff in the Caribbean! Well done, whoever is picking these pics!

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Boats for Sale

Chris-Craft 35 Sail Yacht

Classic Sparkman & Stephens design. Center cockpit, fiberglass hull, built by Chris-Craft in Michigan. 38-hp Kubota diesel, 400 hours. Isotherm fridge, new head and holding tank 2022, solar panels. Great storage, ideal for cruising or liveaboard. Featured in *Good Old Boat* in May/June 2015. Interior modified for separate work areas for artist/writer owners. Located near Kilmarnock, VA. $32,500.

David Aiken
410-490-1191
studioda35@gmail.com

Pearson 30

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

John Traina
207-380-6725
newcmar1@gmail.com

Ranger 37

1973. 20-hp MD20-20 Volvo. Racer/cruiser. Boat needs rebuilding. Engine runs. Located in Florida. $6,500.

Tom McLeod
334-733-0020
jenny.burril@gmail.com

Bristol 29.9

1978 Sloop. Very good cond. LOA 29′11″, beam 10′2″, draft 4′4″. Yanmar SB12 1-cyl diesel, runs exc. Newer standing rigging, backstay tensioner. Wheel steering, GPS plotter, AIS rec, VHS w/remote mic. Newer main/dutchman, roller furler, spinnaker. Efficient galley, head, shower, etc. Lots of storage and extras. Herreshoff design; well-built and maintained cruiser. South NH. Motivated owner. $16,000 or best reasonable offer.

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

Pearson Wanderer 30 Sloop

1966 Pearson Wanderer 30 sloop. Bill Shaw design. Classic Pearson coastal cruiser. Roller-furling jib. Loose-footed, fully battened main. Older sails on board. New dodger. Yanmar 2GM20F diesel, 420 hours. VHF, depth, Garmin chart plotter, bulkhead compass. Brightwork, decks, and hull old, but well-maintained. Yard-maintained. Hardshell dinghy potentially included. Solid, reliable, and pretty boat from a well-respected designer and builder. Brooklin, ME. $15,000.

Peter Triandafillou
207-745-2658
trian@twc.com

Rhodes 25

1936. Design #1870. Good cond. Includes complete history of ownership and letters from builder Philip L. Rhodes. Built by Milwaukee Boat Works. Construction ¾″ mahogany planks on 1 ¼ x 1 ¼ white oak frame at 8″ OC. Bronze screw fastened, lead keel. 39′5″ Sitka spruce mast, 2 sets of spreader and jumper struts. 14′ Sitka spruce boom w/ slab reefing blocks, cleats, and wood boom crutch. 2 jib sheet bronze #2 winches at cockpit coaming and 2 sets of jib blocks w/cars. Additional in-water photos. Located Crowley's Yacht Yard, Chicago, IL. $15,000.

Nautical Donations, Inc.
773-672-2080
info@nauticaldonations.org

Victoria Frances 26

1982. Chuck Paine design, seldom seen on market. Lovingly maintained by owner for 36 years. 1982 1GM Yanmar with new cylinder head in 2022. Club-footed jib 80%, hank-on jib 120% almost brand new, never used by current owner! Interior varnished and spotless. Depth sounder. Bottom maintained every year by yard. Email for pictures and info. Located East Coast mid-Florida. $30,000.

Margaret Pesaturo
321-412-5943
thmargaret1@gmail.com

Continued on next page

Columbia 8.3

1977. Numerous upgrades, main, jib, 160% genoa, Atomic 4. Original owner. Upper Chesapeake. $5,000 (Custom tri-axle trailer available).

Bill Hulanick
609-641-5459
hulanick1@comcast.net

Sea Sprite 23

1980 classic daysailer, C.E. Ryder Corp. design. 4 sails and spinnaker. Full keel in great condition, bottom painted with Pettit HRT Premium Multi-Season Antifouling July '22. Yamaha 8-hp 2008 runs well with new carburetor, new fuel-water separator, new fuel line, and new water pump. Nice interior cushions. Sails well and looks good. Edgewater, MD. $6,995 OBO.

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The Wind at Your Back

The sailing stories we tell can be a map to a meaningful life

BY DAVID BLAKE FISCHER

My first sailboat sank in 6 feet of water. In retrospect, minor maintenance could've saved the little dinghy. But I was a kid; those parts cost money; and anyway, who needs a boat that floats?

Okay, the boat didn't technically sink, per se. Foam flotation made that all but impossible. But when the hull filled with water and tennis shoes and soda cans began floating out of the cockpit, my buddy and I quickly realized we were in a fix.

"Save yourself!" I yelled at one particularly memorable moment.

"Save myself?" Steve said, laughing. "From what?"

We jumped out of the boat and into the warm August water, swimming and pulling on a bowline until we'd floated the boat ashore. Back on the beach, brilliant minds hatched a foolproof plan to recover the semi-submerged vessel. My older brother reversed a rusty S-10 pickup down into the water's edge, hooked up an old clothesline as a tow rope, and pulled until the wheels spun.

Easy work. In a single afternoon, we'd sunk a sailboat and stuck a truck in the lake.

Most sailors have stories like this. Look closely and you'll see that the tales we tell (the funny, the embarrassing, the beautiful) are rarely about ego or the material. Instead, our best memories call back relationships with the environment, the bonds of family, and the connectedness of friends.

In my memory, I can still see my childhood buddy Ben smiling in the Sunfish he sailed each summer when we were kids. I can see my father cutting plywood daggerboards for our catamaran. And I can still hear echoes of a conversation shared with my mother.

"Couldn't you just stay out here forever?" I asked her as we bobbed along monotonously on a windless summer day.

"It's great," my mother said. "Though, I'm not sure about forever."

Nostalgia takes us back in time, but its real power is its ability to orient us forward and offer clues to what a meaningful life might look like. I think of this often as I take my own kids sailing on our Cape Dory 25. They're young now. This is our first year with a sailboat. And as the California spring inches closer to summer, I keep wondering: Which experiences will they remember? What meaning will they make? What stories will they tell?

Twenty bucks says they won't remember some chipped paint, a sale on outboards, or a fancy piece of new rope. Instead, years from now, with the wind at their backs, small, seemingly insignificant moments will resurface from these early years on the water. Maybe they'll recall the briny smell of the sea, the way you can feel a gentle breeze on your arms, or what a gift it is to drift off to sleep and wake to the sound of seals or the sight of dolphins. Or maybe they'll remember that first time they held the tiller and guided us back to the slip at sunset.

Guess I'm biased, but I bet the stories these guys tell will be amazing. And like that, we'll be transported back to when they were kids and we were young parents, a small family out sailing a little boat along the edge of an immense ocean.

It's a ways off now, but I can see it already.

Ezra tries his hand at handling the working sheet on a father-and-son daysail from Marina Del Rey to Redondo Beach, California.

David Blake Fischer lives in Southern California. His work has appeared in McSweeney's, BuzzFeed, the Moth, and Cruising World magazine, where he pens a lighthearted, self-effacing monthly column for noob sailors. Follow his reflections and escapades on Instagram @ sailingdelilah.

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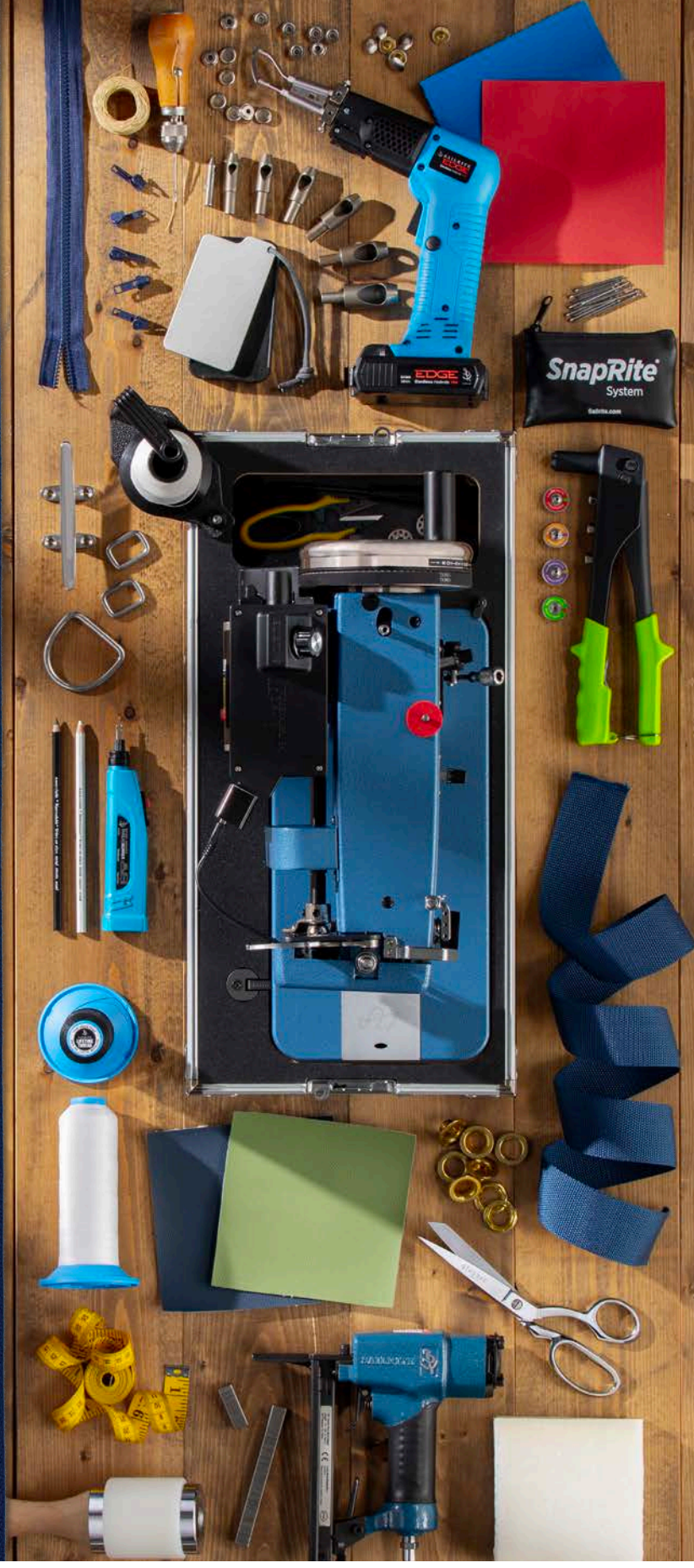

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