

# GOOD OLD BOAT

*The sailing magazine for the rest of us!*



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# Voices from everywhere

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## Where you can find our magazine

*(and sometimes the back issues you're looking for)*

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in the January issue  
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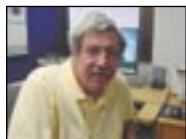


**Bill Sandifer** (*The CS 36*, Page 4) is a contributing editor with *Good Old Boat* and a marine surveyor and boatbuilder who has been living, eating, and sleeping boats since the early '50s when he assisted at Pete Layton's Boat Shop. He and his wife, Genie, sail an Eastward Ho 32.

**Don Casey** (*Cheoy Lee 32*, Page 8) became the authority on boat fix-it projects with *This Old Boat*. He is the author of a series of books in the International Marine Sailboat Library. He and his wife, Olga, cruise aboard their 35-year-old Allied Seawind.



**Ted Brewer** (*Cheoy Lee 32*, Page 12) is a contributing editor with *Good Old Boat* and one of North America's best-known yacht designers. He also is the man who designed scores of good old boats... the ones still sailing after all these years.



**Henry Cordova** (*Com-Pac Yachts*, Page 13) is a geographer/cartographer who has been a sailor of the military persuasion (U.S. Naval Reserve on the USS *Dewey*)

and of the recreational variety (a San Francisco Pelican and a MacGregor 22) for most of his life.

**Gregg Nestor** (*Splicing and whipping*, Page 19) is a contributing editor with *Good Old Boat*. More than 20 years and four boats ago, he discovered sailing and has been an avid "trailersailor" ever since. He and his wife, Joyce, sail an O'Day 222, *Splash*.

**Derk Akerson** (*Splicing double-braid*, Page 21) was raised on and about boats in a boating family. Although he and his wife, Terri, sail a Coronado 23 off the coast of California, they're on the lookout for something bigger for longer retirement-time voyages.



**Brian Gilbert** (*Junkyard wars for a boatless sailor*, Page 23) was a liveaboard sailor for four years before getting married and returning to graduate school. The MacGregor Venture 222, which he spent three years restoring, is for sale; Brian's looking for a larger boat for a cruise to the Caribbean.

**Vern Hobbs** (*Jonathan Seagull's incredible escape*, Page 26) and his wife, Sally, sail a 1974 35-foot Bristol cutter along Florida's Atlantic coast and the Intracoastal Waterway. Their day jobs pay the rent, but Vern's work as a local artist specializing in maritime subjects finances the boat projects.



**Dave Martin** (*Living out a dream*, Page 28) is a contributing editor with *Good Old*

*Boat*. In the early 1980s, he spent two years sailing his Cal 25, *Martini*, from Seattle to New York City via the Panama Canal. Between 1988 and 1995, Dave and his wife, Jaja, circumnavigated aboard that Cal. Between 1998 and 2002, the Martins, along with their three children, voyaged to the Arctic aboard their 33-footer, *Driver*.

**Peter Baumgartner** (*Cape Dory weather*, Page 34) moors his 27-foot Cape Dory, *London*, in the heart of Buzzards Bay. He is the author of *London Goes to Sea*, the story of restoring *London* and cruising on her along the New England coast. The book began as a two-part article first published in *Good Old Boat* in January 2001. Peter and *London* have a website at <<http://www.pbbaumgartner.com>>.



**Michael Batham** (*All ship-shape aloft*, Page 36) enjoys solving problems on boats. As a young man he sailed out from England to the Caribbean on an old Falmouth Quay Punt. There he took charge of a rickety shipyard that was hauling the last of the old sail trading schooners. He and his wife, Tere, have been sailing their 47-foot steel ketch, *Sea Quest*, the length and breadth of the Pacific for the past decade.



Early on, **Steven Alexander** (*Spiffing up the spars*, Page 40) decided to skip the 30 years of hard labor and went straight for the boat. He has been living on a 34-foot Columbia in Marina del Rey, California, for 15 years, making a living as a freelance shipwright and sailing off into sunsets pretty much whenever he pleases.



**Don Launer** (*Shaft Log 101*, Page 42) is a *Good Old Boat* contributing editor. He has held a U.S. Coast Guard OUPV license for more than 20 years. He built his two-masted schooner, *Delphinus*, from a bare hull and sails it on the East Coast from his home on Barnegat Bay in New Jersey.



**Fritz Seegers** (*Fritz's fantastic journey*, Page 44) is an animator and illustrator who blends traditional art with computer technology. He built a Maurice Griffiths 27-foot cutter 25 years ago and has sailed it in lakes Michigan, Huron, and Superior. He recently organized traveling exhibitions of his work and accompanying artists on two circumnavigations of Superior. See <<http://www.lakesuperiorcircum.org>>. He can be contacted at [fritzatsea@yahoo.com](mailto:fritzatsea@yahoo.com).

**Sonny Furman** (*Poor man's Hinckley*, Page 46) flew 137 missions for the U.S. Air Force. After the war he served as an instructor to the Chinese National Air Force and



is now retired. He's a licensed instructor in automotive and diesel technology. Before the Pedrick 41, he owned and refurbished an Albin 27, a Westerly 31, and a Pearson 365 pilothouse.

**Silver Donald Cameron** (*The dinghy dilemma*, Page 51) is the author of several books about the sea, including *Wind, Whales and Whisky*, the story of a circumnavigation of Cape Breton Island in his then-engineless cutter *Silversark*. He lives in D'Escousse, Nova Scotia. Visit his website at <<http://www.islemadame.com/sdc/>>.



**Ken Textor** (*Teak mystique*, Page 55) has been writing and sailing for more than 25 years. In recent years he has been refitting and sailing an Allied Seabreeze 35. He offers deliveries and pre-purchase surveys for other sailors.



**John Butler** (*Reflect on this*, Page 70) was a Coast Guard search and rescue pilot. He retired as a commander in 1974 and now lives with his wife, Mary Lu, on Beaver Lake in Northwest Arkansas and sails a 1963 Cape Cod Catboat whenever he gets the chance.



**Alan Lucas** (*Simple solutions: Winch switch melt-down*, Page 77), an Australian from New South Wales, has been cruising for 40 years, primarily south of the equator. Alan is the author of several Australian cruising guides.



**Geoffrey Toye** (*Simple solutions: The knife with the curious handle*, Page 79) lives in a beach house on the west coast of Wales. He's been involved with small craft for more than 40 years.



After sailing for 10 years on Georgian Bay in Ontario, **Paul Clegg** (*Simple solutions: Dinghy keel extension*, Page 81) and his wife, Arlie, have shipped their Hughes 26, *Smooth Moves*, to Vancouver Island where they are exploring the many islands in the Strait of Georgia.



**Ellen Landrum** (*Reflections: Deciding to go*, Page 88) and her husband, John, are newlyweds on their first extended cruise down the U.S. East Coast aboard *Rubicon*, their 1965 Alberg 30. They plan to winter over in Boot Key Harbor in the Florida Keys before deciding whether to head north to Maine and the Maritimes or continue south.



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*About the cover...*



While visiting Antarctica, Annie Hill and Trevor Robertson took this photo of *Iron Bark*, a Wylo II designed by Nick Skeates and built of steel specifically for high-latitude sailing. This winter they're at the opposite end of the globe, in Greenland.

## Stick-shift revelations

*If you can drive, you'll also  
be able to sail...eventually*

**R**EVELATIONS OCCUR NO MATTER WHERE YOU are. If you can turn the noise level off (radios, television, conversation, phone calls), your mind can wander freely. This is one of the reasons I enjoy sailing so much. We get away from the noise and can explore not only our cruising grounds but also the interiors of our minds.

But this revelation came while creeping along in traffic. The scene was different, but the interruptions were minimal. I was in just one vehicle among hundreds oozing along in a river of metallic molecules merging and flowing at millimeter speed along a clogged-up interstate. Stop and go. Uphill and down, following the Barrel O' Fun Chips and Snacks truck. I realized suddenly that driving a stick-shift was something that came naturally to me.

I was no longer stressed by the first- and second-gear starts and stops on hills. I made it look easy now. I'd been doing this for years. When had I last been challenged by this sort of driving, with the occasional rump-rumps when the gear is too high for the slow speed, interspersed with occasionally killing the engine and the embarrassing restart? It had been years. There was a time when driving a five-speed was not so easy, demanding my full attention and humbling me upon occasion.

My sailing skills are still at that lower level. It demands all of my attention when I'm at the helm or making the calls as captain. I can't steer in reverse worth a hoot. I am not necessarily one with the wind. If I'm at the helm when docking or leaving the dock, it's a study in concentration. I can't always see when the sails need tweaking or how a certain evolution is going to turn out.

Jerry can do all those things and makes them look easy. He's a master of sail shape, thanks to many years spent racing one-designs. He can look ahead a couple of steps and tell me what my role will be when entering an unfamiliar port or taking on an evolution of any type that we haven't already done a hundred times before.

I wasn't born with a tiller in my hand, but I hope someday to acquire the same sort of easy comfort with sailing that Jerry has. I know this is possible because I have mastered driving a stick-shift without having to think about each individual action




**Early June on Lake Superior. Two-way radio is to nav station below.**

and reaction. The only way to accomplish the same thing in a sailboat, I realize, is to sail often. Practice, practice, practice. It's a goal I can enjoy working toward.

See you on the water! But if I'm at the helm, especially if the boat's currently moving in reverse, give me plenty of room. And don't break my concentration just then. I'll be plenty busy.

### Regatta report

I'm pleased to report that in its fifth year the Good Old Boat Regatta in Annapolis (October 2 and 9, 2004) grew to 92 entries for the two-weekend event. The founders are thinking of limiting the number of participating boats in the future, in fact. Co-founder Don Frye reports that the most remarkable thing is the sense of community in the participants. He's also grateful for other sponsors who have joined *Good Old Boat* in supporting this event, Heritage Marine Insurance and Herr's, and host Shearwater Sailing Club. For more, visit our website <<http://www.goodoldboat.com/regatta.html>> and see this issue's Mail Buoy on Page 83.

Farther north, another regatta, the Heritage Regatta Series for Good Old Boats, drew participation, particularly at the Race Rock Regatta part of the series, where 16 fiberglass classics came out to play with the wooden boats that have been racing there for years. Founder Jim Cassidy says the wooden boat sailors were vocal and enthusiastic supporters of this new addition to their race, and he expects to see an increase in fiberglass boats in all the events in the series. 

*Karen Larson*





Photos by Lynn O'Hara

# The CS 36

*A handsome and stoutly built offering from Canada*

*by Bill Sandifer*



**T**HE CANADIAN SAILCRAFT 36 IS one of the best-built boats I have yet sailed. That it is underappreciated is evidenced by the fact that even in its home waters of Long Island Sound, New York, where there are literally thousands of boats, there are only two Canadian Sailcraft 36s. Where you can find them, these boats are very well built, sail well, are fairly priced on the market, and are a sheer joy.

## Design and construction

What is so good about the boat? In a word, quality, both in design and in construction. The boat was designed by Raymond Wall, of Camper & Nicholson's fame. Raymond had previously designed the CS 27 on commission for Canadian Sailcraft and company owner Paul Tenneyson. He eventually became the in-house designer for Canadian Sailcraft. However, he eventually left Canadian Sailcraft as he felt "things were moving too fast for the quality required during different phases of production." The company appointed Tony Castro, a Ron Holland protégé, to replace Raymond as the head designer. Tony produced a number of smaller and larger designs, but the CS 36 is all Raymond Wall's design and it shows.

The CS 36 is a good-looking design with reverse-angle transom. It is a sloop with a double-spreader rig and all stainless-steel hardware on deck. No teak is evident on deck. In today's market the design is slightly dated, but as the sea has not changed, good design always remains in style. The proportions of the boat put it in the middle of the spectrum, neither being too beamy nor too narrow. The keel is a fin type

---

**Stacy and Lori Aslan and their daughter, CJ, sail *Roi Soleil*, their Canadian Sailcraft 36, in the waters of Long Island Sound, New York. *Roi Soleil* is one of only two CS 36s in the area. Designed by Raymond Wall, these boats are fairly priced and a joy to sail.**



with detached rudder mounted on a partial skeg. The boat steers as though on rails and comes about like a dinghy, quick and agile. The hull itself has a nice shape to it, not flat-bottomed, and does not pound when it encounters large wakes of passing powerboats. The day we sailed the breeze was only 8 to 10 knots, so it was hard to know how the boat would handle bigger waves. Based on how it handled the powerboat wakes, I would say this boat would be comfortable at sea.

### On deck

The boat is set up for easy handling with all sheets and halyards led to the cockpit. The halyards are served by single-speed Lewmar 30s to port and starboard on the aft end of the coach-house roof, with a series of stoppers that allow one winch to handle the halyards, dual reefing lines, and mainsheet, which is rigged for mid-boom sheeting. Genoa sheets are handled by a pair of two-speed, self-tailing Lew-

mar 44s on the cockpit coaming.

We cranked in the genoa sheet hard, and the sail flattened out visibly. Owners Stacy and Lori Aslan are considering a new set of sails for the boat for

*“The mast is keel-stepped and has a neat connection at its base to direct the water that enters the spar into the bilge. Small things like this point to the quality and pride with which the boat was built.”*

next year. The main is fully battened and has a Doyle StackPack for ease of furling. The day we sailed, the original monofilament StackPack had broken due to age, but Stacy says the system

works well when operational.

The mast is keel-stepped and has a neat connection at its base to direct the water that enters the spar into the bilge. Small things like this point to the quality and pride with which the boat was built. A look around the deck shows well-bolted lifelines, a well-thought-out flush anchor locker, and a large T-shaped cockpit with a 36-inch stainless-steel destroyer wheel.

### The rig

The only negatives on deck are the shrouds adjacent to the mast. All shrouds attach to chainplates that project through the deck in the middle of the passageway. If they were outboard, you would lose sheeting angle but gain a wider walkway. If they were inboard, they would be next to the cabinhouse with a better, slightly sharper sheeting angle, and one could walk outboard of them on the way to the bow. Located as they are in the middle of the walkway, they present quite an







obstacle for those going forward.

The chainplates are well secured belowdecks. The mast is a heavy-duty aluminum extrusion with a tie rod forward of it tying the keel and the deck together. The tie rod helps keep the deck from buckling upward as the mast pushes downward and the chainplates pull upward.

### Under way

We got under way from a mooring at the Centerport Yacht Club in Centerport, New York, and were quickly pushed to sea by the Westerbeke 30 diesel married to a V-drive under the cockpit. This engine is well suited to the 36-footer. Stacy thought that the two-bladed prop that came with the boat could be improved upon and may go to a three-bladed feathering prop next year.

### Belowdecks

When going below, one is immediately impressed by the open and neat ac-

commodations. The layout is conventional with a V-berth forward, followed by a head to starboard and a limited hanging locker to port. Moving aft, there is an L-shaped settee to starboard and a straight settee to port. The galley is to port aft, with the naviga-

*"...the head and shower... rival ones on most 40-foot or larger boats. The head is really big, usable, and well laid out. The sole is a teak grate with a drain to a dedicated shower sump."*

tor's station to starboard at the head of the quarter berth. There are two really notable areas in the belowdecks arrangement. The first is the head and shower in that they rival ones on most

40-foot or larger boats. The head is really big, usable, and well laid out. The sole is a teak grate with a drain to a dedicated shower sump. The shower curtain is on a rod overhead to protect the entire head from getting wet.

The second remarkable area is the icebox. This 36-footer has no refrigeration, but the icebox is the best-insulated box I have ever seen. There is a molded fiberglass liner in the box with a three-part top, drain, and interior shelves. The icebox drain is connected to an electric pump that discharges melt water from the icebox into the galley sink through a dedicated fitting.

While I was there, Stacy noticed water left in the bottom of the icebox. He simply turned a switch, and the box was quickly drained into the double sink on the opposite side of the galley... a thoughtful touch for a production boat. These touches are more like those found on a Hinckley or a custom craft than on a production sailboat.

The interior of the lockers is well





finished and the molded-in liner is neat wherever you find it. Access to the storage areas below the V-berths is typical of the whole boat: clean, neat, well-thought-out, and smoothly finished.

Stacy was having new teak-faced lockers built over the V-berth, as the boat came with open-bin lockers that dump their contents during a hard sail. The new teak lockers will match the rest of the interior of the boat and be finished bright. There is a teak locker in the galley. This is another nice touch that is unusual on a production boat.

Stacy had to have a new cabin sole installed in the boat when he bought it, as the old one made of teak plywood had rotted from exposure to bilge water. The CS 36 has a shallow bilge, so water tends to wind up under or on the cabin sole. The new sole is beautifully finished in clear varnish, semigloss, and should hold up better than the original. That it held up for 24 years is not bad for a plywood sole.

There are bronze ball valves on all seacocks in the bilges. These valves were not standard; the earlier ones were replaced at some time by a previous owner. Tanks are well secured, and all electrical and plumbing systems are neatly done.

### The engine

Several areas are open to criticism in the engine layout. Access is just plain impossible. The previous owner of this boat *assumed* the engine was raw-water cooled because he could see water coming out of the exhaust fitting at the transom. He never checked the freshwater cooling system, as he did

*“The previous owner of this boat assumed the engine was raw-water cooled because he could see water coming out of the exhaust fitting at the transom. He never checked the freshwater cooling system, as he did not know it had one.”*

not know it had one. One has to lie on one's side in the quarter berth, head aft (it's a V-drive remember), remove a panel in the side of the quarter berth, and use a small cup to fill the reservoir of the freshwater system.

The saltwater circulating pump is under the manifold and might be accessible from this position, but I doubt it.



### Canadian Sailcraft 36

**Builder:** Canadian Sailcraft Yachts Limited, Bramton, Ontario, Canada

**LOA:** 36 feet 6 inches

**LWL:** 29 feet 3 inches

**Beam:** 11 feet 6 inches

**Draft:** Deep keel, 6 feet 3 inches; shallow keel, 4 feet 11 inches

**Displacement:** 15,500 pounds

**Ballast:** Deep keel, 6,500 pounds; shallow keel, 6,650 pounds


**Sail area:** 640 square feet

To get to the other side of the engine to check the oil, one gets into the cockpit locker if one fits (I didn't) and removes a panel to find the dipstick. The aft end of the engine is accessible by removing the companionway ladder, but there really is little here that needs attention.

### Things to watch for

The final criticism I have is of the ladder from the cockpit down into the cabin. It is a two-part vertical ladder that has the lower two steps set over-vertical, a little aft of the top step (see photo on Page 6). This means that you descend a more-than-vertical ladder to get to the cabin sole. I had to look carefully where I put my feet. After many similar maneuvers even Stacy traverses the ladder slowly. If this boat were moving in a seaway, this ladder could cause a fall. An improved angle would obstruct the galley. Perhaps shimming the bottom two steps out a little to an actual vertical rather than over-vertical would help.

### Summary

This is a beautifully built sailing boat of high quality. In its review in 1999, *Practical Sailor* did not harp on engine access as much as I did, but the engine layout did not get rave reviews either. The boat behaves well under sail; is easy to move on about the deck, except for the shrouds; and is a real joy. I definitely would recommend it to anyone. 



# Cheoy Lee 32



*Combining character with space  
and elegant comfort*

*by Don Casey*

**W**E FIRST SAW *ZEPHYR* IN SAPODILLA Bay in the Turks and Caicos, noting her size more than her appearance. My wife, Olga, and I had been assured that almost no one was cruising to the Caribbean in small boats, yet among nine boats waiting there to sail to the Dominican Republic, four were less than 32 feet in length.

A week later, the weather window we were awaiting finally materialized, and we all made the overnight crossing together, nine masthead lights forming a constellation on a pitch-black ocean. Daybreak revealed the astonishing mountains of Hispaniola, barely

conceivable after the low islands of the Bahamas. Entering Lupéron Harbor that morning, we became forever linked as members of the “group of nine.”

We often spent time ashore in company with *Zephyr*’s owners, Bruce and Cheryl Horton, but, with nearly 100 cruising boats in the harbor, more than three months would pass before we went aboard *Zephyr*. When we did, we discovered something special.

In 1993, Bruce and Cheryl were living a “normal” life — a comfortable house with a mortgage, two cars in the driveway, and two jobs. But the house happened to be in Vero Beach, Florida,

a community where an inordinate number of sailors pause, soon to leave for (or recently returned from) far-flung destinations.

“I was working as an electrician,” Bruce recalls. “I got paired up with this guy, and he was always talking about sailing around in the Caribbean. He had just returned from there, and he had lots of stories.”

## Entrancing tales

A friendship developed that soon expanded to include Cheryl. Bruce and Cheryl were entranced by the tales told by new friend George. More to the subject at hand, they were strongly attracted to the life George described.

Neither Bruce nor Cheryl were new to boating. Bruce had recently owned a 50-foot houseboat in Tennessee. Cheryl describes her boating experience as “mostly ornamenting powerboats in a bikini,” but she had done a lot of that and loved being on the water. The two of them began to talk about buying a sailboat. George encouraged them by inviting them aboard his boat — which was on the hard in a boatyard for most of the time they knew him. That didn’t matter.

“George’s boat was very traditional — lots of wood. I loved that,” Cheryl confesses. “It’s probably why we ended up with a boat with so much wood.” Bruce recalls that the boat had no through-hull openings and that it was tiller-steered. These were manifestations of George’s “strong and simple philosophy” about cruising sailboats. It wasn’t a bad introduction.

Soon enough, the Hortons were scouring classified ads, looking for a sailboat to buy. “But we didn’t know a sloop from a ketch, full keel from fin, or stiff from tender.” At first their search was hobbled by uncertainty. Then, as their knowledge of what they were actually looking for grew, they

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***Zephyr, Bruce and Cheryl Horton’s Cheoy Lee 32, at anchor in Lupéron Harbor, above. From the moment Cheryl saw this boat, she knew it was the one. Zephyr had already traveled widely with two previous owners, but the Hortons have added to her sailing résumé. More exterior shots, on facing page.***



*“One look below and Cheryl was in love. And why not?”*

*This particular boat, of which only a small number were built, has a unique and singularly attractive interior.”*

saw the number of potentially suitable boats decline. Their search droned, sputtered, then ground to a complete halt. Even the idea of going cruising lost steam.

### **Drove by marina**

Bruce and Cheryl turned their attention to real estate. “We had been out looking at a parcel of land and just happened to drive by the municipal marina,” Bruce says, eyebrows raised in apparent lingering wonder at the unexpected ways life turns. Nodding at a shared memory, Cheryl continues the story: “We just decided to stop and take a walk on the docks.”

It was a life-altering stroll. In one of the transient slips they discovered a small sloop with a wooden mast, teak decks, and loads of traditional character. Hanging from the lifeline was a diminutive “For Sale” sign. They paused, walked on, then came back. Fortunately for this story, the sloop’s owners were aboard and accommodating. One look below and Cheryl was in love. And why not? This particular boat, of which only a small number were built, has a unique and singularly attractive interior.

Designed by Ray Richards and constructed in fiberglass in the Cheoy Lee yard in Hong Kong, the Cheoy Lee 32 is only one inch shy of being as long as the name suggests. It draws 4½ feet and weighs just over 11,000 pounds.

With a 27-foot waterline and a 10-foot-6-inch beam, the Cheoy Lee 32 has a generous amount of interior space. It is here that this boat most distinguishes itself.

The most prominent cabin feature is the centerline circular settee spreading across almost the full width of the saloon and providing comfortable seating for eight or more. A drop-leaf table converts this space to a dining area. This table can be lowered for guest sleeping. Forward of the settee is a large V-berth that can be screened from the main saloon with folding lowered shutters.

### **Enclosed head**

Aft of the settee on the port side is a hanging locker and a convenient and attractive drawer cabinet. Aft of these saloon features is the enclosed head. On the starboard side is a U-shaped galley with a gimballed propane stove. Aft of the galley is a stand-up navigation desk, with a quarter berth below. A second quarter berth is aft of the

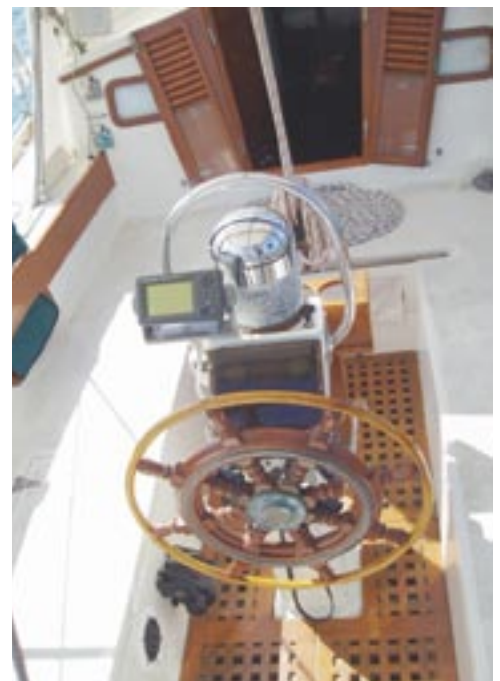
head. Two overhead hatches and eight portlights keep the cabin fresh and make it bright.

A step on the engine access hatch and a small ladder above leads into a spacious cockpit with pedestal steering and wood coamings. In addition to the spruce mast and teak decks, the Cheoy Lee 32 was delivered with teak eyebrows, handrails, toerails, portlight frames, and deck-hatch bases. The carved nameboard on the transom was also teak.

*Zephyr* was the name carved on the board. The Hortons quickly became her new owners. “The necessary negotiations were really little more than a formality,” Bruce says with a shrug. “*Zephyr* became Cheryl’s boat the minute she stepped below.”

Commissioned in San Diego in 1977, *Zephyr* had carried her first owners south along the Pacific coast of Central America, through the Panama Canal, and across the Caribbean Sea to the U.S. East Coast. Her second owners took *Zephyr* back to the Caribbean, as far south as Grenada, before returning to Florida. Bruce and Cheryl became the third owners.

They kept the name: “We had made the mistake of renaming another boat and had nothing but bad luck with it. We weren’t taking any chances.” This nod to superstition augured well for grasping the nuances of becoming sailors.



### Building a kitty

The Hortons sold their home and moved aboard *Zephyr*. They spent the next three years living aboard in a Fort Pierce marina, building a cruising kitty, and learning to sail. There they also removed the teak deck, divining early the potentially destructive nature of this feature of their new boat. This deck project included moving *Zephyr's* anchors to the bow and removing an anchor well that intruded into the V-berth. Aft they installed stainless davits for carrying a dinghy.

Another early modification was the installation of 12-volt refrigeration. Surmising that he would need to add insulation, Bruce cut an opening into the space behind the back of the circular settee to gain access to the box. This led to seven more back-panel openings, creating eight much-appreciated new storage compartments. One of these compartments houses a small watermaker.

"In the marina we met lots of other sailors preparing their boats for cruising. But few actually went," Cheryl relates. There is pride in both her voice and posture when she con-

*"The most prominent cabin feature is the centerline circular settee spreading across almost the full width of the saloon and providing comfortable seating for eight or more. A drop-leaf table converts this space to a dining area. This table can be lowered for guest sleeping."*



**The Cheoy Lee 32 has two variations on the accommodation plan. *Zephyr's* layout has the A plan with a distinctive circular settee. The B plan has a more traditional settee and folding table. Otherwise, the two plans are similar with the galley to starboard and the nav station aft.**

tinues, "We went."

Indeed they did. In 1997 they stowed docklines aboard and set off across the Gulf Stream for the Bahamas. Their first cruise would last seven months, taking them nearly the full length of the Bahamas chain and expanding their sailing knowledge exponentially. It ended at Rum Cay, where they had a friend rebuilding a hurricane-damaged home. An offer to help had spurred them to sail south and east of Georgetown, Exuma — the usual terminus for a first Bahamas cruise.

### Found employment

At the end of their first cruise they did not return to the United States. Rather, they both found employment with the Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center (AUTEC) on Andros Island. At AUTEC, the Hortons had both the time and the facilities to make labor-intensive improvements. Among them was stripping and barrier-coating *Zephyr's* bottom. With access to the center's machine shop, Bruce turned and shaped a taller foot-pump spout, "the best galley improvement for me," Cheryl says. Indeed, one does wonder if spout manufacturers ever actually tried to wash a pot under the standard offerings.

After two years, they had also accumulated a list of maintenance and improvement projects that they could not easily accomplish in Andros due to the limited availability of parts, so they headed back





to Florida. By the time they arrived, a new project had been added to the top of their list—replacing *Zephyr's* chainplates. “On the trip back we broke one due to corrosion we couldn’t see. The chainplates were all hidden behind cabinetry,” Bruce says. “So in addition to replacing all the chainplates, we made modifications below that left them visible to regular inspection.” *Zephyr* remained in Florida for six months while Bruce and Cheryl re-rigged her, replaced the tired Volvo MD-11C with a new 3GM Yanmar, and renewed the exterior canvas.

Canvas work merits more than a toss-off mention. It is an ongoing art form aboard *Zephyr*, with wholesale and subtle changes occurring on a regular basis. Bruce does the design. Cheryl does the sewing. Cheryl has also done all the interior upholstery on the Sailrite sewing machine that is an essential part of *Zephyr's* cruising equipment.

### What changes?

After two additional years working and cruising in the Bahamas, the Hortons finally pointed *Zephyr's* bow toward the Caribbean. Eighteen months later they were in Grenada, where Olga and I reconnected with them. There I asked them both what, after 10 years of being aboard, they would change.


“Ray Richards’ original design has been nearly perfect for us,” Cheryl says. “We have not altered it at all.

**Bruce and Cheryl at home in their cockpit, at right, and under sail, middle right. The *Zephyr* shows off her carved teak nameboard, below right. Note how Bruce created stowage spaces behind all seatbacks, below left.**

All of our improvements have been in equipment and appointments.”

“I think I would like a cutter rig,” Bruce ventures, then falls silent. A one-item wish list says all there is to say about how well matched this boat is to her owners. But time takes its toll on us all. “We plan to cruise for two more years,” says Cheryl, “probably completing the Caribbean circuit. When we are finished with cruising, whenever that is, *Zephyr* will be for sale.” When that happens, someone will have the opportunity to acquire a very nice boat.

“Our powerboats were always just toys . . . possessions,” Cheryl tells me as I am leaving. “Sailboats are different. I really believe that sailboats have a soul. *Zephyr's* soul is protective. This is a boat that takes care of all who sail aboard her.”

I had cause to reflect on this parting remark two weeks later as Hurricane Ivan was devastating Grenada. Just days before, *Zephyr* had safely carried Bruce and Cheryl out of harm’s way to Venezuela’s Isla de Margarita. 



# Cheoy Lee 32

## A designer compares four sturdy, solidly performing cruising yachts

by Ted Brewer

THE FOUR YACHTS UNDER DISCUSSION HERE COVER A 14-YEAR design period, from the 1970 Endeavour to the 1984 Crealock. Although two of the boats — the Valiant and the Crealock — are double-enders, they are all remarkably similar in many ways. The Endeavour is the most extreme, perhaps, having the shortest waterline and shoalest draft by a few inches and the smallest sail area of the group. Designed by Ted Irwin as a cruiser/racer, its Floridian heritage explains the shoal draft. Because it was designed at the end of the Cruising Club of America (CCA) era, its low rig and moderate sail area are understandable. Regardless, it fits in nicely with this company as a comfortable family cruiser with offshore aspirations.

Here are the numbers. We had a bit of trouble obtaining some of the figures, and I'm still not 100 percent sure of the dates, so readers might correct me if I'm wrong on any of the facts.

To my mind, Ray Richards' handsome

Cheoy Lee 32 has one advantage over the rest of the pack and that is its optional ketch rig. This increases sail area to 540 square feet and the SA/Displ. ratio to 17.2. The drag of the mizzenmast could reduce windward performance slightly, perhaps, but the added sail area should improve off-wind performance, particularly when the mizzen staysail is set.

And, as you know, gentlemen never sail to windward! As well, the ketch rig offers a wide variety of reduced sail combinations for heavy-weather conditions and can be easily trimmed for hands-off sailing to weather.


In any case, I've long been enamored of ketches and yawls. I expect that comes from my teenage years when I read, and dreamed about, William A.

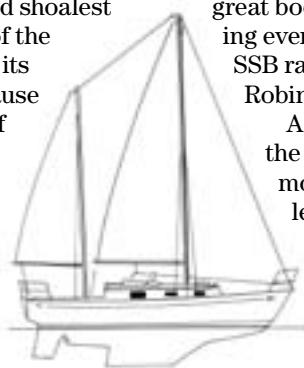
Robinson's *Ten Thousand Leagues Over the Sea*, the story of his circumnavigation aboard the *Svaap*, a 32-foot Phil Rhodes ketch, in the late 1920s and early '30s. It is still a great book and, if you can find a copy, well worth reading even in these days of GPS, radar, depth sounders, SSB radio, and the other modern conveniences that Robinson managed without so successfully.

As to performance, I think we have to consider the Endeavour to be the "tail-end Charlie" under most conditions. I expect it'll make a bit more leeway than the others, due to its lesser draft, and prove to be a tad slower in light air, under 10 knots or so, due to its smaller rig. However, the Endeavour could well be the heavy-weather champion of the group thanks to its high ballast ratio, high comfort ratio, and moderate rig. The other three are more evenly

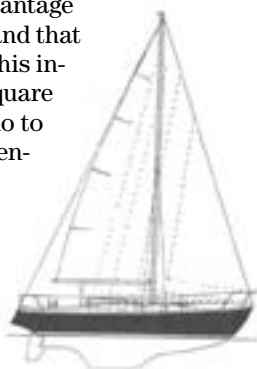
matched for performance; I would not want to be the one to handicap them for a race around a triangular course.

In any case, racing performance is not what these boats are about. Rather, they are four sturdy, solidly performing cruising yachts. A study of the numbers indicates that they

are all quite capable of comfortable coastal cruising and offshore island-hopping. Indeed, lesser yachts make happy and successful ocean voyages every year, and there is no reason these boats could not do the same, given good condition, proper equipment, an experienced crew, and the usual run of luck. 



Cheoy Lee 32



Endeavour 32



Valiant 32



Crealock 34

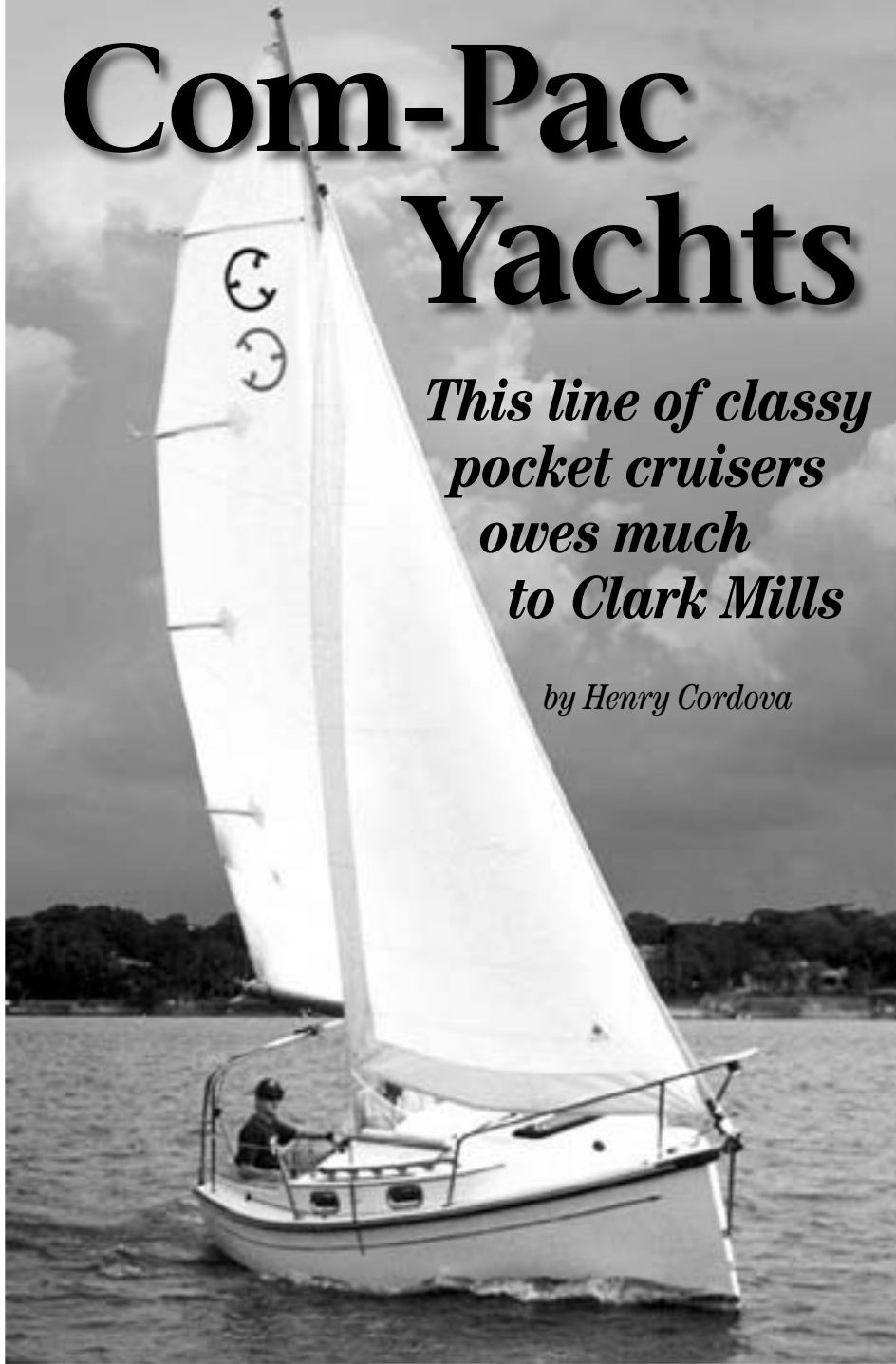
	Cheoy Lee 32	Endeavour 32	Valiant 32	Crealock 34
<b>Years built</b>	1978-86	1970-82	1977-	1984-
<b>LOA</b>	31' 11"	32' 7"	32' 1"	34' 1"
<b>LWL</b>	27' 0"	25' 6"	26' 0"	26' 2"
<b>Beam</b>	10' 6"	10' 0"	10' 5"	10' 0"
<b>Draft</b>	4' 6"	4' 2"	4' 6"	4' 11"
<b>Displacement</b>	11,300 lb	11,700 lb	11,800 lb	12,000 lb
<b>Ballast</b>	4,200 lb	5,000 lb	4,700 lb	4,700 lb
<b>LOA/LWL ratio</b>	1.18	1.28	1.23	1.30
<b>Beam/LWL ratio</b>	0.389	0.392	0.401	0.382
<b>Displ./LWL ratio</b>	256.3	315.0	299.7	299.4
<b>Bal./Displ. ratio</b>	.372	.427	.398	.392
<b>Sail area</b>	540 sq ft	470 sq ft	524 sq ft	534 sq ft
<b>SA/Displ. ratio</b>	17.2	14.6	16.2	16.3
<b>Capsize number</b>	1.87	1.76	1.83	1.75
<b>Comfort ratio</b>	26.6	30.3	28.7	30.1



# Com-Pac Yachts

*This line of classy  
pocket cruisers  
owes much  
to Clark Mills*

*by Henry Cordova*



Photos courtesy of Com-Pac Yachts

**M**Y FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH A COM-Pac yacht was in the mid-1970s. Charlie, a school friend of mine in Florida, bought one of the first hulls sold by the Hutchins Company, a sweet little 16-foot sloop with salty lines and a saucy, turned-up nose. There was simply nothing like it in those days — a trailerable boat with a solid keel and shallow draft perfect for the sort of sailing we enjoyed and could afford.

My own boat, a centerboard, lug-rigged catboat, was a good sailer and perfect for gunkholing in the mangroves, but the Com-Pac sported a level of luxury the rest of us could only

dream about. It had a cabin with just enough cover for one to get in out of the rain and spend a night anchored on the turtle grass or the mud flats, protected from the weather and saltwater marsh mosquitoes.

Charlie's exploits in the Com-Pac were legendary. He loved to tell the story of when he hove to in a squall, and a Coast Guard cutter, thinking the boat was abandoned, raced over, only to find the little white sloop perfectly balanced and giving ground sensibly, her jib backed, main reefed, and tiller lashed to leeward. Charlie was in the cabin calmly smoking his pipe.

**The 20-foot 10-inch Eclipse, launched last year, has an open transom, making scuppers unnecessary, as any water in the cockpit quickly drains aft.**

When Charlie popped his head out of the hatch, the Coastie skipper knew he wasn't needed. He shrugged his shoulders and went back to fulfilling his primary mission: rescuing powerboats in trouble. Another time, during a winter blow, Charlie, who sailed without an outboard motor, was forced to anchor off a lee shore just outside breaking surf. The Com-Pac gave him a wild ride all night but survived intact... except that his brand-new Danforth had a fluke bent so badly it had to be replaced.

## **The word spread**

Apparently a lot of other sailors have had similar experiences. Although they were not specifically designed for the Gulf Coast, word of Com-Pac's quality and seaworthiness quickly spread, and by the end of the 1970s more than 1,000 had been sold in Florida and beyond.

*"...word of Com-Pac's  
quality and seaworthiness  
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than 1,000 had been sold in  
Florida and beyond."*

It certainly did not hurt that the Com-Pac was designed by Clark Mills, who in the late 1940s designed the one-design Optimist pram dinghy, the world's most popular trainer for junior sailing programs. Other models followed: the Mills-designed Com-Pac 23 and, a few years later, the Bob Johnson-drawn Com-Pac 19. (*Note: We'll profile Bob Johnson, the founder and designer of Island Packet Yachts, in an upcoming issue. —Ed.*) The line was distinguished by its traditional hull shapes, striking teak detailing, and round, metal-framed portlights set off against a gleaming white hull. Beamy, shoal-draft weekenders with high-lift NASA airfoil keels, these boats were not built for high speed or extreme windward performance, but

they were safe, sturdy, and beautifully finished. The Com-Pac 16 sold in 1974 for \$2,988, or about the price of a (then) new compact car.

### Company origins

The Hutchins Company was founded in 1957 by W. L. "Hutch" Hutchins, Sr., an inventor and entrepreneur who provided parts and accessories for the automotive industry and the aftermarket trade. In the early 1970s his interest in sailing led to the development of the Com-Pac 16, an attempt, he said, "to build a small but highly efficient sailboat that would appeal to people who didn't want to invest too heavily in a boat, yet one they could easily trailer behind a compact car."

It is said that the overall concept for the Com-Pac 16, as presented to designer Clark Mills, was to build a boat that, when dismantled, would fit nicely into a standard shipping crate. This final specification was never achieved but the original idea certainly was.

The first few years for the fledgling boatyard were filled with all the melodrama of any new business. Working for almost three years from Clark Mills' shed in Dunedin, Florida, the production bugs were worked out of the Com-Pac 16 by the elder Hutchins and Buck Thomas, a key employee in the company's early days in both the construction and marketing operations, as well as builder of the Southern 21. They were soon joined by Hutch's sons Gerry and Richard. Gerry had experience in the



Com-Pac 16



boatbuilding trade, having worked at Gulfstar Yachts, while Richard had run the metal stamping part of the family business.

Hutchins remains a family operation; Richard's son is now in charge of the steel fabrication facility at the Hutchins yard. As sales of the 16-footer took off, it didn't take long before the firm moved to a larger facility in nearby Clearwater.

### Still the same

The Hutchins Company is still essentially the same business today, 30 years and 5,000 hulls later. It's run by brothers Gerry, the president, and Richard. Their father, Hutch, remained active in the firm until his death a few years ago. The firm is no longer involved in the automotive market and has devoted itself entirely to building sailboats.

Richard says the secret to their success has been to build a good boat with passion, keep the company small and efficient, and not to compete with boat designs already capably delivered by other manufacturers. That also means not competing with their own boats on the used market. The philosophy works. Declining sales of the Com-Pac 16 finally led to discontinuation of that model in 2003, after 3,000 had been sold. The popular Com-Pac 19 met the same fate after a run of more than 600, but only after the tooling was damaged and it became prohibitively expensive to continue production. The Com-Pac 23 is still going strong after a history of 644 hulls.

In 1985, Hutchins jumped into the potentially lucrative coastal cruiser

**The Com-Pac 16, above, launched the boating part of the Hutchins Company, which had been founded in 1957 as an aftermarket supplier of automotive parts and accessories. The Com-Pac 16, designed by Clark Mills, was launched in 1974. Sailboats eventually replaced the automotive business entirely. Richard and Gerry Hutchins, at right, sons of founder W. L. Hutchins, run the company these days.**



**Above left on facing page, the Com-Pac 23, a Clark Mills design launched in 1979, and the 27, a Bob Johnson design launched in 1985, are still in production. The Com-Pac 16, to left above, and 19, on facing page below, are no longer in production, although 3,000 of the 16-footers and 624 of the 19-footers were built before their runs ended.**





market with the Com-Pac 27, also a Bob Johnson design. With its 9-foot 6-inch beam and more than 3 tons displacement, the Com-Pac 27 was not a trailerable vessel but it was still an evolutionary outgrowth of the proven Hutchins philosophy — a roomy, shoal-draft sloop built more with convenience and quality in mind than racing performance. Its lines and overall appearance also shared the traditional looks and spirit that characterized the other Com-Pac yachts.

### Flagship introduced

Eight years later, Hutchins had introduced the flagship of the fleet, the Com-Pac 35, an open-water cruiser designed to meet the criteria set out by designer Charley Morgan: “shoal-draft, stable, seakindly, and fast enough to give good results under Performance Handicap Racing Fleet (PHRF) rules.” It sports a high-tech Henry Scheel keel to provide decent performance yet keep draft to a modest 4 feet. Richard Hutchins makes no claims for the

Com-Pac 35’s ocean-crossing abilities; he likes to say that “the boat might make it, but you won’t.” It’s not due to any lack of seaworthiness, but long-distance voyaging is not what it is de-

*“Richard says the secret to their success has been to build a good boat with passion, keep the company small and efficient, and not to compete with boat designs already capably delivered by other manufacturers.”*

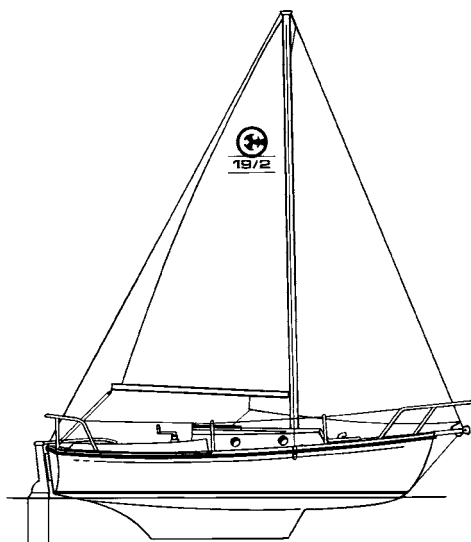
signed for, lacking among other things the tankage for bluewater passages.

Not wanting to neglect their traditional trailersailer market, the Hutchins

introduced a transitional model in 1995 to fill the gap between the 23 and 27 — the Com-Pac 25. The design was based on the Watkins 25, Hutchins having purchased the tooling from this short-lived Florida builder. Two short-production-run boats, the Com-Pac 14 and the Com-Pac 33, were produced during this period; the former retired after attracting little customer enthusiasm. The latter was a preliminary version of the Com-Pac 35. Meanwhile, the established models were evolving with modifications and improvements. In addition, Hutchins offers an impressive catalog of options and accessories for a production operation. According to Gerry Hutchins, the company does its best to “customize our boats, particularly the Com-Pac 23 and larger, to fulfill the customer’s needs.”

### Boat hulls everywhere

The Hutchins plant is located in a light industrial park and consists of several large, well-ventilated metal buildings, cluttered with tools, materials, and



**Com-Pac 19**



**Com-Pac 23**



**Com-Pac 27**



A worker at the Hutchins yard puts finishing touches on an Eclipse, at left. The company subcontracts the construction of the hulls, liners, and decks. The final assembly and all finishing work, such as deck fittings and cabinetwork, is done at the Hutchins facility in Clearwater, Florida, shown above.

parts. Boat hulls are everywhere in various states of assembly and finish, from roughly shaped shells and decks still bristling with glass cloth to gleaming finished yachts on shiny new trailers, wrapped in plastic, and ready for shipment.

The challenge for many boatbuilders is to achieve the balance between quality and economy that produces good value. Hutchins has adopted a construction philosophy that seeks to reach this balance by using only quality polyester resins and knitted fiberglass fabrics.

## Hutchins production

The following table summarizes production runs for all Hutchins yachts, by years and hull number.

Boat	Production run	Number of hulls
Com-Pac 14	1988-1989	31
Com-Pac 16	1974-2003	3,000
Picnic Cat	1998-present	201
Sun Cat	2000-present	199
Com-Pac 19	1982-2002	624
Horizon Cat	2002-present	55
Eclipse	2004-present	22
Com-Pac 23	1979-present	644
Com-Pac 25	1995-present	44
Com-Pac 27	1985-present	181
Com-Pac 33	1990-1993	10
Com-Pac 35	1993-present	22

It also makes sense to subcontract the construction of hulls, liners, and decks to other firms. The parts are then shipped back to Hutchins' Clearwater facility for assembly. The subcontractors are Custom Fiberglass Products of Clearwater, and JMJ Fiberglass of Pinellas Park, both in Florida.

The Dwyer Aluminum Mast Company, of North Branford, Connecticut, provides the mast and rigging for the Com-Pac 23 and the new catboat models (described shortly). U.S. Spars, of Gainesville, Florida, rigs the new Eclipse model. The masts and booms for the Com-Pac 25, 27, and 35 are fabricated by Charleston Spar, of Charlotte, North Carolina. All Com-Pac yachts have deck-stepped masts with the exception of the Com-Pac 35, which has a keel-stepped mast.

No adhesives are used to fasten interior furnishings such as cabinets and berths to the hulls. In the Com-Pac 35, an interior pan, or liner, is glassed to the hull, and the furnishings are then glassed to both hull and liner, contributing to the boat's overall strength and rigidity. In the Com-Pac 25 and 27, a

fiberglass pan incorporates all furnishings, including cabinetry, lockers, and shelves. On the Horizon, Eclipse, and Com-Pac 23, the interior is a single, prefabricated unit of plywood incorporating all the finished wood interior pieces; the entire assembly is lowered in and fiberglassed to the hull. The

Picnic Cat has a simple fiberglass interior.

### High-class construction

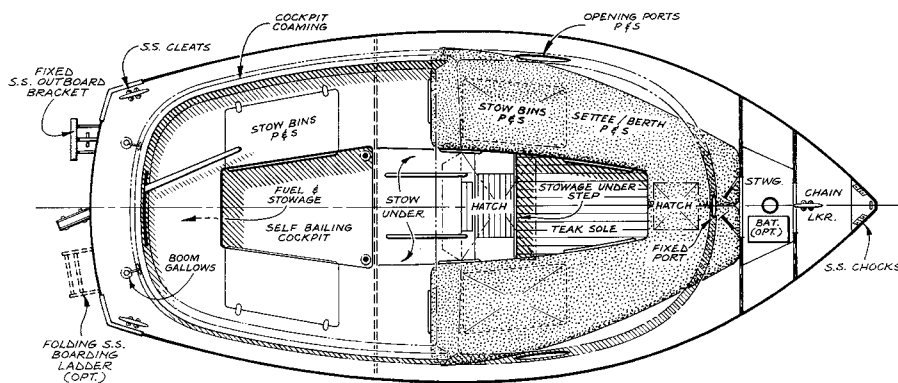
Positive-action seacocks, not gate valves, are used on all through-hulls in all models. Hulls and decks are joined together with marine adhesive sealant and mechanical fasteners, and in

the 27- and 35-foot models the hull-deck joint is fiberglassed as well. There are no high-tech laminates or other space-age exotics here, just good-quality conventional boatbuilding materials.

All Com-Pac keelboats are ballasted; the Com-Pac 25, 27, and 35 use lead ingots encased in concrete. The Com-Pac 23 carries concrete ballast only. The Eclipse and the new centerboard catboats (with the exception of the Picnic Cat) also carry supplementary concrete ballast.

*"As the 20th century drew to a close, the Hutchins Company found itself in a remarkable position. Richard says the boats were being sold 'as fast as we could pop them out.' Almost all its designs still in production were unqualified commercial successes."*





In addition to the final assembly and finishing of the boats, Hutchins does all of the stainless-steel deck fittings and cabinetwork. Fully equipped woodworking and steel fabrication facilities are located on site, as are the administrative offices.

### New catboat line

As the 20th century drew to a close, the Hutchins Company found itself in a remarkable position. Richard says the boats were being sold “as fast as we could pop them out.” Almost all its designs still in production were unqualified commercial successes. In an industry dominated by buyouts and corporate takeovers, with respected names bought and sold like worn-out plugs and molds, the firm was thriving, profitable, and still firmly in family hands. Choosing not to rest on its laurels, Hutchins embarked on a bold program of innovation: the introduction of an ambitious new line of trailerable sailboats.

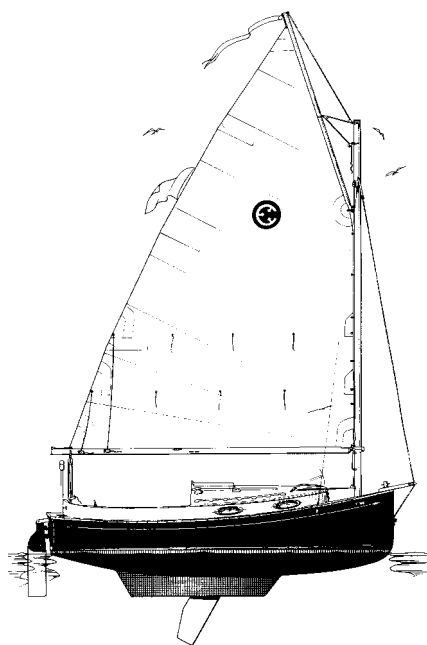
First, in 1998, came the Picnic Cat, a Clark Mills-designed 14-foot day-sailer featuring several departures from the company’s earlier models: it is an open boat, with a centerboard and catboat rig. The Picnic Cat also carries a Hutchins innovation — the Mastendr Quick Rig Sailing System, which allows the mast, boom, gaff, sail, and all standing rigging to fold down around a hinged pin arrangement onto a boom gallows, allowing fast singlehanded launching and recovery. The potential weak point of the small boat — the centerboard trunk — was eliminated by fabricating a heavy-duty stainless-steel centerboard frame bolted into a box, which is fiberglassed to the hull. This box is also stainless steel, so the boat requires no additional ballast. In the other cats, the box is fiberglass and is molded as an integral part of the hull.

The centerboard assemblies for each model are fabricated by Hutchins and produced to close tolerances. The



**The 17-foot 4-inch Sun Cat, shown above, and 20-foot Horizon Cat, shown below, were introduced in 2000 and 2002, respectively. Together with the 14-foot Picnic Cat, this trio of shoal-draft sailboats has great appeal among catboat lovers.**

centerboard pivot is not through the hull; instead, the board pivots relative to the frame. The board is controlled by means of a lanyard rove through a



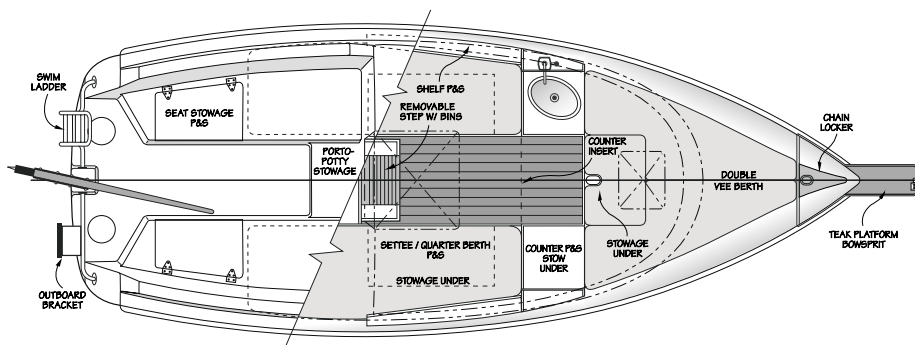


**The Eclipse, above, was the long-awaited replacement for the discontinued Com-Pac 16 and 19. Introduced in 2004, this is the company's first new masthead sloop model to be introduced in years.**

tube that leads aft to the cockpit. In spite of the lack of cabin and Com-Pac-style portlights, the Picnic Cat is unmistakably Com-Pac in appearance and quality.

### Enter the Sun Cat

In 2000, Clark Mills was again called on, this time to design the Sun Cat, based on the same overall concept as the Picnic Cat but with the addition of a cabin. (There is also an open, cabin-less variant — the Sun Cat Daysailer — with enough seating to accom-



modate eight adults in an enormous cockpit.) At 17 feet 4 inches, the Sun Cat is somewhat reminiscent of the Com-Pac 16 except for the rigging innovations and centerboard technology introduced in the Picnic Cat.

Down below, the Sun Cat boasts a finish and a standard equipment list that put it into another league altogether: bilge pump, teak-and-holly sole, two 6-foot 6-inch berths, a chain locker, and a forward hatch. The yacht's overall look and feel above the waterline owe a lot to the 19th-century Cape Cod cat, but the centerboard and aluminum kick-up spade rudder bring her right into the new millennium. Below, the Sun Cat is a very big boat for its size, beautifully finished and with a list of options for every budget. It is a serious mini-yacht.


The third entry in the "New Breed of Cat Boat" came when Hutchins purchased the molds for the Herreshoff America, designed by Halsey Herreshoff and originally built during the 1970s by Nowak and Williams of Bristol, Rhode Island. The Hutchins brothers kept the classic shape but worked their usual magic below the waterline

with some help from Bruce Bingham (designer of the 20-foot Flicka built by Pacific Seacraft). They also made some rig modifications that incorporate the Mastendr technology, sail-reefing points, and a modest bowsprit.

### The trio completed

The result of all this, the Horizon Cat, completes the Com-Pac trio of shallow-draft, traditional catboats. Hull No. 1 hit the water in 2002. More than just a Sun Cat on steroids, the Horizon Cat is 20 feet overall, has a beam of 8 feet 4 inches, and draws 2 feet 2 inches with the board up (5 feet with it down). This is a remarkable boat.

The latest Com-Pac, introduced last year, is the long-awaited replacement for the discontinued Com-Pac 16 and 19. The 20-foot-10-inch Eclipse is Hutchins' first new sloop in years, utilizing both the centerboard and Mastendr rig pioneered in the catboats. It is being offered at an introductory price of about \$23,000, or about the price of a new medium-sized car.

Richard Hutchins says that all existing models will remain in production for the foreseeable future. Interestingly, he says that the introduction of the new line of catboats has seemed to rekindle customer interest in the company's older designs. As for the future, does the Hutchins Company have anything new and exciting in the works? When I asked Gerry and Richard about this, they only smiled and replied, "Wait and see." 

## Vital Statistics

For purposes of comparison, here are details of current production models:

TRAILERABLE BOATS					
	Picnic Cat	Sun Cat	Horizon Cat	Eclipse	Com-Pac 23
LOA	14' 0"	17' 4"	20' 0"	20' 10"	23' 11"
Beam	6' 6"	7' 3"	8' 4"	7' 4"	7' 10"
Displacement	500 lb	1,500 lb	2,500 lb	2,200 lb	3,000 lb
Draft (board up)	6"	1' 2"	2' 2"	1' 6"	2' 3"
(board down)	3' 2"	4' 6"	5' 0"	5' 2"	n/a
Sail area	109 sq ft	150 sq ft	205 sq ft	200 sq ft	250 sq ft
Base price	\$8,995	\$15,745	\$27,995	\$22,995	\$27,500

CRUISING BOATS			
	Com-Pac 25	Com-Pac 27	Com-Pac 35
LOA	28' 2"	29' 7"	36' 9"
Beam	8' 6"	9' 6"	11' 10"
Displacement	4,800 lb	6,500 lb	12,500 lb
Draft	2' 6"	3' 6"	4' 0"
Sail area	308 sq ft	380 sq ft	579 sq ft
Base price	\$46,995	\$85,495	\$158,000

### Resources

Updated pricing information, specifications, and optional and standard equipment listings for the Com-Pac line should be obtained directly from the manufacturer.

#### Com-Pac Yachts

Hutchins Company, Inc.  
1195 Kapp Drive  
Clearwater, FL 33765  
727-443-4408; fax 727-443-1088  
<<http://www.Com-PacYachts.com>>



# Splicing *and* whipping

*Here's how to keep  
those untamed line ends  
under better control*

*by Gregg Nestor*

PERIODICALLY, I CONDUCT A CURSORY examination of my running rigging. I make mental notes of those lines that need to be monitored, as well as those that are potential candidates for repair or replacement, and sometimes make corrections on the spot. By doing this often enough, I hope to avoid failures... I don't like surprises.

I carefully inspect all of my cordage each year, usually in the fall prior to putting the boat away. I check the running rigging, of course, but also the docklines, mooring pendant, heaving lines, and anchor rode. If I discover anything significant, I have all winter to correct the situation.

During a recent inspection, it struck me that not all of the bitter ends of my lines were finished off in a proper seamanlike fashion. Most had been heated and fused rather than whipped. This was functional but not nautically acceptable. I vowed to use the winter months to correct this deplorable situation and to make a few changes and upgrades in my cordage.

## **Common whipping**

While whipping not only makes for a nicer appearance, its primary func-

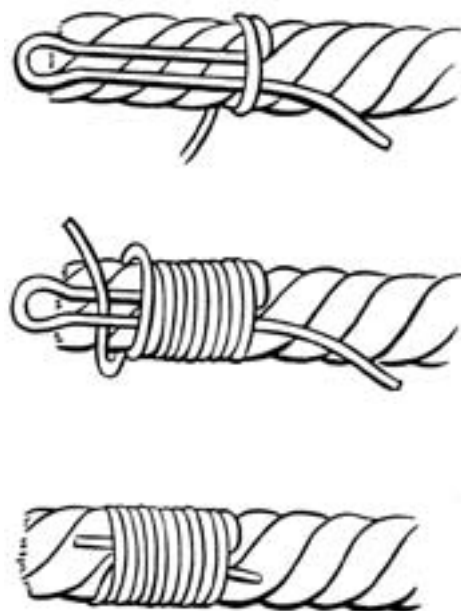
tions are to prevent the line's ends from unlaying and to make them easier to reeve through blocks and eyes.

The simplest type of whipping and the one most often seen is common whipping. Whipping line (twine, waxed cord, and so forth) is laid along the line to form a loop. The whipping is then tightly wound around both the line and the loop for a distance equal to the line's diameter. To finish, the working end of the whipping is passed through

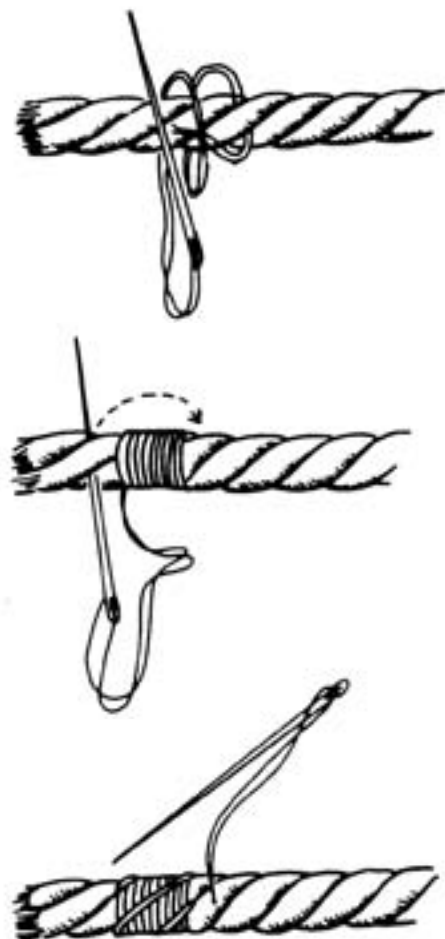
the loop and is pulled out of sight under the turns by pulling the loop end. Finally, both ends of the whipping are trimmed off. Consider this type of whipping temporary. To make it permanent, add a drop or two of super glue to the whipping. Common whipping can be used on three-stranded and braided lines.

## **Needle whipping**

The finest whipping is needle whipping. It takes a bit longer to accomplish, but its superiority justifies the extra time required. It is performed more easily on three-stranded line but can be used on braided line. A doubled length of whipping is passed under one strand of line or, in the case of braided line, a



**Common whipping**



**Needle whipping**

few braids. The ends of the whipping are tucked under the turns, which are put on doubled, rather than single, as with common whipping.

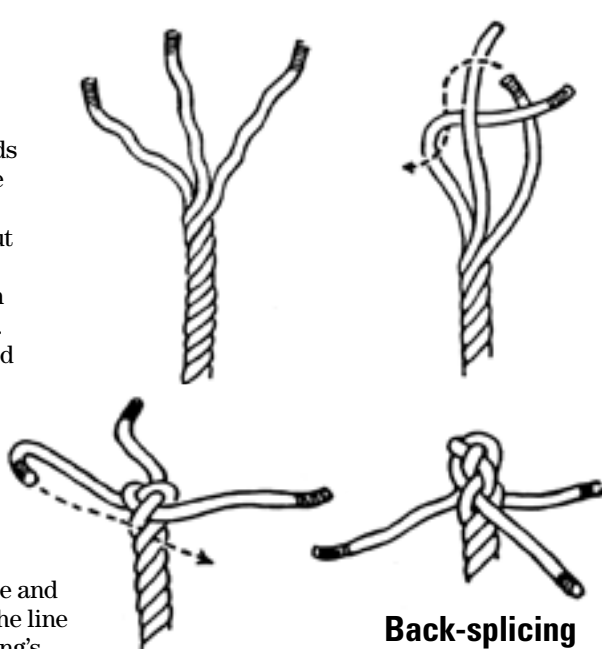
Once the desired length of whipping has been achieved, the working end of the whipping is brought under a strand (or a few braids) of line and follows the lay of the line back to the whipping's start, where it is drawn under another of the line's strands (or a few braids). After having followed the three lays back and forth over the turns of whipping (three or four times for braided line), the whipping is finished by bringing the working end up through the center of a strand and trimming it short. In the case of braided line, the whipping is finished by bringing the working end up through approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the line's body and then trimmed short.

When whipping a line, remember that all whipping should be started inboard and the turns wound toward the end of the line. Whipping should not be put on close to the line's end, but rather several inches from the end. Once the whipping has been completed, cut the excess line off not less than  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch from the whipping. The width of the whipping should generally equal the diameter of the line to be whipped.

### Back-splicing

Another way to prevent three-stranded line from unlaying is by back-splicing. This technique works well and looks great on docklines and some heavier lines. Since back-splicing almost doubles the end of the line's diameter, the line may not pass through blocks and eyes. The advantages and disadvantages depend on how the line is used.

Back-splicing starts with a crown



**Back-splicing**

knot, which is very simple and is most easily described by illustration. Moving counterclockwise, each strand of un-laid line is crossed over its neighbor on the left, with the final strand enclosed in a bight. The strands are drawn tight and emerge from the bottom of the knot, ready for back-splicing.

To back-splice, working from left to

right, one of the crown knot's strands is brought over a laid strand of the standing line and under the next.

This process is repeated with the other two remaining strands, completing a series of three over-and-unders. The working strands are pulled snug, and the series of three over-and-unders, with a snugging in between, is repeated until the strands are too short to work.

### Rope-to-chain splice

In addition to finishing off three-stranded line in nautical fashion, a crown knot and back-splice combination is an excellent method for attaching rope to chain without the use of a thimble. A perfect application is a combination rope-and-chain anchor rode. If you have a windlass

with a rope-chain gypsy, hands-free operation demands a proper rope-to-chain splice. Thimbles and shackles won't go through without jamming. They also can hang up in bow rollers.

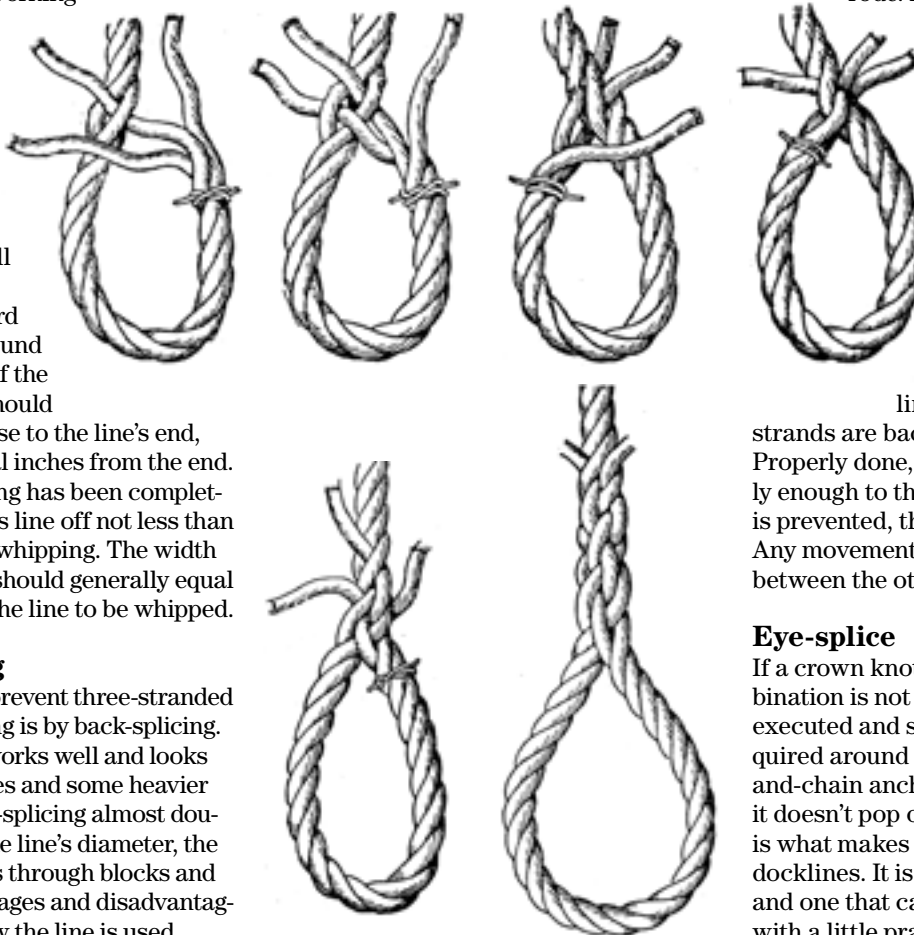
In this application, the crown knot is tied through the first

link of the chain and the strands are back-spliced into the line. Properly done, the line is spliced tightly enough to the chain that movement is prevented, thus eliminating chafe. Any movement that does take place is between the other links of the chain.

### Eye-splice

If a crown knot and back-splice combination is not employed, a properly executed and snug eye-splice is required around the thimble in a rope-and-chain anchor rode to insure that it doesn't pop out. Also, an eye-splice is what makes the loop at the ends of docklines. It is the strongest rope loop and one that can easily be mastered with a little practice.

**Continued on Page 69**



**Eye-splice**



# Splicing double-braid

*If you're a frustrated splicer,  
read this and take heart*

*by Derk Akerson*

**A**LMOST EVERY BOAT HAS SOME DOUBLE-braided line aboard. In most cases, the ends of the lines are ragged and sloppy. Many people use tape instead of whipping or splicing or resort to knots to fill in for eye-splices. With a bit of effort and patience, however, everyone can learn to splice double-braided line. I think most people are simply intimidated by it. However, splicing double-braid is not that much more difficult than splicing three-stranded line. The results will make your boat look more shipshape, and it will be safer too.

As tempting as it may be to start with the eye-splice, I recommend against that. I assume you will make your first splicing attempts with used line that you have aboard. While this may be economical, starting with an eye-splice will create a level of frustration that will send you looking for duct tape. The eye-splice is very difficult with old line. I suggest instead that you start with a back-splice.

I see very few boats with back-splices in the lines. This splice can be done with old line without too much difficulty. It will provide a level of confidence that will help you when you do get to the eye-splice. It will also help give you a foundation for the concept of the eye-splice.

There are different brands of splicing kits available. I was told when I started that they were equal in terms of ease of use. I was also told that whichever one I started with is the one I would like better. Well, I have both sets now. There are good qualities in both sets, and I tend to use different tools for different splices.


This is not to say you should buy both at first. I would say to buy the set you want or feel you would have better success with. Either set will serve your needs. There are times when I use straightened coat-hangers too. Some of my training came from another sailor who has done a lot of splicing in larger lines for ships. He generally uses coat-hangers or other long, stiff wires. Either way you will need a few supplies that you probably already have:

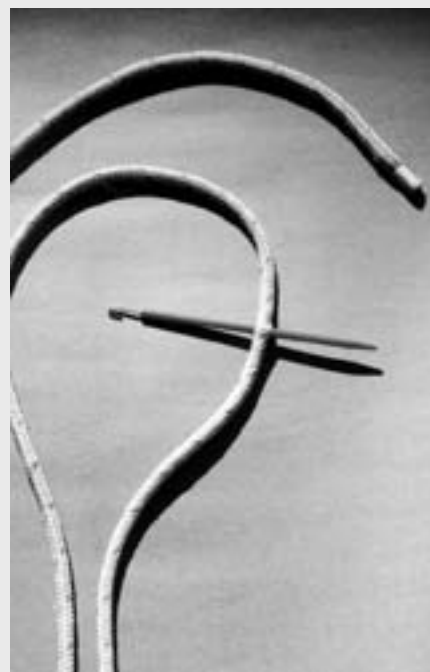
- a very sharp knife
- sharp scissors
- splicing tool/s
- sharp-pointed marking pen
- electrical tape
- a small fid or marlinespike
- a good length of line

Follow the instructions and pictures here and you will succeed with your first back-splice. As you finish up the splice, the way it comes together will amaze you.

*"With a bit of effort and  
patience... everyone  
can learn to splice  
double-braided line."*

Once you have accomplished a few back-splices, you will be ready to tackle the eye-splice. For that project I suggest that you buy a length of new double-braid designed for docklines. It is easier to work than the line used for halyards and such. It will make your first attempts less frustrating.

Once you have mastered splicing double-braid you will be far ahead of most boatowners. You will be proud to have a boat that doesn't sport a lot of cows' tails. Your boat will look more shipshape and be safer. Splicing well provides a sense of inner satisfaction that is hard to duplicate. 



**Step 1. Measure five or six fid lengths from the end of the line. Either tie a knot or carefully put a fid through the cover and core. Holding the knot or fid, smooth the cover from the knot to the end.**



**Step 2. Measure one short fid length back from the end and mark this point on the cover. Carefully remove the core from the cover here. Mark the core with one band where it exits the cover (Mark 1).**

***Continued on Page 22***

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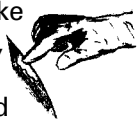
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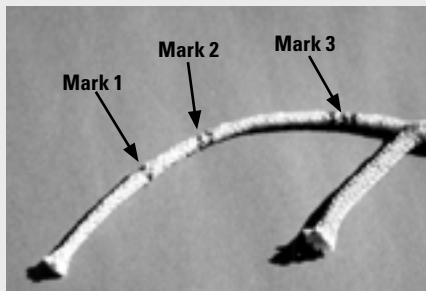
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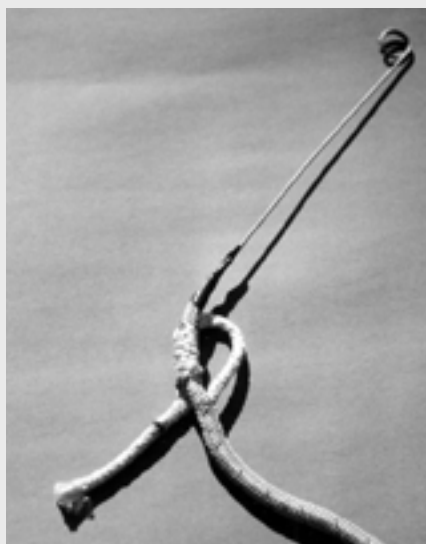
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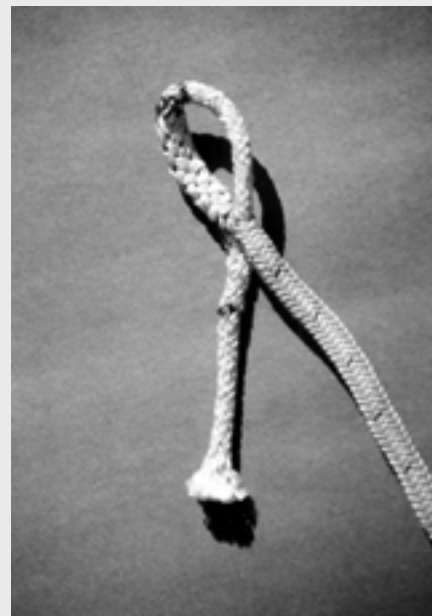
**Step 3.** Pull the cover back, exposing more of the core. From the first band, measure one half fid length toward the knot or fid. Mark this with two bands (Mark 2). Measure one short fid length from the double band toward the knot or fid and mark with three bands (Mark 3).



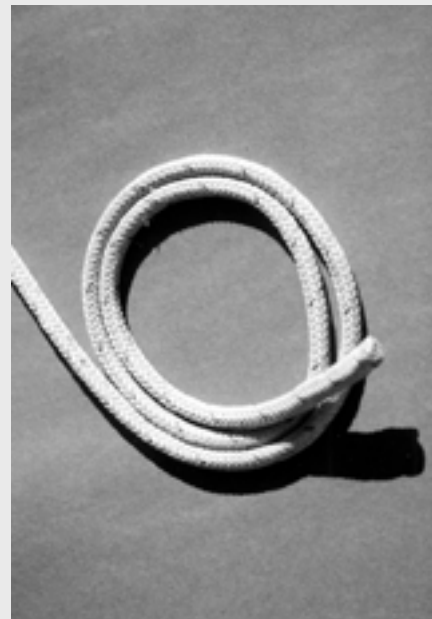
**Step 4.** Use a fid or wire (as shown) and insert it at Mark 3 and out at Mark 2. Tape the cover to the wire. Pull the cover up through the core and out at Mark 3.



**Step 5.** Remove the fid or wire from the cover. Trim the end of the cover at about a 45-degree angle and shorten so that it will all be able to be covered by the core.



**Step 6.** Smooth the core over the cover so that the cover is completely inside the core. Your splice should look like this now. Trim the core back to Mark 1 and taper it as you did the cover.



**Step 7.** Now smooth the cover from your knot or fid toward the splice. This will start to bury the core. Untie the knot or remove the fid and smooth (milking style) the cover. Some remnants of the core may need to be cut off (especially with older line). Now milk and smooth until the core is completely inside the cover. Smooth and shape the splice. Like me, I think you'll find your well-made splice somewhat soul-satisfying.





# Junkyard wars *for a* boatless sailor

## *Getting back to the water with very little money and a lot of effort*

*by Brian Gilbert*

I CLEARLY REMEMBER DRIVING DOWN the interstate behind a 1972 MacGregor Venture 222. The boat was being pulled by its current owner ... headed toward my home in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where I would begin its restoration. As I drove through the shower of leaves and twigs, I remember wondering to myself, "Gee, what was I thinking?"

The sailboat was a sad case. Because it had been lying in the woods half

full of stagnant rainwater, everything inside was rotted or mildewed. It had been heavily modified by the previous owner, who may have been a skilled cabinetmaker, but he didn't understand the subtleties of marine carpentry. Once beautiful interior-grade hardwood plywood had delaminated, and mild-steel screws had turned to rusty, powdery barbs.

So what *was* I thinking? I once lived aboard a Catalina 27. But I sold her, got married, and returned to graduate school. I never regretted making

those choices, but I'd often wished I could have done all that and kept the boat as well.

With my new responsibilities, replacing my Catalina was out of the question, so I began searching for a

smaller trailerable boat that I could keep at the house in the winter and sail on our nearby lake in the summer. Sailboats are rather rare near Chattanooga, and those I found were expensive, often at prices well

above book value. I was starting to get discouraged.

### **Things going for it**

That's when I came across the MacGregor Venture 222 that I was following home. This boat did have a few things going for it. It was essentially complete: mast, boom, sails, trailer, cushions. Much would be replaced, but having all the parts gave me the option of rebuilding if possible. If a part was too far gone to restore, it could be used as a pattern. Another

advantage was that it was relatively close, only 30 miles away. And it was cheap. I paid \$500 for it, though in hindsight I paid too much.

The final advantage was that the seller was willing to sell the boat delivered at my house. This was no small consideration. Since the sale depended on delivery, it was comforting to know that if the boat did ball up, I wouldn't be responsible for the resulting mess on the highway. But we made it to the house with no problems, and the boat was soon blocked up under a shady tree beside my house. I thanked the former owner for his help, and we closed the deal. As he drove off, I took a good, close look at my boat and assessed the mess.

### **Surveying a restoration case**

One of the most important steps in buying a boat, for restoration or otherwise, is a survey. With larger or more valuable boats, hiring a professional surveyor is always a good idea. But with boats on the low end of the value scale, it makes less sense. A blind man could survey this boat with his nose and come up a reasonably accurate assessment: it had serious problems. To pay a surveyor to tell me the obvious seemed a waste of money.

I did my own pre-purchase survey. I uncovered the most obvious problems: a cracked and delaminating keel, water-damaged interior, rotten trim, and an electrical system beyond repair.

---

**Looking none too cheery, *Sunshine*, a MacGregor Venture 222, awaits a new dawn at the hands of Brian Gilbert.**



**The interior in the beginning and the improved interior following three and a half years of hard work.**



This was sufficient to get the price reduced from \$1,800 to \$500, though a professional survey might have gotten the price down even lower. Actually, I had to explain to the owner that \$1,800 was a completely unrealistic figure for this boat. BUC International gives the retail price range for a 1972 MacGregor Venture 222 at \$1,500 to \$1,800 for a normally-equipped, sound boat in ready-to-sail condition without the motor. This boat had a motor, but it had an unrepairable lower unit, and the boat was a long way from ready-to-sail. For

## How long it took

Job	Hours
Interior preparation	12
Interior painting	16
Exterior preparation	66
Exterior painting	30
Interior repairs	92
(includes rewiring)	
Exterior repairs	103
(includes re-rigging)	
Keel repairs	22
Upholstery and canvas	33
Trailer repairs	8
(not including sand-blasting and painting)	
Miscellaneous work	15
<b>Total hours</b>	<b>397</b>
<i>(and still more to do)</i>	

more information on boat values, log onto <<http://www.BUCvalu.com>>.

The seller had said that this boat needed “a good cleaning,” which seems to be a favorite phrase among owners of hopelessly neglected watercraft. I started the next day, doing much of my cleaning with a hammer and crowbar. This had been a much-loved and well-used boat at one time, but clearly if it were to have any hope of ever sailing again, it needed to be “cleaned” down to its most basic structure and reassembled.

## Better picture

After two weeks of scrubbing, removal, and general demolition, a more complete picture of the boat’s deficiencies came to light: old hull repairs made with Bondo, a pair of pine grubs happily munching away at my winch support post, and a thin repair on the topsides where one could easily poke a screwdriver through the hull. It’s doubtful that a more thorough survey on my part (or a professional surveyor) might have revealed these problems, but you never know.

If you are seriously considering the purchase of a boat in similar condition, ask the seller if you could spend half a day cleaning your prospective purchase. Give it a good scrub. Clean the bilge. Empty the lockers. Wipe down the interior. You might uncover additional deficiencies that you can use to leverage the price. And the boat is going to need cleaning anyway.

## The master list

Once I had stripped, cleaned, and thoroughly inspected the boat, I was ready to make my “master list,” an itemization of all the repairs, improvements, and enhancements I wanted to make. A list like this can take any form. In *This Old Boat*, Don Casey goes into great detail about making your repair plan, identifying nine different categories of jobs. I wasn’t nearly so organized. I just made a big list in a spiral notebook that I called my *Boat*

*Restoration Log*. I also recorded the money spent on parts and supplies for the boat, as well as the time spent on each repair job.

It was often very helpful to break down a big job, like “fix keel,” into smaller, more manageable parts. Thus, “fix keel” would have several subheadings, like “lift boat,” “remove keel,” “strip off old glass,” and so on. It was a great morale booster to cross a job, no matter how small, off the list.

The way I went about completing each task wasn’t methodical. I’d look at the list, choose something I felt like working on that day, and have at it.

If the job required lots of hours, like scraping the hull, I’d often scrape for a few hours, then switch to something a little more manageable, like plugging

*“The seller had said that this boat needed ‘a good cleaning,’ which seems to be a favorite phrase among owners of hopelessly neglected watercraft. I started the next day with a hammer and crowbar.”*

holes in the deck or renewing a piece of hardware. Certain jobs had to be completed in some kind of sequence — I didn’t install any hardware until the painting was finished, for example — but skipping from job to job kept me from getting too bored with the work and

feeling overwhelmed. (Most of the time, anyway.)

## Sequence of repairs

The basic sequence of repairs went something like this:

**1. Removal of everything** to the bare hull and deck. This included hardware, woodwork, electrical system, and paint.

**2. Clean and prepare for painting.** This meant repairing all rot, drilling limber holes so the lockers could drain, replacing earlier repairs that were weak or substandard, reinforcing joints with epoxy fillets, and sand-blasting the interior.

**3. Repair or recondition** as many parts as possible: keel, rudder, blocks, and winches. Replace those that are substandard or deteriorated, such as the table, the exterior trim, and the electrical system.

**4. Reinstall and re-bed** all of the repaired or new systems.

While there isn’t enough space to



write about every single job, here are my thoughts about some of the larger efforts:

### Painting the interior

Since this boat had a piece-built interior rather than a liner, I had to paint. When I restore my next boat, I'll look for one with an interior liner. I've heard disparaging remarks about liners. They are a cheaper, and often weaker, form of construction. They allow poor access to the hull. The interiors look like the inside of a refrigerator. But as long as their attachment to the hull is good (they are often tabbed to the hull or screwed into wooden stringers, which can rot), liners are much easier to clean up. Mold doesn't imbed itself permanently into the surface and, since they are out of the sun, their gelcoat surfaces can look good for a long time, much longer than exterior gelcoat.

Despite a year or so spent with standing water inside, the interior didn't have too much rot. I was able to remove all of the rot by replacing one seat top panel, addressing the wooden keel winch support, enlarging the seat locker cutouts, and replacing the lids. The lockers were originally hacked out roughly at the factory with a circular saw. By enlarging these with a jig-saw, I improved access and upgraded to lockers with rounded corners. I was able to cut away some rot while I was at it. This is a minor detail, but it gives the boat a more professional finish.

The interior had some sort of fabric attached to the hull. This might have been done at the factory to give the interior a warmer look. I'm sure it looked nice for about a year and a half. Then the inevitable mold set in. After 30 years, it was shot. I ripped it out, revealing a nasty surface of flaky old glue and/or paint. I sanded much off (if you do it, wear a respirator), but some areas could only be sandblasted. I bought a small pressure pot. Next time, however, I'll rent a large industrial blast pot and compressor. (On second thought, I won't be doing this again because the next boat will have a liner, right?)

I added structural reinforcing at the corners of the keel trunk, the transom, inside the lockers, and so on, using thickened epoxy. These joints were already fairly strong; no cracks



**Fluke, a refurbished MacGregor Venture 222, sails once more.**

were showing after 30 years. But the joints were rough. Adding a rounded fillet left a smooth, rounded inside corner that is stronger, looks better, and is easier to clean. Then I painted the interior with polyurethane enamel, dented cans on sale for \$2 a quart. I used 4 quarts. It's holding up well.

### Replacing the wiring

Older MacGregors have a reputation for being poorly wired. On my boat, that reputation was well deserved. The electrics were substandard from Day One, relying on lamp cord, household switches, and a single fuse to distribute power throughout the boat. I threw everything out and replaced it with larger-diameter wire, a distribution panel, and new navigation and interior lights. I tried to follow the ABYC specification for marine wiring as closely as possible. I was unable to find a consumer version of the specifications, but I managed to piece together various parts from the Internet and boat-repair manuals. The result is a vast improvement over the stock system.

### What it cost

Boat	\$500
Consumables	66
Tools	140
Cover	205
Stainless-steel fasteners	243
Canvas and upholstery	214
Epoxy, paint, fiberglass	349
Electrical	270
Wood and raw materials	128
Rigging	400
Sails	471
Motor	505
Taxes and registration	43
Trailer	105
Interior equipment	355
Deck equipment	116
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,110</b>

### Centerboard rebuilding

The centerboard was a major problem. The MacGregors of this era had centerboards that were made from three ½-inch steel plates, sandwiched together and set in a female mold containing a few layers of glass, but mostly resin. Over time, water finds its way to the core, causing rust. The rust expands, cracking the brittle resin covering and allowing more water in. These centerboards are often found wedged tightly into the centerboard trunk.

Mine had been "repaired" by slicing away some of the fiberglass covering, but it still needed to be driven out of the trunk with a steel pin and a sledge. Lifting the boat off the trailer to access the centerboard was a nightmare. The boat nearly fell over twice despite being shored and braced nearly every way imaginable. The soft ground over which I was working made this a dangerous and difficult job.

But I was able to remove, strip, sandblast, paint, relaminate, and re-install the centerboard. That's about three months of part-time work in one sentence. I discovered the ½-inch keel bolt had bent nearly 45 degrees, so I bored the pivot hole larger and installed a ⅝-inch grade 8 bolt. This keel should last awhile, but were I to do it again, I'd get a cast-iron replacement keel as was used on later models. That keel has a better foil shape, and renewing one consists of sandblasting the rust, priming, and painting.

### Canvaswork

One of the more enjoyable jobs was the canvaswork. I learned enough about sewing to muddle through replacing and recovering the interior cushions and to do some exterior projects as well (see *Good Old Boat*, July 2003). Recovering the cushions was a long job that sometimes got tedious, but it's a great project for the winter months. Next to painting, new canvas makes one of the most noticeable improvements to the overall look of a boat.

It's been about three and a half years since I started my restoration project. To date I've spent about 400 hours and \$4,000 on the boat. I've won my junkyard war. I have a boat that — while it isn't perfect, nor the last

**Continued on Page 76**



# Jonathan Sea incredible

*A cruising crew figures one good tern  
deserves another*

*Story and illustrations by Vern Hobbs*

**T**HE FIRST LIGHT OF MORNING TRICKLED through the portlights of *St. Pauli Girl*, our old Bristol cutter, anchored in the lee of Merritt Island. I silently made my way on deck past my sleeping shipmates to watch as the day was born. As I crept forward to lower the anchor light from the headstay, I flinched from the cold dew beneath my feet. "Savor that feeling," I whispered to myself. "It might well be the only cool sensation this late summer day has to offer." A thin mist was rising and glowing luminous in the dawn. I looked down at my reflection in the mirror upon which we floated and thought how fortunate I was to be a sailor.

One by one the crew awakened. First, Sally, my life-mate of 20 years, co-owner and chief purser of the sailing vessel *St. Pauli Girl*, joined me on deck. Then our guest crew: Sally's nephew, Jimmy, and his new bride, Jeanette, emerged from the companionway into the first rays of the sunrise.

This would be the last day of our cruise, and we were all looking forward to an ocean sail off Cape Canaveral. Ahead of us lay 6 miles of the Intracoastal Waterway, two drawbridges, and one lock. It was time to

get under way. Moving fluidly between my roles as executive chef, chief engineer, and captain, I lit the stove and put water on to boil, completed the daily engine room checks, and assigned deck duties for hoisting the anchor.

## **Anchor aweigh**

Before the sun was fully above the horizon, Jimmy was signaling from the foredeck that our 35-pound plow was aboard. We began chugging out of our tranquil gunkhole to the rhythm of the Perkins diesel, which was older than half our crew.

The generous wind of the past few days had vanished as low pressure in the Gulf migrated toward Texas. An onshore breeze was promised for the afternoon, but motoring would be the order of the morning. With no sails to tend, Jimmy and Jeanette lounged on the cabinroof in the hot morning sun. Sally kept me company in the cockpit as I steered us up the waterway.

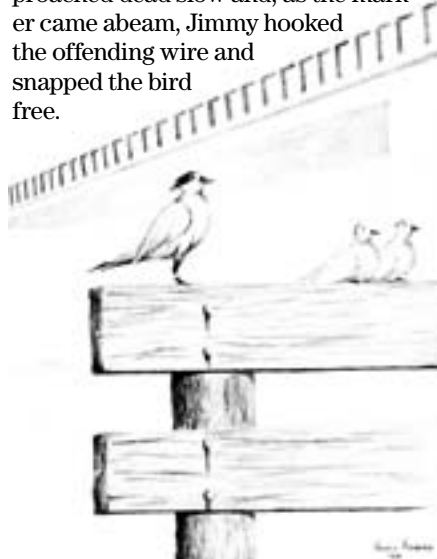
Passing a channel marker to starboard I noticed an entangled shorebird, probably a sea gull hanging inverted in the very wire devices intended to keep birds off the marker. "Ironical," I thought, and the thought saddened me. Although no one spoke, everyone was watching the poor creature slide by. Suddenly Jimmy stirred from his reclined position and said, "He's alive!" We all looked astern and saw the bird weakly flapping his wings.

Jeanette wondered aloud if there was anything we could do. "We should try to free him," Sally stated resolutely. Jimmy was now surveying the bird with binoculars and said he believed

he could untangle him using a boat-hook if I could bring the boat close enough. All eyes shifted to me. My own thoughts turned to the potential pitfalls of such a rescue attempt. The bird was dangling probably 6 or 7 feet above our deck level. How would we reach him? This was a wild animal. How much bodily harm might a panicked bird inflict? Was there shoaling around the marker? What about the danger of entangling our rigging on the structure? In our favor, there was no wind or current. We had plenty of crew. I decided it was worth a cautious try.

## **Rescue operations**

I slowed *St. Pauli Girl*, brought her around, and started back toward the marker. My previously lethargic crew came to life. Sally and Jeanette went forward to watch for shoaling. Jimmy positioned himself, boathook in hand, just forward of the port shrouds. We approached dead slow and, as the marker came abeam, Jimmy hooked the offending wire and snapped the bird free.



# gull's escape

We had imagined the bird taking to wing mid-fall and flying smartly away. Instead, he plopped into the water below and bobbed helplessly, wings spread, beak agape.

Turning slowly to starboard, we watched the bird with sinking hearts and began to speculate about his condition. Jeanette, a vet-tech who had worked with injured birds before, was certain she could determine the extent of his injuries if she could examine him. This of course would require bringing the bird aboard. Again we exchanged ideas and decided a large plastic bucket with a heaving line attached represented our best chance. We would simply scoop the bird up and haul him aboard. After a few tries, it worked.

Jeanette carefully removed the bird from the bucket and began to examine him. The bird's right leg was severed, but he was otherwise unhurt. This seemed a grim prognosis, but we had all seen one-legged gulls before. Apparently they could adapt. Jeanette recommended we keep the bird immobile, allow him to regain his strength, and then release him.

## Intricate beauty

We all began to look closely at our new passenger as Jeanette cradled him in her arms. We admired the intricate beauty of his markings. Consulting a field guide to Florida birds from our ship's library, we identified him as a royal tern. On his remaining leg was a bright metal band with the inscription, "U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service," and a series of numbers. Sally named him Jonathan, for Richard Bach's mystical *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*.

Jonathan remained calm in Jeanette's care. She nestled herself and her patient into the bow pulpit. Rescue and triage complete, the rest of the crew secured our boathooks, buckets, heaving lines, and other improvised gear, and we began once again to make way for the Canaveral Inlet.

After a long while Jeanette reported that Jonathan was growing restless and seemed ready for release. We were nearing our first drawbridge and decided it best to release the bird before reaching the bridge. There are some sandy spoil islands where the channel begins to narrow. We always see shorebirds there, so it seemed the logical spot. Jeanette carried Jonathan to the starboard rail as I slowed *St. Pauli Girl* to a stop just off a narrow strip of sand that we imagined would be inviting to him.

Looking ahead, I saw a tug and barge just emerging from under the drawbridge and urged that the release not be delayed. I wanted ample time to gain good steerageway before the traffic reached us.

## Oncoming tug

Jeanette lifted Jonathan to arms' length and gently tossed him aloft. He took to flight but, turning away from our intended landing site, circled our bow and made a water landing mid-channel directly in the path of the oncoming tug and barge. We all let our dismay be heard, but there was no time to do anything more. The tug was closing rapidly.

I shifted ahead, throttled up, and steered to port to move into position for the passing tug now only a hundred yards away. *St. Pauli Girl* did not respond. We had softly grounded. I imagined the tug's wake driving us hard aground. I knew I had but one chance to avoid that fate. I shifted astern, brought the rudder amidships, and demanded maximum power from the ancient Perkins. After a few long seconds, she began to move. I held my breath, counted to 10, throttled to idle, shifted ahead, steered a quarter turn to port, and once more called for maximum rpm. The bow of the barge came abeam as *St. Pauli Girl* pointed toward the advancing wake, her depth sounder counting reassuringly upward.

My crew could not have been more oblivious to our narrow escape from a hard grounding and the ordeal that goes with it. They were all single-mindedly searching the churning wake of the tug *Kathrine* for Jonathan or, worse, his remains. It seemed unlikely that the poor tern could have


survived, but there he was...surfing the *Kathrine's* wake and paddling for the far side of the channel. He hopped ashore, ruffled his feathers, and stood looking back at us. A unanimous cheer went up from all aboard *St. Pauli Girl*.

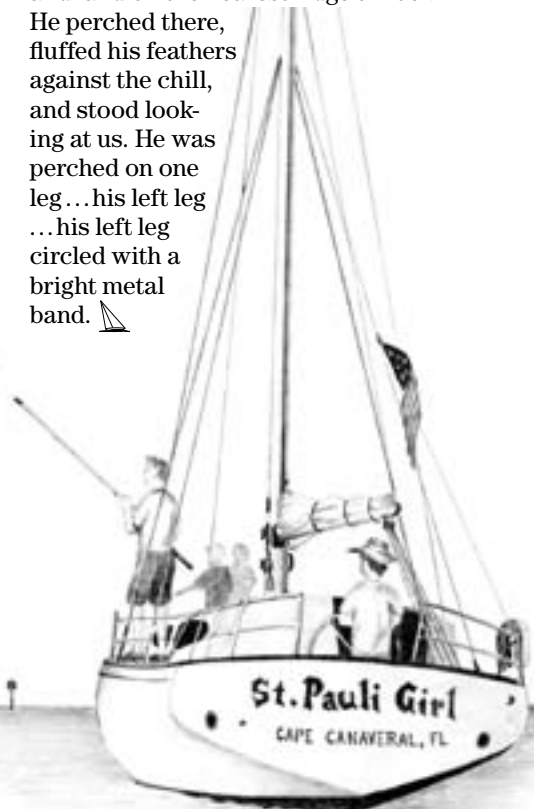
## Fading white speck

The Highway 3 bridge was opening ahead, and we continued our journey to the sea as Jonathan faded to a white speck on the sandbar far astern. We enjoyed a pristine ocean sail that day, made all the sweeter by the knowledge that we had helped a fellow creature. Sunset found us back in our home marina. The next day Jimmy and Jeanette were on a flight back to Denver, and I was off to job-related training that would keep me ashore for eight weeks.

It was a chilly, sunless, late November day before Sally and I sailed again. Despite the misty drizzle that had begun to fall, I was excited to be out on the water again. The timbers protecting the pilings of the familiar Highway 3 drawbridge were lined with shorebirds seeking shelter from the cold rain.

A royal tern squawked from overhead as we emerged from under the open bridge spans. We looked up to see the bird circle forward of our mast and land on the nearest ridge timber.

He perched there, fluffed his feathers against the chill, and stood looking at us. He was perched on one leg...his left leg...his left leg circled with a bright metal band. 





# Living out a dream

## *Youth and poverty turn a stock Cal 25 into a world cruiser*

*by Dave Martin*

**M**Y DECISION TO REBUILD A CAL 25 for a voyage around the world was inspired by one basic fact: I was broke. A 25-foot boat was all I could afford. But at age 22, I had a lot of energy and big dreams. When wise adults (hereafter known as The Skeptics) tried to dissuade me from going — saying it was a dangerous plan — I politely explained the reasoning behind my overall scheme, about how I was beefing up the flimsy hull with extra fiberglass.

I smiled, they smiled; each of us thinking the other an idiot for not seeing the obvious. Eighteen months down the road, as the project neared completion and I was getting ready to set off, the flak increased. I finally realized that people who are scared to be in your shoes will call you a fool.

A stock Cal 25 was never intended for long-distance ocean sailing. I discovered that while sailing the boat more than 10,000 miles between Seattle and New York via the Panama Canal. Bulkheads tore loose. The hull and rudder cracked. The problem with taking any older daysailer cruising is that the extra gear and provisions required for a lengthy voyage overburden the boat in ways that were never anticipated during construction. For example, an empty cardboard box can be dropped and remain intact. Fill the same box with heavy cans, and it will split wide open when dropped.

Although inadequately constructed, the hull has a superb design. The reason I entertained the notion of rebuilding the boat was due to its sailing

characteristics. Designer Bill Lapworth knew what he was doing when he penned the Cal 25. With its long fin keel, spade rudder, and flat sections, the boat boogied.

### **Deck not normal**

Some people had a problem with the way the boat looked. The trend-setting flush deck was definitely not normal. More than a gimmick for providing extra space below, however, the flush deck was the boat's saving grace during a circumnavigation. In severe sea conditions it provided extra freeboard. During knockdowns, the boat lay on its side and bounced down the faces of waves like a beach ball. In the same circumstances, traditional designs with sidedecks and cabin trunks tend to dig in.

The boat's major design flaw was its enormous cockpit. The gunwales, in particular, were too narrow. During a gentle knockdown, half the sea poured over the rail like a bucket dipped in a well. The companionway was also enormously wide, and the Cal sported a sloppy innovation called the pop-top — quite possibly the largest, leaking, fiberglass deck hatch in the world. Prior to the Seattle-to-New York trip, I had reduced the size of the companionway opening and replaced the pop-top with a hard doghouse to make the boat watertight. Now that I was doing a major overhaul, however, the cockpit had to go.

The most difficult aspect of any project is beginning. Apprehensions stymie action and large cash outlays cause shortness of breath. The best



Dave and Jaja Martin's children, Chris and Holly, in Indonesia in 1994. *Direction* floats in the background. Dave says the key to *Direction's* sea-keeping abilities was her small cockpit, a major modification he made as part of a total refit before setting out on his second cruise.

way to get started on any rebuild project is to rip the boat to pieces as quickly as possible — before you know what has hit you. Then the only alternative is to put it back together again.

On a quiet Sunday in November 1985, I ran an air hose out to *Direction*, hooked up a cutting tool, and slipped on a dust mask. In less than two hours the cockpit was severed from the hull and lying on the ground nearby. During the week that followed I ripped out the V-berth, the galley, dinette, and quarter berths. I left the main bulkhead intact. I sanded the hull back to clean fiberglass.

### Rocked the keel

I now had a bare hull and deck, minus a cockpit. To find out where the hull needed stiffening, I blocked the boat high enough so the keel was an inch off the ground. I then sat inside the empty hull with a 6-foot 2 x 4. Using it as a lever, I put the 2 x 4 into the deep bilge and began rocking the keel. Once enough momentum had built up, the keel swung freely from side to side, simulating its motion when sailing to windward. Without any interior to obstruct my view, I was able to observe that the transom twisted, the sides



**The cockpit gets cut out, above. Dave rides it to the dump, below left. The hull is gutted, below right, and gets sanded back to clean glass.**

*“Designer Bill Lapworth knew what he was doing when he penned the Cal 25. With its long fin keel, spade rudder, and flat sections, the boat boogied.”*

of the boat moved in and out, and the bottom of the hull flexed up and down. Using a magic marker, I put circles in all the areas that were contorting. Having completed the “research phase” of construction, I was able to map out my “structural scheme” to keep the hull rigid.

To curb the twisting and flexing, I chose to run three longitudinal stringers from stem to stern. I placed one of the stringers at the sheer to act as a clamp. Another followed the waterline. The third went across the flatter areas of the hull between the waterline and the garboard. After those were in place I added a thwartship bulkhead between the main bulkhead and the stem and another bulkhead 5 feet forward of the transom. Last, I curbed the keel movement by adding five box-section keel floors that were tied into the lower stringer. When I was finished with the boat’s structural additions, the interior resembled the inside of a DC-3 fuselage (see photos on Page 31).

I designed the new cockpit with wider gunwales, a shallow footwell, and a long stern deck. This new aft deck not only prevented the hull from

twisting, it kept following seas from slopping into the cockpit. A hatch provided access to the newly formed watertight aft lazarette. I also rebuilt the companionway. It was an 18- by 24-inch opening surrounded by a hard, fiberglass dodger. There was no sliding hatch. It was an extremely small opening for humans to wriggle in and out of, but it also presented a challenge for breaking waves (see photo on Page 31). *Direction* would prove herself to be a very dry boat.

### Attacked her size

By the time I was finished with this structural phase of construction, I had invested 500 hours of my time, spread out over six months. The Skeptics still prowled, offering their advice and wisdom. They could no longer argue that the boat was not strong enough for a sea voyage so they attacked her size instead.

“Too small,” they claimed. “She’ll be overcome by large seas.”

“We’ll see,” I said.

I did not want an interior that resembled the inside of an oak coffin. I wanted an interior that was light and airy, cheap to build, with enough room for two people to live in relative comfort. Although I was planning to begin







The new, aft, thwartship bulkhead, above. The cockpit getting primed for paint, at right. Note the wide gunwales and the stern deck with its hatch (not installed). Installing deck hardware, below.



my voyage alone, I was hoping to find a partner en route. Never in my wildest dreams would I have imagined that children would one day prowl the deck and enliven the cabin with their frantic energy. Fortunately that was a few years off, and I still had some energy of my own left to complete the project and get moving toward my destiny of meeting my wife-to-be, Jaja.

I designed extra wide settees in the main cabin to provide maximum food and water storage capabilities over the keel. The advantage with these wide settees is they were also comfortable berths. I hate narrow bunks — even at sea. I want to be able to move my arms and legs and to be able to curl up in a fetal position when I'm seasick. By inserting two plywood boards with

cushions between the settees, the entire main cabin was transformed into a 6- by 7-foot double bed.

### Dishwater back

The galley sink was to port and the stainless-steel Hillerange two-burner kerosene stove, with oven, was to starboard. There was not standing headroom in the galley, but it was easy to sit on the settees and cook, which worked well in rough conditions. Washing up was a different matter. You had to stand and bend over the sink in order to operate the hand pump. This created a syndrome Jaja would later term "dishwater back."

Instead of a traditional V-berth, I ran the cabin sole all the way to the new forward bulkhead. I built vertical lockers for hand tools, clothes, a sewing machine, and dry stores. In time, this area would be remodeled and become the nursery. The 5-foot space between the forward bulkhead and the

stem was storage for sails and charts.

Building an enclosed head on a small boat is a colossal waste of space compared to how much use it receives. I installed the head on *Direction* at the foot of the sail locker. Since it was located at the bow, it was a fairly miserable experience to use it while at sea. But the boat had a head, and it did not take up any valuable space.

Compromises are the main theme when designing small-boat interiors. You have to weigh the pros and cons of each situation and pick the lesser of two (or perhaps more) evils. My main drive was to create maximum storage in the middle of the boat. When fully provisioned, *Direction* could carry 60 gallons of water and 15 gallons of kerosene. Most important, we could stock

*"The best way to get started on any rebuild project is to rip the boat to pieces as quickly as possible — before you know what has hit you. Then the only alternative is to put it back together again."*

enough food to last a family of four for three months. As a rule of thumb while provisioning, we knew that six shopping carts brimming with supplies would somehow find a place aboard.

### Got through gales

*Direction* proved herself to be an able sea boat, especially in severe conditions. Her extra freeboard and wide-gunwaled cockpit (and virtually leakproof companionway) were battlements against breaking waves. She got us through many gales, the worst of which was an 11-day blow in the Indian Ocean. And she held together during a 90-degree knockdown on the Coral Sea. In seven years we logged more than 45,000 miles on her without a single, structural mishap. Not bad for a boat that cost less than \$15,000 to rebuild and fit out.

That's not to say we zoomed around the globe always reveling in cushy comfort. Far from it. At sea





**To stabilize the keel, Dave built box-section keel floors using  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch marine plywood, sheathed in fiberglass, then laminated to the hull, above. A hard dodger and fiberglass doghouse, below left, prevented seas from entering the cabin. Launch day, below right.**

**The fuselage-like latticework of stringers, above. Dave made the stringers using 2-pound density closed-cell foam, covered with polyester resin and mat and roving. At the widest section of the beam the stringers got three layers of mat and roving, equaling  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thickness of material. He tapered the laminating schedule toward the bow and stern, down to one layer mat and roving.**

when the wind blew more than 20 knots, the constant and unforgiving motion would sometimes chafe our nerves to distraction. Making a cup of coffee was akin to a high-wire act. And then there was the reality of a boat battened down tight for sea while holding a load of dirty diapers. But we survived and the children thrived. We knew we would be more comfortable living ashore, but would we be happier? Not on your life.


Well, it's been 20 years, three kids, and a voyage to the Arctic on a different boat since that Sunday in November 1985 when I tore *Direction* to

pieces. If I have learned anything useful over the years it is this: unless you have unlimited funds, do not place "comfort and convenience" at the top of the priority list. None of us wants to sleep on a bed of nails or use canvas soaked in cod liver oil for raingear, but attempting to bring all the perks of shore life onto the boat will get complicated and costly. Prioritize. Buy only the stuff to make the boat safe and performance-oriented. Comfort is a relative state. I can adjust to anything and be happy about it — especially when a dream is being lived out.

Looking back, I would not have

changed a thing. I chose cruising over college and incorporated a family into the general sailing plans. It really is true that the most difficult aspect of any project is getting started. You must be bold, hold firm to your aspirations, and not allow the questioning looks from others to hold you back. Do what you have to do, because time will charge on regardless.

Incidentally, not long ago I met a few of The Skeptics from my youth — the ones who had offered less-than-positive encouragement when *Direction* was little more than a boatyard disaster area. Now my aged adversaries clapped me on the back. They said, "I remember when you were just a kid, Dave, rebuilding that boat. Oh my goodness! I would have given anything to be in your shoes. What adventures you've had!"

I just smiled. 





# What does woman want?

*The answers . . . are simple and few. But many men just don't get it*

*by Karen Larson*

**I**N THE BEGINNING, God created man, and man built himself a boat.

It was good. Adam looked at Eve and asked if she'd like to go sailing. For her part, Eve wasn't so sure about this, another of Adam's nutty ideas. However, she went along for the ride.

Unfortunately for the future of Adam's cruising career, he chose a cold, wet, and windy day. He stayed out too long. He laughed when she panicked. And he shouted when she didn't pick up the mooring correctly. After that, Adam had to singlehand his boat. Eve went shopping.

Since that day, Adam's philosophical offspring have often asked themselves, "What does woman want?" The answers, as it turns out, are simple and few. But many men just don't get it. Those who do get to go sailing with their favorite females along as crew.

As a minority of one, I make the following suggestions on behalf of the silent majority, many of whom will have additional thoughts and comments. If one of those making the suggestions happens to be your wife, pay particularly close attention.

## **Get her involved from the start**

If you're both new to sailing, read together, go to boat shows together, take classes together, and buy the boat of your dreams together. *Together.*

Whether new to sailing or not, when you're buying a boat it goes without saying (*doesn't it?*) that a purchase of this size, which will affect your joint lifestyle, should fully involve *both* of you. Your wife should be equally involved in everything from purchase to upgrades.

If you're already a sailor and she's new to it, get her involved in all parts of the experience. Don't wait until it's blowing like stink, and you need to put a reef in the main, to ask her to take the helm for the first time. It's nice to have a second pair of hands aboard all the time. Make sure she helps even when you don't need an extra set of hands. When it's comfortable for her. Don't do everything on board. Uninvolved passengers don't have as much fun as crewmembers who understand the dynamics of boathandling and navigation.

## **Make her comfortable**

If she's cold, wet, hot, miserable, sunburned, or seasick, she's not likely to

be a great first mate or eager to return for the next trip. Make sure she's got good foul-weather gear, sea boots, deck shoes, sunscreen, wind protection, sunglasses, hats, and so on. Don't give her your leaky castoffs. Invest in your sailing partner's comfort. Seek out seasickness solutions if she needs them. Avoid bad weather and big seas (*rigorously* in the beginning of your seafaring adventures). You can't prevent her from getting wet and enduring some windy and bouncy conditions, but you can be sure she's not physically uncomfortable when she does.

Physical comfort is a big part of it, but keep an eye on her overall sailing comfort level too. Is she confident taking the helm? Is she comfortable when the boat heels? Does she believe in the capabilities of the boat and her skipper? Is she learning new skills about sailing and navigation at her own speed and in her own way? Women are generally more comfortable observing how things are done *before* doing them. Be patient as she learns new aspects of boathandling. The skills you now take for granted were new to you once too.

## **Send her to school**

If she can't learn boathandling skills from you (and many wives can't be





taught by their husbands for a variety of reasons), then invest in training through other organizations. Many programs are focused on teaching sailing skills to women. The sheer multitude of these tells you that you are not the only couple for whom the teacher/student relationship doesn't work. Classes run the gamut from basic sailing to navigation to cruising to offshore passage-making. Your crew will return with more confidence once she's accomplished some goals without you.

And when she's working on your boat on skills that are new to her, keep it stress-free and upbeat. Don't push, don't manipulate, don't overdo it with false praise. Let her assume more and more responsibilities aboard at a pace that works for her. Occasional emergency (or urgent) situations will call for an extra pair of hands, and she may be galvanized into new roles by these situations. She may seem unsure of herself, but if she is able to lend a real helping hand, her confidence will grow and she'll feel less challenged the next time the wind picks up or you need to reef, stand watches, avoid a collision, or rescue a hat that fell overboard.

### **Give her some control**

She'll be a more active participant if she has much to say about the agenda for the day and the trip itinerary. On our boat, the skipper is primarily interested in going sailing. Anywhere. Any time. As "operations officer," where and when and how far are primarily my responsibility and within my control. Our cruises and adventures have expanded in tandem with my expanding confidence, belief in the boat, and absolute faith in the skip-

per's ability to keep us out of danger.

### **Beware of gender-related roles**

If all she does aboard the boat is cook and clean (those things we call the "pink jobs"), she'll prefer to do that at home, thank you. Modern appliances are available there. There's a lot to be said for labor-saving conveniences, electricity, a

full-sized sink and stove, dependable refrigeration, and a stable platform for food preparation. So share in the planning and provisioning as well as the

*"On our boat, the skipper is primarily interested in going sailing. Anywhere. Any time. As 'operations officer,' where and when and how far are primarily my responsibility and within my control."*

cooking and dishwashing. And go out to eat sometimes, if that's important to her. (*It's not important to me, so when Jerry takes me "out to eat," we motor or sail out from our marina somewhere, and I cook. But he cleans up!*) Make life aboard fun and not just another place to go to work. What sort of weekend or vacation getaway is that?

On the other hand, do include her in some of what we refer to as the "blue jobs," such as boat projects, trip planning, navigation, sail changes, helm work, and maintenance. It's her boat too. Let her play a role in the boatkeeping chores or she might as well crochet afghans or, worse, stay ashore and go shopping.

### **Temper your expectations**


She's probably not as strong as you are. She can get that sail

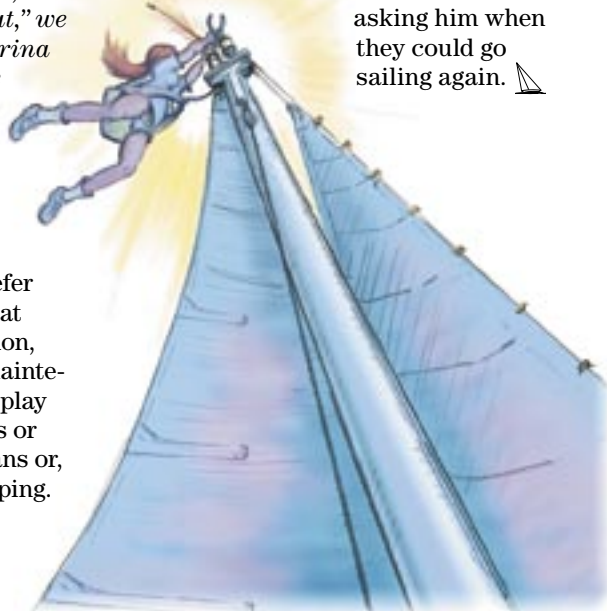
up, yes. But if you need that extra oomph on the winch to tighten the halyard to your exacting specifications, you may have to do the last crank yourself once the boat's under way. You may make the final cranks on the jib winches at each tack too. She probably won't mind. Consider which one of you is stronger, too, when it comes to anchoring and docking roles. It might be handier to take a 400-pound gorilla sailing with you. But would you want to?

### **Temper your temper**

And finally...every skipper knows this one: don't yell when the situation gets out of control. In fact, try not to let it get out of control. Talk through what you're going to do before you dock, anchor, or make sail changes. Talk about the kinds of things that could go wrong and what to do if those things actually happen. Then do what you've discussed. If things still go wrong, talk later about how to avoid the same situation the next time.

Over time, as you work your boat together, you'll need to communicate less and less about each situation in advance. You'll both know what to expect of the circumstances and of each other. You'll be working your boat like a well-oiled machine...one she's going to be happy to be a part of.

If Adam had thought things through better in the beginning, Eve would have been asking him when they could go sailing again. 







# Cape Dory weather

*A solid old 27-footer proves her worth  
in choppy Buzzards Bay*

*by Peter Baumgartner*

had the good fortune to be out there on one of those warm lively days when, by early afternoon, the breaking crests of the waves are blown away and atomized by the warm mist of a smoky southwester, a wind that will puff

the first dunkings, I learn to steer *London* at an angle up the face of the larger waves and to swivel on their crests and slide into the following troughs as gently as I can. *London* is doing 6 knots. The turnbuckles of the lee shrouds will spend the next three or four hours in the water. This is why I love Buzzards Bay in summer. It is clean. It is warm. It blows like heck.

My sloop is old but solid. She was built for conditions just like these: steep green salty waves breaking over the bow, water washing the deck and pouring over the cabintop to drain down her sides and drop off the stern. Water spills over the rails, water streams off the jib. It is fine. I feel great.

I am not afraid. I am soaking wet. My bilge is dry. *London's* track through the sea is steady.

I watch big cruising sailboats emerge from the canal channel with their sails furled tight to the boom. Under full throttle they smash head-on

into the steep oncoming waves. The large waves lift these big hulls out of the water, expose their keels, and drop them into the next trough with a shudder. Other boats hurry off the open bay for the refuge of a harbor, their masters hunkered down at the wheel, peering forward to the shelter they know lies

and blow until evening.

Picture this, for example: at 1:55 p.m. *London* is heeled well over, just out of the Cape Cod Canal, and heading south when the first wave breaks over her the bow. At 2:10 I am hit in the face with about 3 gallons of warm salty water. I begin to laugh. The waves have suddenly become steep and breaking. They're running 4 to 6 feet. At 2:15, several more gallons of the sea drop through the open companionway hatch and into the cabin. I reach forward, close the hatch, and grab the harness to clip myself in.

## **Swivel on the crests**

The boat is close-hauled and I am singlehanded as we tack across the mouth of Hog Island Channel. After

*"She was built for  
conditions just like these:  
steep green salty waves  
breaking over the bow,  
water washing the deck and  
pouring over the cabintop  
to drain down her sides  
and drop off the stern."*

I DREW A LONG COOL BREATH IN THE SUMMER of 1998 when I first saw the hull of a 27-foot Cape Dory hull sitting in a Massachusetts backyard. I had been looking for a sailboat with a full keel, a solidly built boat with an inboard diesel, one I could buy cheaply and fix up. I bought *Loon* and worked on her. She was launched as *London* the following spring. (See articles about this refit in *Good Old Boat*, January and March 2001.) We are still sailing off the New England coast five years later.

On the coastal charts of Massachusetts, the spot where the Cape Cod Canal enters Buzzards Bay looks sheltered and calm. It is protected from open ocean swells by long peninsulas and a scattering of islands. The chart does not show how, on some days, the fast ebb current from the Cape Cod Canal conspires to run into a fresh southwest wind focused by the shape of Buzzards Bay. This bay wind blowing against the strong canal current can build a quick and impressive sea. Many yacht captains have wished they were far out at sea instead of in this "sheltered spot."

This past summer, *London* and I

just ahead, past the sea gong and under the shelter of their own soft and familiar headland.

I've had no lunch but do not want to eat. I am absorbed in moving the boat up-wind. Everything else is forgotten for the next four hours as I trim sails, set and undo reefs in the main, and trim the jib in an effort to find the best combination, the best set. My goal is to move forward against the fury of a summer sea that is trying with an increasing vigor and elemental fortitude to press me back.

### Kind of meditation

My actions, my thoughts, become a kind of meditation. I focus on the elemental forces of water, sail, and wind. I bruise my hands, bang my knees, and once slide across the steep, slopping-wet deck toward the sea.

I feel nothing but the exultation, the pure luck, the good fortune to be out here on this bay on an afternoon when the moon and the big tides, the winds and the currents, have conspired to set up a really exciting sea on a warm afternoon in late August.

Before each tack I get my lines clear and set to run, center the traveler, and then yell out loud, as I always do, even when sailing solo, "ready about," followed by the deep sonorous, "hard alee." I heave the tiller over with my hip and duck under the boom. All about is noise and chaos as the wind tries to shake the jib to pieces and tear the sheet from my hand. Some tacks are beautiful, and we sprint ahead in the new direction; others are complete disasters and we are kicked back by sea and wind as waves slop over the gunwales.

On one tack in a moment of inattention I backwind the jib. Instead of letting the windward jib sheet loose and tightening the lee one to attempt the tack again, I leave the jib as it is, to go with the error, and steer hard downwind. We spin 270 degrees and come round to the very close-hauled course I was trying to achieve. In a breeze like this there is little room for subtlety. The afternoon is filled with

*"My actions, my thoughts, become a kind of meditation.*

*I focus on the elemental forces of water, sail, and wind. I bruise my hands, bang my knees, and once slide across the steep, slopping-wet deck toward the sea."*


noise, motion, and creaming spray. Time and waves race by.

Much later, near the end of the afternoon when I am beginning to tire and find myself muttering, "I will not tack again," I am able to sneak

past the last point of land off Mattapoissett and slip past Ram Island into the lee of West Island where the sea surface suddenly becomes quiet. At last I am nearly home.

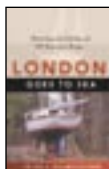
### All drenched

Here I can slack off, brush the crystals of salt off my eyelids and wonder at the day, wonder at the boat I restored and know so well. The cockpit, the lines, the sails are all drenched. For hours the salt water scooped from the sea was running off the jib in a constant stream. Everything looks very clean, glossy wet — new again. I ease back and breathe deeply. I no longer have to brace myself. For a few minutes we just glide.

There is a final spot ahead, just before the entrance to my harbor's channel, where the wind is always strong. It accelerates over and around the back of West Island and then out across Nasketucket Bay. The island magnifies the southwest current of air as a lens bends light. I wait for the extended gust and, when it comes, let *London* lift up one more time, rails back in the water, and bless the day I bought this old boat. The water flows by in an evening stream of molten gold. Waves rush by. I stretch and lick my salty lips. A cormorant croaks at our passing. Just up ahead I can see the red and green buoys that mark the entrance to the harbor channel. 

*For further reading...*

Peter Baumgartner's book about the restoration of his Cape Dory 27 and coastal sailing, *London Goes To Sea*, was released in April 2004. It is available at <<http://www.goodoldboat.com/bookshelf.html>> or by calling 763-420-8923.



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The mizzenmast comes ashore, above. Pulling the masts, below, at Opua Wharf, Bay of Islands, New Zealand.



# All shipshape aloft

*A 20-year-old 47-footer gets new rigging and spruced-up masts*

*by Michael Batham*

THERE COMES A TIME IN THE life of every vessel when it needs more than routine annual maintenance. Our 47-foot steel ketch, *Sea Quest*, now nearing her 20th birthday, had been our home for 11 years as we cruised the Western Pacific. To prepare for our next long voyage, my wife, Tere, and I decided the engine had to be rebuilt. This entailed pulling the mizzenmast to get the engine out from under the doghouse roof. With one mast already out, it seemed a good idea to pull the mainmast as well and refurbish them both.

The old galvanized standing rigging had stood up well for nearly two decades. Only the forestays, abraded by the sail hanks, and a mizzen shroud showed any serious rust. Over the years I had come to appreciate galvanized wire over stainless steel because it does not work-harden and break when you least expect it.

Galvanized wire is cheaper than stainless, although the actual savings in cost would only amount to a small part of the total bill for a re-

rig job. Big savings, however, can be made on the galvanized fittings, along with the fact that the preparation work would be done not by a marine rigging shop but rather by a wire rope company.

More important to me than the cost of the job, however, was peace of mind that results from knowing that any deterioration in the wire would appear only gradually. The rusted mizzen shroud, though looking bad, had plenty of sound strands of wire at its core. The chance of losing our rig, as happens all too of-

*"The old galvanized standing rigging had stood up well for nearly two decades. Only the forestays, abraded by the sail hanks, and a mizzen shroud showed any serious rust."*

ten with stainless through the failure of a perfectly good-looking stay due to work-hardening, was slim.

## **The best wire**

Tracking down the best-galvanized strand is imperative. Experts we consulted considered English wire the best. Chinese strand they said, was to be avoided at all costs. I found an industrial wire rope company that could supply me with both ½-inch and ¾-inch 1 x 19 wire made up from good quality galvanized English strand.



*“When ordering wire, I allowed an extra 3 feet to bend smoothly around each thimble. If cut too short, the worked end of the wire tends to unlay itself on the bend. The tail would later be cut off and discarded.”*

The first vital step when the masts were laid horizontal was to accurately measure the rigging. I removed the old stays with all their shackles, links, and turnbuckles and laid them on flat ground. After winding the turnbuckles back to their previously marked “tight position,” Tere and I measured the length from clevis pin to clevis pin, checking, comparing, and re-checking the measurement of each port and starboard shroud. This became our reference “overall length” from which I could calculate the correct wire length.

The old turnbuckles had, at one end, a clevis pin that went through the chainplate. At the other end, an eye was shackled to the thimble on the stay. I wanted to eliminate the extra bulk of these shackles if I could. After re-galvanizing the old turnbuckles, my plan was to splice the new wire directly to the eye.

In order to accurately calculate the length of each wire from thimble to thimble, I needed to deduct the length

of the turnbuckle from the “overall length.” But by how much? I took both the maximum and the minimum length of the turnbuckle and arbitrarily allowed 70 percent of that for setting

up and stretch. The remaining 30 percent of the turnbuckle length would, I hoped, cover any shortfall the opposite way.

### Two hand-splices

As a child I had watched a rigger spend half a day laboriously making two beautiful hand-splices on a new shroud for my dad’s boat. Today the industry uses Nicopress splices. This involves bending the end of a wire around a thimble and then squeezing the tail onto the standing part with a Nicopress sleeve. A giant press, using tons of pressure to mold the sleeve around the wire, does this work. It now takes hours, not days.

When ordering wire, I allowed an extra 3 feet to bend smoothly around each thimble. If cut too short, the worked end of the wire tends to unlay itself on the bend. The tail would later be cut off and discarded.

While the stays were being made, we set to work on the aluminum masts. Tere and I stripped the hardware, then we removed the old paint with scrapers. Next we sanded the masts with fine paper on a random-orbital sander.

The amount of paint required took us by surprise. The total surface area of two masts, booms, and spinnaker poles totaled as much surface area as the topsides of the boat. The constraints of re-coat times for the different paints had us worried. The paint company representative had said, “If you don’t complete Step 3 without a break, you must scrape the primer off and begin again.”

This was the schedule:

**Step 1.** Wash with an acidic cleaner. Wait till dry, a maximum of four hours.

**Step 2.** Coat with aluminum primer. Wait a minimum of three hours and a maximum of 24 hours.

**Step 3.** Coat with polyurethane, silver for the bulk of the spars and



**Michael cleans the old paint off the stripped masts, top. Preparing the aluminum spars, center, using a fine random-orbital sander. Tere touches up the overlap from white to silver paint, above. This photo also shows the mast-support gantry and spreaders.**



**Even this badly corroded stay, top, had plenty of good metal left. Removing all the mast hardware, above.**





white for the top quarter of each mast. Wait 4 to 24 hours.

**Step 4.** Overcoat all the polyurethane with high-gloss clear finish. Recoat in 12 to 24 hours.

Despite the fact that we were working outdoors and dodging autumn squalls, we somehow squeaked through all the steps within the allotted time frame. The spars were ready. The turnbuckles had been re-galvanized, and the wire was being spliced.

I began to rebuild both masts. This involved a lot of fiddly work: refitting the spreaders, winches, cleats, electrics, and other fittings. Fortunately, I had made careful notes as I dismantled things. Now I slavishly followed these notes. Tere and I checked each item, cleaned it, and refitted it. Where screws were tapped into the mast section, I cleaned the threads using a tap in a slow-speed cordless drill. To prevent electrolysis between stainless and aluminum, I coated the screws with an insulating paste and bedded all fittings in Sikaflex.

Many of the bands and fittings were originally fixed with 1/4-inch round-headed machine screws. I screwed these home with a large flat-bladed screwdriver. During our next cruise a small but significant problem revealed itself. Metal burrs, almost imperceptible to the eye, had formed around the slots of the screw heads. The sharp edges caused significant chafe on halyards lying against them. I had to go up the mast to file each screw head smooth.

I also discovered later at sea, when the masthead light failed, that it is as important to *let* water out of the

light fittings as it is to *keep* it out! The fitting had probably leaked from the beginning. Now I made a drain hole at the lowest point. Fortunately I had remembered to clear the drain at the foot of the deck-stepped masts.

### Crevice sealer

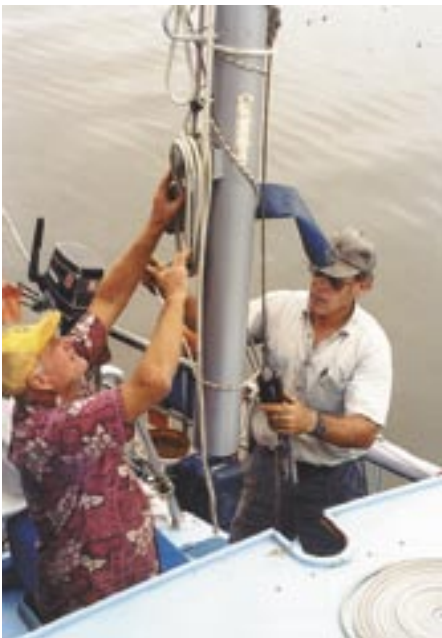
The masts were ready when the new wires arrived. Into each thimble, Nicopress sleeve, and worked wire end, we applied an epoxy metal crevice sealer, followed by a high-build epoxy coating, hoping to prevent water from pooling there. Later we coated the lower part of each stay — which is subject to heavy wear and salt corrosion — with the same

epoxy coating. We discovered that the paint had an unexpected added advantage of making the wire less abrasive to the sails.

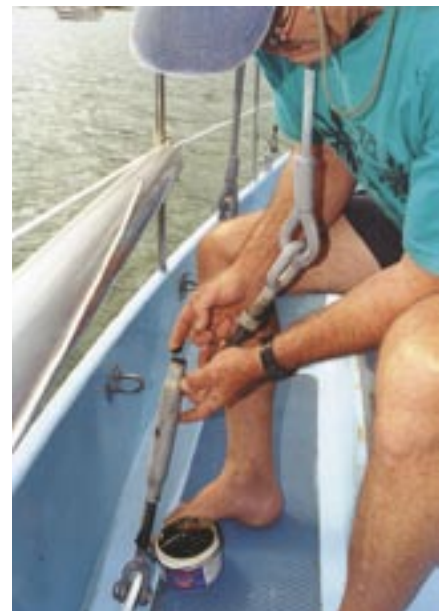
All our careful planning and tedious attention to detail paid off the day the crane lifted the masts aboard. With many hands to help, the masts dropped neatly into place. We fed the labeled electrical wires through the deck. We fixed the turnbuckle clevis pins to the chainplates. The crane was on its way in less than an hour.

Tensioning the rig took a little

*“The amount of paint required took us by surprise. The total surface area of two masts, booms, and spinnaker poles totaled as much surface area as the topsides of the boat.”*



**Tere applying the sealer to the new wire, at left above. The mizzen swings back through the doghouse roof, at left center. Securing the mizzen rigging — a ketch once more, at left bottom. The turnbuckles are filled with Lanacote, at right.**




longer. I made sure the masts were plumb. Starting with the cap shrouds, forestay, and backstay, I adjusted them using the turnbuckles. After both masts looked right I tensioned the triatic stay, the intermediate shrouds, and finally the lower shrouds. How relieved I was to find nothing too short and each turnbuckle with a few spare turns left.

After I was satisfied with the tension of the stays, I packed each turnbuckle with a lanolin-based preparation, Lanacote, then wrapped the exposed threads with Lanacote-impregnated bandages and a covering tape.

I checked the lead of all ropes and halyards to minimize wear and chafe. In the next few weeks Tere and I made new baggywrinkle and wound it onto the backstays at the chafe points.

The mast refit turned out to be far more complicated than it had first appeared. The masts were heavier and longer than I realized. Getting them on and off the trailer required the help of at least eight other shipyard volunteers with good backs. I built simple frames to support the masts, but turning them to scrape and paint required the use of a block and tackle.

The notes and dimensions I took as the mast came apart proved essential during the rebuilding process. Containers of such things as winch parts or spreader-light mounting screws, each marked to show its specific contents, helped to ensure that parts were not mixed up or lost.

A re-rig in a vessel's mid-life should outlast the cruising years of most couples. We now have a brightly shining pair of masts and hardy rigging that we expect will last us another 20 years with luck. Now that we are out cruising again, the exertions of the job have been forgotten, but when that ol' wind starts to blow, we bless those bright new shrouds and are glad we undertook the task of renewing them. 

*For further reading...*

Sheridan House just released Tere Batham's new book, *Cruising Japan to New Zealand: The Voyage of the Sea Quest*, available at <http://www.goodoldboat.com/bookshelf.html> or by calling 763-420-8923.



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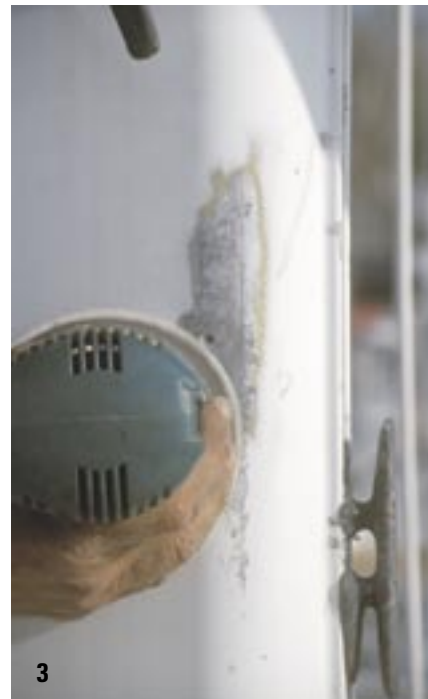
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# Spiffing up the spars

## How to repair corrosion damage on painted aluminum

by Steven Alexander

**H**OW DOES THE PAINT LOOK ON THE painted aluminum of your boat? Is it bubbling up and breaking through the surface? This is the first visible evidence that the metal beneath the paint is corroded. It is a problem that needs to be dealt with immediately; if left unchecked, the corrosion will eat right through the metal, leading to expensive and time-consuming repairs.

I've repaired this sort of damage several times over many years, experimenting with different materials

and procedures on all sorts of aluminum pieces, from masts and steering pedestals to window, hatch, and door frames. What follows is what works for me when it's time to strip, prep, and paint corroded aluminum.

The first step is to remove the corrosion — all of it. Any corrosion left behind will come bubbling up to the surface later. Use a paint scraper

and a wire brush to remove the loose, bubbling paint from the aluminum. Then sand the damaged areas down to shiny bare metal, using an orbital

*"The key to stopping corrosion from recurring is sealing the metal surface with a proper paint job. And the key to a proper aluminum paint job is the priming."*

Crevice corrosion on the mast (Photos 1 and 2) is obvious as it bubbles up between the layer of paint and the aluminum mast. The first step (Photo 3) is removal of all traces of corrosion first with a scraper, then with a wire brush, and finally with 80- and 120-grit sandpaper. Next, etch the surface with an acid solution (Photo 4) and apply primer (Photo 5). Sand the primer layer with 220-grit sandpaper (Photo 6) and spot-paint with a thinned coat followed by a layer of top coat. Hand-sand with 220-grit paper. The final coat is a thinned layer. First spread the paint horizontally but finish with a vertical stroke to prevent curtains (Photos 7 and 8). The finished mast is Photo 9.

sander fitted with an 80-grit disk. Finish up by hand-sanding with 120-grit paper, feathering the edges of the surrounding paint into the sanded area. Then wash everything thoroughly with running water. If you are working on a thin piece of aluminum — like a window frame — skip the power sander and do the job by hand in order to keep from breaking through the metal.

The next step is to etch the metal surface with an acid solution. Paint doesn't stick well to smooth metal surfaces. Etching roughens up the surface just enough to give the paint something to grab onto. Use a phosphoric acid-etching solution, which is readily available at marine, auto supply, and hardware stores. Follow the dilution directions on the container, applying it to the bare aluminum with



an acid brush. The etching process is almost immediate; you can wash it off with running water within minutes of application.

### Running off in sheets

When you rinse the aluminum, see that the water runs off in even sheets rather than beads of water. Sheetting water is a good indication that the metal surface has been properly etched. If the water beads, repeat the etching process.

The key to stopping corrosion from recurring is sealing the metal surface with a proper paint job. And the key to a proper aluminum paint job is the priming. My favorite aluminum primer is Awl Grip 545, which



was developed for use with the manufacturer's linear polyurethane (LP) paint. Although this two-part epoxy primer is expensive, the leftover material doesn't go to waste since it also makes an excellent all-around primer for fiberglass and wood surfaces.

Work with small amounts of the primer, since you'll throw away whatever you don't use. Mix equal parts of base and converter, pass the mixed primer through a paint filter, and apply it over the bare aluminum with a disposable brush, overlapping the feathered edge of the surrounding paint by about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch. Since this primer is thin, keep an acetone-damp rag handy to immediately wipe away drips. The primer will dry hard to the



touch within an hour. You can then give it a light sanding with 220-grit paper, rinse it clean, and apply a second coat once it has dried thoroughly. Allow this second coat of primer to dry overnight before repeating the sand/rinse/dry routine.

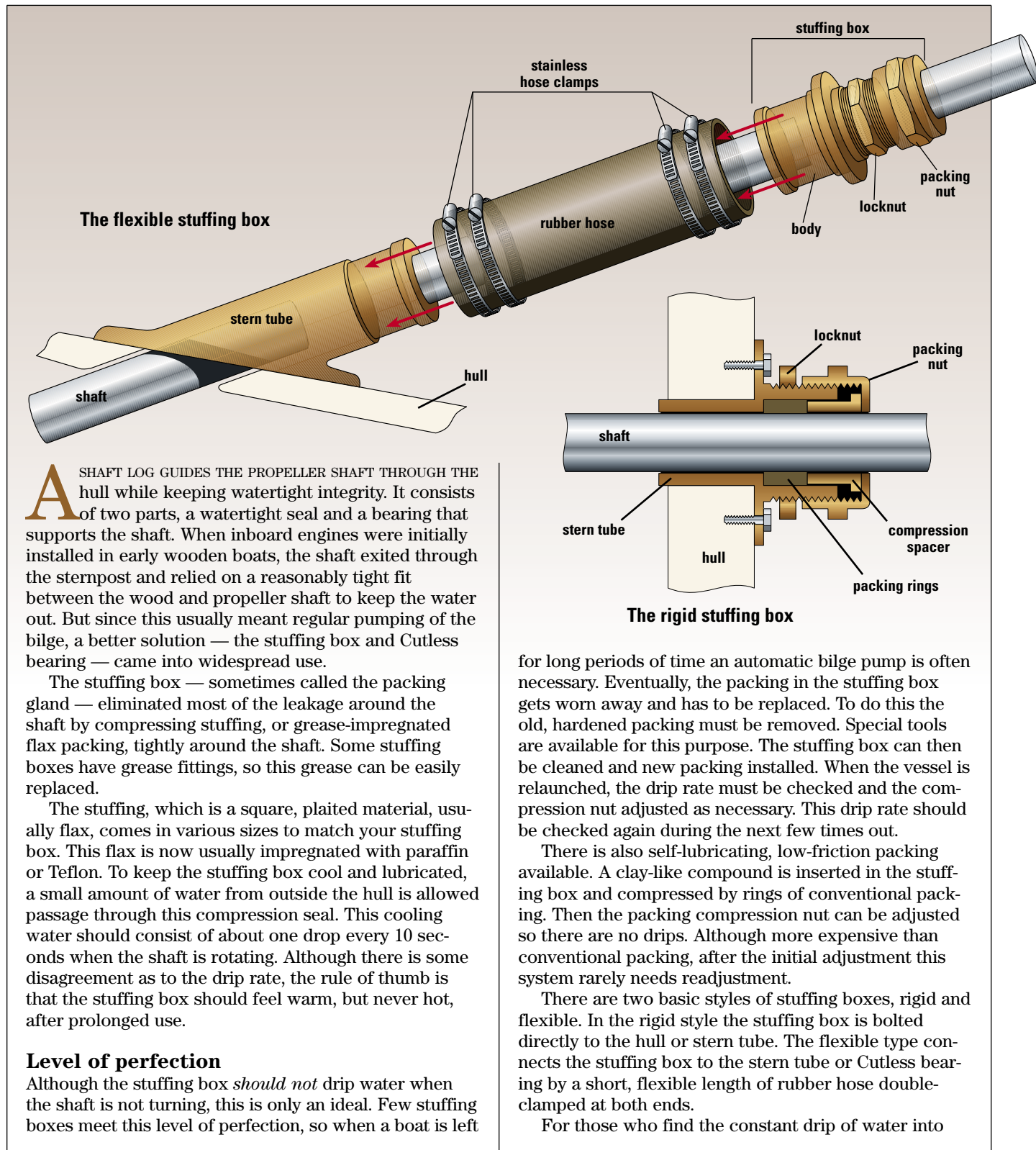
You can paint over 545 primer with enamels or twin-pack linear polyurethanes; however, I prefer using a marine-grade one-part polyurethane paint as an excellent compromise between these two. One-part polyurethane is more durable than enamel and a lot easier to use than LP. In addition to the paint, you will need a natural-bristle brush, brushing thinner, paint pots, stirring sticks, and filters.

**Continued on Page 76**



## Keeping that drip-drip-drip under control

by Don Launer



**A** SHAFT LOG GUIDES THE PROPELLER SHAFT THROUGH THE hull while keeping watertight integrity. It consists of two parts, a watertight seal and a bearing that supports the shaft. When inboard engines were initially installed in early wooden boats, the shaft exited through the sternpost and relied on a reasonably tight fit between the wood and propeller shaft to keep the water out. But since this usually meant regular pumping of the bilge, a better solution — the stuffing box and Cutless bearing — came into widespread use.

The stuffing box — sometimes called the packing gland — eliminated most of the leakage around the shaft by compressing stuffing, or grease-impregnated flax packing, tightly around the shaft. Some stuffing boxes have grease fittings, so this grease can be easily replaced.

The stuffing, which is a square, plaited material, usually flax, comes in various sizes to match your stuffing box. This flax is now usually impregnated with paraffin or Teflon. To keep the stuffing box cool and lubricated, a small amount of water from outside the hull is allowed passage through this compression seal. This cooling water should consist of about one drop every 10 seconds when the shaft is rotating. Although there is some disagreement as to the drip rate, the rule of thumb is that the stuffing box should feel warm, but never hot, after prolonged use.

### Level of perfection

Although the stuffing box *should not* drip water when the shaft is not turning, this is only an ideal. Few stuffing boxes meet this level of perfection, so when a boat is left

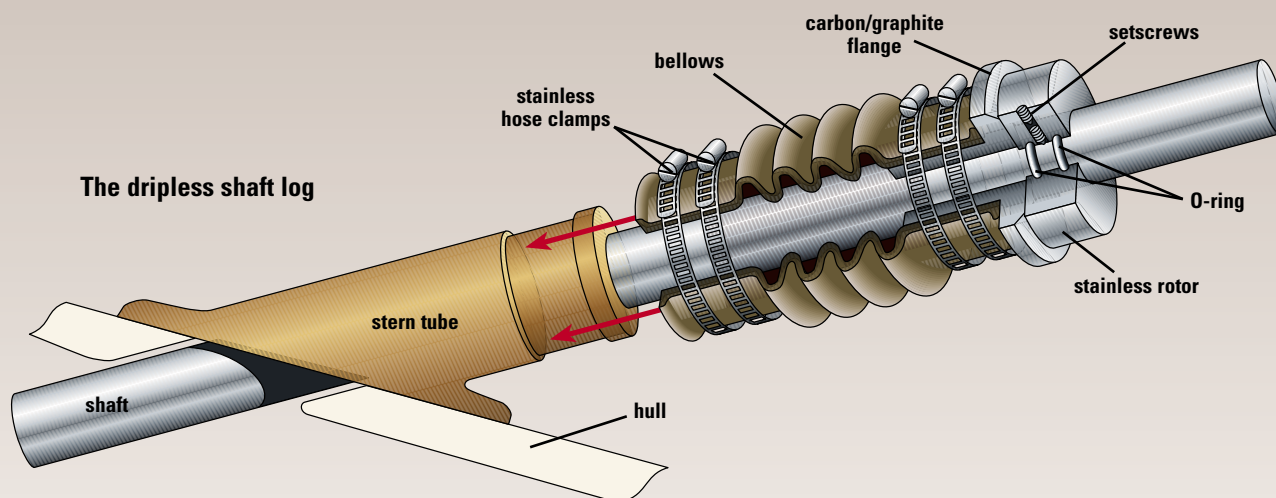
for long periods of time an automatic bilge pump is often necessary. Eventually, the packing in the stuffing box gets worn away and has to be replaced. To do this the old, hardened packing must be removed. Special tools are available for this purpose. The stuffing box can then be cleaned and new packing installed. When the vessel is relaunched, the drip rate must be checked and the compression nut adjusted as necessary. This drip rate should be checked again during the next few times out.

There is also self-lubricating, low-friction packing available. A clay-like compound is inserted in the stuffing box and compressed by rings of conventional packing. Then the packing compression nut can be adjusted so there are no drips. Although more expensive than conventional packing, after the initial adjustment this system rarely needs readjustment.

There are two basic styles of stuffing boxes, rigid and flexible. In the rigid style the stuffing box is bolted directly to the hull or stern tube. The flexible type connects the stuffing box to the stern tube or Cutless bearing by a short, flexible length of rubber hose double-clamped at both ends.

For those who find the constant drip of water into



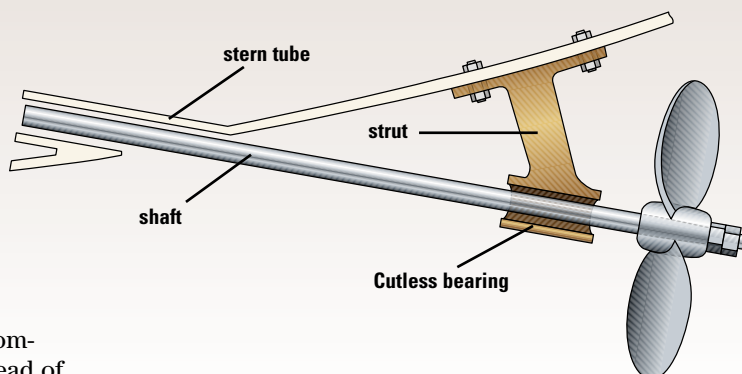


the bilge to be disconcerting or for those who find it difficult or impossible to accomplish the contortions required to adjust the compression and lock nuts on the stuffing box, a dripless seal is the answer.

### Newer method

Dripless shaft seals replace the stuffing box and are a newer method of providing a seal that is completely watertight. A rubber bellows is used instead of the straight rubber hose to connect the dripless seal to the stern tube or Cutless bearing. At the forward end of this bellows is fastened a polished carbon flange, which is compressed by the bellows against a polished stainless-steel rotor attached to the shaft. Thus, the carbon flange remains fixed to the rubber bellows, while the stainless-steel rotor rotates with the shaft. The tolerances on this seal are so close that there is no drip, and heat from friction is reduced by the natural lubricating properties of the carbon and the cooling water just behind the seal. This seal does not require the frequent, awkward readjustments that are required by the conventional stuffing box or the periodic removal of the old packing and its replacement. It also prevents the scoring of the propeller shaft that is a long-term problem with stuffing boxes.

The Cutless bearing provides support and alignment for the propeller shaft. It is a bronze, stainless-steel, or fiberglass tube with a grooved nitrile-rubber or plastic liner inside. The propeller shaft is supported by this Cutless bearing inside the stern tube or in an external strut and, when new, should allow little or no play in the



propeller shaft. The grooves in the liner allow outside cooling water to enter the Cutless bearing to cool both the propeller shaft and seal.

Signs that a Cutless bearing needs replacement are vibration when in gear and a propeller shaft that shows  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch or more of play. Replacing a Cutless bearing can be quite a task. Although the bearing itself is relatively inexpensive, the replacement process can be complicated and frustrating. It usually requires the removal of the propeller shaft that, in turn, often means removal of the rudder. The setscrews holding the Cutless bearing to the stern tube are then removed, and a Cutless-bearing puller is used to remove the old bearing. A new bearing can then be slid in place. If it's a tight fit, keeping it in the refrigerator or freezer overnight will usually shrink it enough to make the job easier. Then the greased propeller shaft can be slid into place, coupled to the engine, the propeller and rudder installed, and the engine's alignment checked.

A properly aligned Cutless bearing should last for several thousand hours.



# *Fritz's fantastic journey*

*by Fritz Seegers*









# Poor man's Hinckley

## *Turning an aging Pedrick 41 into a dream boat*

*by Sonny Furman*

**M**Y LOVE AFFAIR WITH BOATS BEGAN in 1971, while I was ferrying aircraft in and out of Vietnam via Ching Chuan Kang, a Chinese Air Force base in Taiwan used by the U.S. Air Force for C-130 operations.

During downtime, I would travel to the southern ports along the coast, mesmerized by the sleek yachts under construction for wealthy foreign owners. I would sit and dream, hoping that someday I might set sail in one of these beautifully crafted “leaky teakies,” as those early Taiwanese boats were sometimes called. But it would not be until many years later that, still humbled by the craftsmanship and labor that went into building those boats, I would realize my dream.

Years of sailing and four boats later, I embarked on a quest to find what might become the perfect cruising boat for me. Knowing that all things are at the very least a tradeoff, I set out to find a boat that would fulfill my most basic needs. It must have moder-

*“Neshuma began life as a sloop, but with a pitiful anchor storage arrangement and some undesirable weather helm. I decided to change her into a cutter and add a more suitable bow platform and a means of extending the rig.”*

ate speed in light air, moderate draft, and the ability to stand up well in offshore conditions; be a dry sailing boat with comfort both in the cockpit and below; have good storage; and, naturally, be affordable.

In order to keep such an ambitious project within my budget, I also knew that I must be capable of doing

the refurbishing and repairs myself. After much searching, I finally found the best candidate suited to the task, a basically well-kept 1983 Cheoy Lee Pedrick 41 keel/centerboarder located in the Gulf of Mexico.

I bought the boat and had it shipped to my home in Annapolis, Maryland. By the time it arrived I already had a fair idea of what it would take to turn my dream boat into a reality. So I set about on a two-year task that did a good job of wearing down my fingers as well as thinning out my bank account.

---

***Neshuma, Sonny Furman's Cheoy Lee Pedrick 41, has been extensively modified. He added a bow platform and re-rigged her as a cutter. He added a windshield to protect the cockpit from spray and davits to carry a dinghy. He installed new roller furlers for the headsail and staysail.***

## Changed to cutter

*Neshuma* began life as a sloop, but with a pitiful anchor storage arrangement and some undesirable weather helm. I decided to change her into a cutter and add a more suitable bow platform and a means of extending the rig. I constructed the platform of laminated teak strips, through-bolted internally every 10 inches with stainless-steel threaded rod. I also fabricated the custom twin rollers, scuff plates, headstay fittings, and all other metal fittings.

The platform was firmly bolted through the foredeck with massive backing plates and an adjustable internal truss rod in the anchor locker to take the load of the inner stay. A bobstay connected to a heavily reinforced bow fitting takes the lower loads and those of the truss rod to equalize the forces. I then cut the original bow rail and welded in sections to extend it.

I installed new roller furlers for the headsail and staysail. These increased the total foretriangle area by 120 square feet. This alone made a vast improvement in light-air sailing, decreased the weather helm, and provided much greater flexibility in sail combinations for all conditions. *Neshuma* is now very well balanced on nearly all points of sail and much easier

*"I located a newly rebuilt 65-hp Perkins 4-154 diesel. Of course, it was no easy feat shoehorning that beast into place, with a scant 1/8-inch clearance going down the companionway."*

to manage singlehanded.

The original engine was a 44-hp Universal model 50 diesel, with barely enough power to make headway into any kind of seaway, especially considering the boat's 24,500-pound fully-loaded displacement. I decided to replace it with a bit more heft, so I located a newly rebuilt 65-hp Perkins 4-154 diesel. Of course, it was no easy

feat shoehorning that beast into place, with a scant 1/8-inch clearance going down the companionway.

## Tight squeeze

The engine had to be stripped of all accessories then reassembled after having been fitted to the beds, all in a space that scarcely had room for a hand on either side. The entire swap took me more than a month of intensive labor and much custom fabrication in my basement shop. The repowering required new engine beds, a complete new custom exhaust system, and a plethora of custom fittings, each requiring careful engineering and fabrication, including special machining to adapt the Hurth V-drive. Of course all the boatyard mechanics said it couldn't be done ... not enough space.

A new custom three-bladed propeller and shaft were provided by Jimmies Prop Shop of Miami, Florida; those guys really know what's going on and delivered superb service and pricing. Yes, I could have gotten one locally, but at Annapolis prices. With the new engine and prop I can attain

**Sonny replaced the 44-hp engine, at left, with a more powerful one, below, which barely fit through the companionway.**







**The galley, before, at left, and after, at right on facing page.**

hull speed quite handily, but I normally cruise at 7.5 knots at 2,400 rpm.

In the electrical department, I fitted a new 100-amp Balmar alternator, along with a Heart 2,500-watt inverter and three gel cell batteries totaling 525 amp-hours. It's proven to be a real bulletproof system. I also decided to upgrade the entire electrical panel and rewire the entire boat, since most of the wiring was old and marginal. I also built a custom breaker panel into what had previously been a shelf space at the side of the nav station.

The rewiring job was daunting but ultimately worth the effort. I needed to replace and upgrade all the electronics, but I knew right away that the original open shelf above the nav desk was inadequate, so I built in a new

and larger teak-faced panel. It was mounted with a piano hinge so the entire affair can swing out for servicing (see photo on Page 50). It houses all of the radios, radar, and instruments with a built-in look.

### **Teak and stainless**

I wanted my cockpit instrumentation mounted in a pod at the wheel, but all I could find were rather expensive pods made of PVC. I rounded up some scraps of teak and cut out the side of an old stainless-steel fire extinguisher (see photo on Page 50). Hey, this modification didn't even cost what I call a full "boat unit" (\$100, because it seems that's the minimum you spend every time you open your wallet at the marine store).



Early on it became apparent that with the low coachroof, the boat seemed more likely to get green water in the cockpit, making for a somewhat damp ride at times. I hit on the idea of a hard windshield, remembering just how many soft dodgers I've had to replace after just a couple of years in service. A quick look on the eBay web-site turned up a nice used powerboat windshield, which I bought for less than the price of dinner at the marina, herein known as a "marina unit."

All I really wanted was the frame material anyway, so work then began: making templates, cutting, welding, and forming up a coaming from

*"...I bought [a nice used powerboat windshield] for less than the price of dinner at the marina, herein known as a 'marina unit.'"*

marine ply and fiberglass. I had a local glass shop make up the windows from tempered plate. The finished product looked almost as though Hallberg-Rassy had put it on at the factory. A new custom mini-dodger was made up that could stand alone over the windshield and further keep out spray, and the new Bimini top was fitted with a center section that can be zipped in to complete the entire ensemble and provide full shade and weather protection.

Since I normally carry my dinghy while sailing, I looked high and low for davits that would do the job, but most were quite expensive and even a bit flimsy, so I welded up my own, using 1½ inch-square 316 stainless tube. I designed it so that both arms can swing up out of the way in a crowded storage area or tight slip. I simply

**Sonny welded his own davits for the dinghy, at far left, and constructed the anchor platform, at near left, out of laminated teak stripes.**



For the most part, Sonny left *Neshuma's* interior as it was, concentrating instead on her sailing characteristics and exterior. However, he did rewire her and added an alternator and inverter. He also ripped out all leaking ports (that is to say *all* ports) and redesigned them, modified the folding table that blocked traffic through the boat, tiled the head and galley countertops and sole in the head, and revised the navigation station.



remove one pivot bolt, and there are no more charges for additional boat length. The total cost in material was two marina units.

### Leaky ports

The interior was basically in excellent condition, save for the ubiquitous leaks found below every fixed and opening port — a Cheoy Lee hall-

mark. I ripped out every port and window in the boat, only to discover that they were held in by little more than their interior wooden trim rings. One good wave and it might have been all over.

I cut polycarbonate windows for each, but added another 1 inch of material to the perimeter, which was then through-bolted to the stainless

exterior trim rings and sealed with 3M automotive window mastic. It required shimming the interior panels just a bit, which I covered in matte white Formica. If nothing else, this really helped brighten up the interior. No more leaks.

The original folding teak table in the saloon was actually too big when opened — I seldom seat eight

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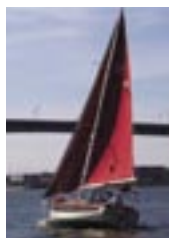
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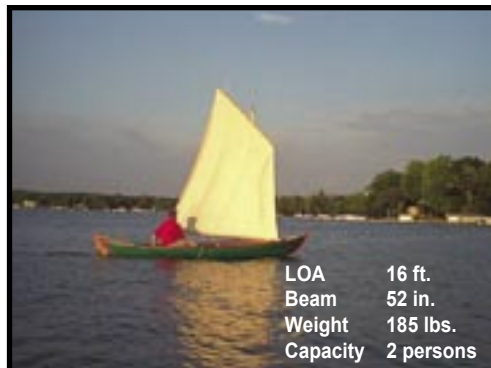
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for dinner — and blocked all traffic to the forward cabin. I narrowed the leaf on the walkway side by 10 inches and constructed a teak-faced plywood cabinet to enclose all the wasted space under the table, along with two opening doors. This adds much-appreciated storage for dry goods and those ever-so-tall cereal boxes.

The floor in the head and all countertops are now covered in matte white 2-inch tile, which looks superb and is easy to keep clean, all courtesy of Home Depot. Cost? About one marina unit. Because of all the dark teak, the head had to be revamped. Now it's faced mostly with Formica and teak trim. Much brighter, easy to clean, and inviting.

The hull and topsides were in remarkably good shape when I first purchased the boat. The previous owner had the entire boat painted with Imron polyurethane, a project I would *not* suggest for the do-it-yourselfer.

*"To this day, I often hear the same  
flattering comment by dockwalkers,  
'Isn't that a Hinckley?'"*

### No blisters or rubrails

The bottom had also been given a complete epoxy job, and there was no evidence of blisters. One obvious glitch was the lack of rubrails, something most of us think about when docking, especially with beautifully painted topsides. I laminated and spliced up long strips of select mahogany, through-bolted to the hull every 18 inches, and capped it with sacrificial stainless-steel rubbing strakes.

Once I had the new cutter rig, I was disappointed with the original mainsail, so I had one made up by a loft in Hong Kong. I won't say just how many boat units, but it was about 30 percent cheaper than the prices quoted by the local lofts, and the finished product was better than I expected.

Today, the refurbishing of *Neshuma* is essentially done, or as done as any boat ever is. Like everyone else, I have my lists. She has recently been fitted with a Pur-40 watermaker, as well as a new rigid inflatable boat (RIB) and outboard. I've also fitted a 75-watt solar panel atop the davits with an adjustable swing mount to catch the sun at various angles. An extended cruise to the Bahamas, South America, and beyond is drawing very near.

It's interesting to note how similar the specifications of this David Pedrick design are to the Hinckley Sou'wester 42, designed by McCurdy & Rhodes. With the exception of the lower coachroof, the hull form, keel/centerboard, underbody, sail plan, and dimensions appear to be nearly identical.

To this day, I often hear the same flattering comment by dockwalkers, "Isn't that a Hinckley?" When I then explain that it's a Cheoy Lee built in Hong Kong, most look a bit puzzled and just keep smiling. 🚤

---

**The restoration complete, Sonny and his wife, Sharon, are heading toward South America aboard *Neshuma*. Photos from top show the modified instrument pod at the helm, the nav station, and the interior cabinetry.**



# The dinghy dilemma, Part I

## *Almost the answer but not quite*

*by Silver Donald Cameron*

WHEN *MAGNUS*, OUR NEWLY REFTTED motorsailer, needed an appropriate dinghy, I surveyed my fleet. There was a gorgeous Phil Bolger-designed Gloucester light dory, a flat-iron skiff, a plastic canoe, a Force 4 inflatable dinghy, and a 7-foot plywood pram that I designed to fit on the foredeck of our previous sailboat.

None of them would do.

The dinghy, says cruising guru Tom Neale, is “the family car, the family pickup truck, the fuel tanker and water barge; it will probably be your towboat or tugboat, your fishing boat, and your reef-diving boat; it will be your far-off and rough-terrain exploration four-wheeler. And that’s just the beginning.”

Absolutely. But the dinghy is always a problem. You can hoist a wooden or fiberglass dinghy aboard, which is not much fun, and then it will cover your hatches, block your vision, attack your shins, and snag your lines. Towing one is literally a drag. In a breeze, the towed dinghy will blow around, fill with water, or perch on the waves astern and then charge downhill at the mother ship.

Alternatively, you can get nesting dinghies — two or three boxes that nest inside one another and can be bolted together to make a boat. You’ll

love doing that in a lumpy, windy anchorage.

So most people use inflatables. Alas, even the best small inflatables are poor boats. Rowing an inflatable is like levering a doughnut through

*“Rowing an inflatable is like levering a doughnut through Jello, almost impossible in any wind. With an outboard, an inflatable moves like a doughnut driven by an eggbeater.”*

Jello, almost impossible in any wind. With an outboard, an inflatable moves like a doughnut driven by an eggbeater. Inflatables are desperately wet in a

chop, and they are always vulnerable to abrasion, chafe, and puncture. You can’t let them rub on things or drag

them up a rocky beach. The nails of a dog can do them in.

### **Hardly ever deflated**

Furthermore, most sailors never deflate their inflatables anyway. The boats are inflated in the spring and (maybe) deflated in the fall. So the inflatable proves to be just as much of a bulky nuisance as a hard dinghy ... and much less of a boat.

That’s why I bought a Porta-Bote — a folding boat made of polypropylene. The Porta-Bote’s two sides fold down against the bottom and the two halves fold together, making a surfboard-sized package 4 inches thick, 2 feet wide, and 8, 10, or 12 feet in length. Our 8-footer weighs just 47 pounds. Prices are very competitive with inflatables.

A folding boat sounds gimmicky, but Porta-Botes have been around for 30 years, and more than 50,000 have been sold. The hulls are guaranteed for 10 years, and the boats are almost indestructible. The Japanese Coast Guard tests every import shipment by



**Before leaving Nova Scotia for a cruise down the East Coast, Silver Donald Cameron goes for a spin in his Porta-Bote.**



loading a Porta-Bote with 600 pounds of concrete and dropping it 21 feet into a pool of water.

Porta-Botes get rave reviews from cold-eyed judges such as *Practical Sailor*, *Field and Stream*, and *Canadian Yachting*, not to mention several Nova Scotian owners. They're also popular with hunters, fishermen, and R.V. owners.

To open a Porta-Bote, you simply unfold it, hold it open with a spreader stick, insert the seats and the transom, and remove the spreader. How hard is it? *Practical Sailor* assembled the boat in six minutes. The day our

boat arrived, I opened the package, assembled the boat, dragged the boat down the rocky beach into the water, took it for a row around the wharf, and dragged it back on the shore... all in well under an hour.

### Flexible hull


The 8-foot version is over 4 feet wide and very stable. I can stand up in it anywhere, though the flexible hull material yields easily underfoot, which gives a disconcerting sensation of standing on a pad of jelly. With its drooping nose, the boat looks odd but rows well, it's unsinkable, and it carries a huge load. There is even a sailing kit for it.

*Practical Sailor* describes the Porta-Bote's performance under power as "startling," which it is. With a 2.5-hp outboard, our boat planes easily and rockets across the harbor. It rides softly and quietly, and steers nimbly. *Practical Sailor* clocked a 10-footer with a 4-hp motor at more than 15 knots.

Any complaints? Of course — it's a boat, and no boat is perfect. The boat would benefit from better oars and ad-

ditional oarlock sockets, and the two fat seats and the transom are awkward to stow. Some owners substitute plywood seats. And I haven't yet found a really good place to stow the folded boat on *Magnus* without blocking the view from one of the helm stations, though I believe I may be able to hang it along the side, slightly below the stanchions.

In the meantime I tow it, and it tows just fine... though it needs the tiny foredeck to keep spray out, and the foredeck is flimsily attached. I eventually laced it tightly in place.

I see more and more Porta-Botes as I cruise, and no wonder. No solution to the dinghy dilemma is perfect, but for me, the Porta-Bote is hard to beat. 

*For further reading...*

Silver Donald Cameron is a prolific and well-read Canadian author; in fact, most of his books have sold out over the years. One book, *Sterling Silver*, is still available from Cape Breton Books, <<http://www.capebretonbooks.com>> or by calling 800-565-5140.



## Resources

### Porta-Bote International

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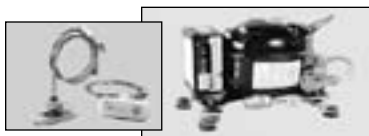


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# The dinghy dilemma, Part II

*Good kayak, but is it a dinghy?*

OUR C&C 30 DIDN'T COME WITH a dinghy when we purchased her. On a hunch, we bought a 17-foot rotomolded two-person kayak that we manage to shoehorn inside the port shrouds on deck. This boat is built with the same technology used in building high-quality garbage cans. It's tough and easily paddled. The drawbacks are that it is not very easily towed and its 17 feet take up a lot of space on the port side of our 30-footer.

Still, we liked the idea of having a kayak for a dinghy so we decided to

*by Jerry Powlas*

*"...we chose a Folbot, which, in collapsed mode, stows into two large bags, each light enough to be carried by one person and small enough to be stowed inside the Mega when we're trailering her."*

equip our C&C Mega 30 trailerable sailboat with a kayak also. But because the Mega would be towed with a truck more than sailed, we chose a Folbot, which, in collapsed mode, stows into two large bags, each light enough to be carried by one person and small enough to be stowed inside the Mega when we're trailering her.

The "Mega project" is at two years and counting. We haven't had her in the water yet, but we've had the use of the Folbot for most of those two years. At this point, we actually know more about the dinghy's characteristics

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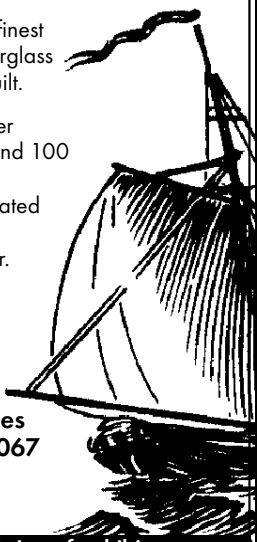
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The Folbot has a sailing rig and out-riggers for stability. The author and his crew (not pictured) like theirs as a two-person kayak and have not tried the sailing rig.



Photo courtesy of Folbot

than we do about the sailboat's.

The Folbot concept is very old and has some characteristics in common with Eskimo-style kayaks. The "skin" of a Folbot is a strong fabric material stretched over a structure made of aluminum tubes and glass-filled nylon frames.

## Assembly time

The time needed to assemble and disassemble the boat varies with the number of times we've done it and how recently we've done it. We're still at that stage where Karen reads the instructions to me one line at a time and ticks them off. It's never taken us more than half an hour; I believe we could get it down to 15 minutes if we assembled it more frequently.


When we ordered the boat, I had no hope that it would be as fast or as maneuverable as the rotomolded plastic kayak that we dearly love. Wrong. The Folbot is lighter, easier to paddle, and more maneuverable. While the plastic kayak needs the rudder when two of us are in the boat, the Folbot does not.

We find the plastic kayak more comfortable to sit in, and I don't believe that we would ever assemble or disassemble that Folbot on the deck of

*"When we ordered the boat, I had no hope that it would be as fast or as maneuverable as the rotomolded plastic kayak that we dearly love. Wrong. The Folbot is lighter, easier to paddle, and more maneuverable."*

a sailboat — too complicated, too many pieces, too easy to lose something overboard. If we were to tow it, I would reinforce the bow eye for this purpose, but I don't expect we'll tow it, based on bad experiences we've had when towing the plastic kayak.

So far, the Folbot, named *Seaflower*, has

been a wonderful dinghy for our truck, but I don't know if she's going to be the dinghy for the Mega. That remains to be seen. 

## Resources

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# Teak mystique

*An expert woodworker reveals some homely truths about teak*

*by Ken Textor*

SEPARATING MYTH FROM REALITY IS almost impossible with a wood as well known as teak. From its “discovery” by the Dutch in the 1600s to today’s confusing maintenance and political debates, few imported wood species have been as publicized and consequently misunderstood as *Tectona grandis*. For boat restorers, teak can be anything from a significant maintenance bugaboo to an attractive accent used in interior and exterior applications. But it’s far from the perfect wood for all nautical applications. Moreover, it’s important to know its working quirks and shortcomings before messing around with lumber that routinely costs between \$15 to \$25 a board foot retail.

## Dutch treat or trick?

Teak is desirable in boatbuilding today for many of the same reasons it has been prized for centuries. The wood is hard, heavy, rot-resistant, and, when grown naturally in its native habitat, quite attractive. Those are the main reasons why today’s boating enthusiasts love it — those and the lore of teak.

In its native growth areas of Southeast Asia, teak has always been considered a sacred wood. For thousands of years, teak was used to build temples and shrines and frequently was the

basis of religious sculpture. The myths got their start when the first Dutch explorers realized the financial value of including this kind of background information in the sales pitch for the

lumber back home. Certainly, teak’s prime selling points 400 years ago were its practical values. But since then the legends about teak grew and changed without ever really diminishing.

For those doing boat projects using

wood, however, teak has some inherent problems worth considering. Even if you’re willing to pay the high cost of the wood, the extra labor involved in working teak is more time-consuming than it would be working other attractive woods like the mahoganies or an appropriate domestic species. For instance, when sawing or shaping teak,

**Replacing the teak cabin sole was one of Ken’s projects on his Allied Seabreeze 35 yawl, at top. He chose a cheery red oak for the conversion. When he substituted the old hatch for the newer replacement, at right center, the difference in color between the worn teak and the new oak floor covering was striking. An earlier step in that sole conversion, at right, also shows the contrast between the two woods.**



**The original locker door in Ken's Seabreeze was built of teak, but the new bookcase side he added later was made of stained red oak. He notes that the color difference — unlike on the cabin sole — is hardly discernible between the two finished pieces.**

blades will dull much more quickly because of the wood's high silica content. Moreover, teak is a relatively brittle wood. So in crosscutting operations, there is often chipping near the edge of the cut, particularly when cutting with blades that have been dulled by the silica. Taking extra time out to score the cutting line with a razor knife prevents chipping and drags out a simple chore.

In working with teak for the last 25 years or so, I've found another unpleasant side effect is its toxicity. Skin rashes and asthma-like breathing problems are often reported among woodworkers who work with teak frequently. Also, the primary sensitizing agent in teak can set off more sensitivity to allergens in other unrelated wood species. So it's best for anyone working with teak to take the time to use a respirator at the very least and perhaps also suit up in a pair of disposable coveralls.

Teak will also slow down restoration operations because it will clog sandpaper more rapidly than most other hardwoods. This is due to the wood's oil content, which helps give teak its legendary durability. The wood's silica also contributes to sandpaper clogging. Clogged sandpaper drags out a job and makes it more expensive than working



with some other woods because more sandpaper is needed.

There are other woods that meet or exceed teak in durability — without the attendant oil, allergy, and blade-dulling problems. Among domestic hardwoods, mesquite, white oak, black walnut, and several species of cedar compare nicely with teak for decorative value. Some cedars, juniper, and Douglas fir can match its durability in exterior applications. Among imported woods, most mahoganies, Spanish cedar, purpleheart, Angelique, and sapele are just a few substitutes that spring to mind as good all-around replacements for teak — at a significantly reduced price too.

### **Extra care in gluing, finishing**

Teak's natural oils, which are responsible for its superior rot-resistance, also play havoc with ordinary gluing and finishing procedures. Teak oils tend to concentrate at the wood's surface, particularly as the wood dries. This is good for repelling water, making teak a good wood for decks. But those oils are not good for many adhesives and finishes.

When gluing teak, there are two approaches that help assure a long-lasting bond. The best is to plane the mating surfaces just before gluing. A common practice is to wipe the mating surfaces with a lacquer thinner, acetone, or alcohol before gluing, but this is not a good idea. Capillary action from evaporating solvents pulls more oil to the surface. Nor should you simply run a belt sander over the surfaces to be glued. The heat generated in sanding may bring out more oil. It's also wise to use a less oil-sensitive adhesive like resorcinol or epoxy.

In the finishing department, a different approach to teak is also required. For best results in a hard finish, a good sealer coat is essential. The most reliable sealer to use is epoxy resin. But be sure to use an epoxy resin specially formulated for coating, not gluing. After applying epoxy, be certain to wash the dried surface with clear fresh water. Otherwise, you'll have trouble with the drying time of your oil-based varnish overcoat. Amine blush is a chemical byproduct of the epoxy curing process. If left on the sealer surface, the drying time of topcoats of ordinary oil-based varnish could be extended by many hours, sometimes days.

In exterior and interior applications, some boatowners prefer an oiled finish for teak. This sidesteps the sealer issue but adds an annual maintenance chore that can become burdensome. In exterior service, most non-pigmented teak oils simply do not survive a season in the sun, salt, and abrasive traffic. For 25 years, I've tried one teak oil formulation after another and — even in Maine's relatively benign summer climate — the non-pigmented exterior oil finishes haven't held up.

By the end of the boating season, the golden-brown look of my freshly oiled teak surface was always closer to dull gray. Pure 100-percent tung oil

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holds up best and often will survive an entire season in northern latitudes. Pigmented teak oils also work well, but they color the wood orange or brown.

In exterior and interior applications, oiled teak tends to collect and retain dirt, which inevitably builds up in the wood's open pores. Some older boats, therefore, not only end up with their teak surfaces faded gray but also in desperate need of a cleaning before they can be oiled.

### Teak cleaner torment

Most of the teak cleaners on the market use a chlorine bleach base or an oxalic acid base to get the gray out of lightly aged teak. Most of these potions are watered down to minimize the risks involved in the cavalier use of these chemicals by consumers. Thus, they often require several applications to bring back the teak's original color.

Ultimately most teak cleaners are only effective at removing the gray patina and light dirt. Long-term mildew stains, motor oil drippings, diesel fuel discoloration, and a host of other common messes usually require sanding to get the wood truly clean... a time-consuming job. Thus, on anything other than exterior decks, I would recommend varnish over teak oil. In the long run, it is far less time-consuming.

### Political correctness problems

Teak may have always had its maintenance bugaboos, but these days there is another angle to consider. Teak increasingly comes with built-in social/political considerations. If you're thinking of ordering some teak, you may want to consider them too.

Since the 1600s, there has generally been a wholesale stampede to process teak into lumber, continuing essentially unabated until the 1980s when Thailand finally banned teak exports in an effort to conserve the resource. That ban has been only partially effective, and other countries' conservation efforts have been even less effective. Also, whether teak-processing today is continuing at a sustainable pace is a matter of some debate. Many industry officials say it's under control, but groups concerned with environmental degradation and associated human-rights violations disagree vehemently. Most teak-related problems focus on

*"There are other woods that meet or exceed teak in durability — without the... problems. Among domestic hardwoods, mesquite, white oak, black walnut, and several species of cedar compare nicely with teak..."*

the outlaw nation of Myanmar, formerly known as Burma. Myanmar has an abysmal human rights record and isn't much interested in environmental concerns either. Unfortunately, it's not easy to avoid purchasing native teak from Myanmar, which is the world's biggest teak exporter.

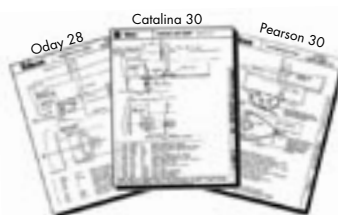
The diminishing supply of forest-grown teak has led to a rise in teak plantations in Central and South America, as well as the West Indies, Africa, and some Southeast Asian countries. Teak trees actually regenerate relatively rapidly and are tolerant of a wide variety of tropical soil and

weather conditions. So plantations have been appearing in increasingly large numbers since the 1950s, with a rapid escalation in the last 20 years or so. But no government, educational, or industry agency that I contacted could produce statistics that show how much imported teak comes from plantation stocks or how much is from naturally occurring forests.

### Important debate

The debate over plantation vs. native teak is important to boat restorers because of anecdotal evidence that plantation teak may not possess some of the desirable qualities that natural teak possesses. The problem could be the New World soils where much of the plantation teak grows. The difference in Eastern and Western soils may also explain why Central and South American plantation teak is generally much lighter in color than its Southeast Asian counterpart. The chemical content of the soil in which any tree grows has a direct bearing on the rot-resistance and durability of the lum-

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ber from that tree. Variable soils will produce fluctuations in any wood's rot-resistance.

Ultimately, you must rely on your teak retailer for information about your teak's origins and exactly what you can expect from it. Some retailers are cooperative in this regard, while others are not. A thorough knowledge of what teak ought to look and feel like, as well as how it ought to work, should keep you out of trouble.

Forest-grown teak from Southeast Asia is characterized by its color: a rich, deep brown to a dark golden-brown, both of which turn darker when exposed to sunlight. The sapwood is a few shades lighter and should be avoided where rot-resistance is of prime concern. When cut or planed, the surface of natural teak develops a decidedly oily feel to it. Note, too, that Southeast Asian teak has the distinct smell of old shoe leather when sanded, cut, or planed.

By contrast, New World plantation teak is a much lighter yellowish color, akin to straw or old hay. When

*“Teak’s natural oils, which are responsible for its superior rot-resistance, also play havoc with ordinary gluing and finishing procedures. Teak oils tend to concentrate at the wood’s surface, particularly as the wood dries.”*

worked, the classic teak smell isn't as evident and, in some cases, is absent altogether. The surface's oily feel is usually present, but it's frequently not as pronounced as that of forest-grown teak. And, U. S. government studies of Central American plantation teak indicate the wood is not as strong or tough as forest-grown teak. Still, in both plantation and forest-grown versions, teak's strength and toughness are generally on a par with those of many North American oaks.

As a straight-grained wood, teak

has an exceptional stability — especially the heartwood. But whether it's fine-grained or coarse-grained may depend on whether it's plantation- or forest-grown, old growth or new. As with most wood species that regenerate rapidly, the tree's growth rings tend to be widely spaced in ideal growing conditions found on plantations or on freshly logged open areas. Widely spaced growth rings usually yield a coarser grain. But a teak tree that has struggled for decades to reach above the canopy of the natural rain forest will have tightly packed growth rings and a resultant fine grain.

### Some alternatives

Teak today still maintains its tradition of being one of the most popular woods among all imported species. It has that “Cadillac image.” Still, slight variations in its popularity have had an unpredictable effect on price. For instance, when tax policies put the boatbuilding industry in a severe recession during the early 1990s, teak prices lowered to \$6 to \$10 per board

## Why teak?

THERE IS A VILLAGE I KNOW RATHER well just outside of the town of Mae Hong Son in Northwest Thailand. Most of the houses there are built of wood, and the wood of choice is teak. The village is situated at the edge of a large natural forest that stretches into Myanmar, which is not far away. Years ago I asked a villager I know well why, with access to just about any hardwood they might want, they almost exclusively used teak. He replied, “Teak is the easiest wood to work.” That is my opinion as well.

Teak is a medium-density hardwood and therefore not nearly as heavy as many of the other hardwoods available. In addition to its well-known weathering properties, the relatively light weight has probably contributed to its popularity for use on boats.

I wonder whether the oil content really contributes to blades becoming dull faster. I think of the oil as a form of lubricant. Agreed, it does leave a residue on the blade, which must be cleaned from time to time. It is easy to do that; kerosene works well.

It's true that teak roots suck minerals out of the ground and deposit them in the wood. I have seen blue and green sparks coming off a blade. This should indicate copper content in the wood. I have seen the same sparks when I cut through a copper-jacketed bullet.

You can run teak past a blade really fast and get a lot of ugly blade marks, but no burning. Do the same with a really hard wood, like rosewood, and the wood burns. If you run fast enough, you will get smoke. That's resistance causing the heat.


If you are cutting teak or any other hardwood regularly, you need carbide steel-tipped blades. Carbide stays sharp much longer. I can recommend Matsushita as the world's best saw blade and Porter Cable for the very best router blades. Will blades dull faster with teak than with other hardwoods? I honestly don't know. Does it matter a few days one way or the other? With either, they dull just the same.

When gluing teak the most important point is to have two clean

surfaces free of dust and other oils. Apply glue to both surfaces and apply pressure with screws or clamping. Epoxy is convenient for small projects. Resorcinol is better for larger jobs because of the longer pot life. Both glue joints are waterproof and will last a lifetime.

When finishing teak, one of Murphy's Laws applies best: “There is never time to do it right, but always time to do it over.” If you do a proper varnish (or other good finish) job in the beginning, it will save you a lot of work later.

Is there any reason not to use American hardwoods for interior work? Not at all. And by mixing different woods you might come up with some very interesting and creative color combinations.

But for the exterior? Use teak! We already know the results! 

---

*Donald Petrie has been in the teak business since 1972. He is the owner of Thai Teak Marine Co., Ltd., <<http://www.thaiteakmarine.com>>.*

**Ken chose Spanish cedar to replace the teak handrails on his yawl. Speaking of the original teak rails, he says, "These weensy handrails are a sore point among Seabreeze owners." He believes the hefty and rot-resistant Spanish cedar replacement rails fill the bill nicely.**



foot. But once tax policies changed and the industry rebounded, retail teak prices bounced up to as much as \$14 a board foot in early 1996. With the recent boatbuilding boom, some shops have been paying as much as \$20 per board foot and even more for the very best. Other factors, including the plantation-grown vs. forest-grown debate, can also affect the price. When labeled, plantation teak is usually less expensive than forest-grown.


Teak veneer is a much cheaper alternative, bringing the price down to as little as \$4 to \$6 per square foot. And less expensive teak plywood is available in many thicknesses and styles,

including flat-sawn, quarter-sawn, and book-matched. But some enterprising woodworkers have worked successfully with teak substitutes.

Afrormosia (*Pericopsis elata*) is perhaps the most common teak substitute. By looks and heft alone, it's hard to tell the difference between the two. Tough and durable, it's not quite as oily as teak, but it is equally rot-resistant. Rhodesian teak (*Baikiaea plurijuga*) is similar to afrormosia, although it is more difficult to find in long lengths. Iroko (*Chlorophora excelsa* and *C. regia*) is also considered a dead ringer for teak. All three woods are forest-grown in Africa and can be

10 to 30 percent cheaper than teak.

Even cheaper is Spanish cedar (*Cedrella spp.*), which can be one-half to one-third the price of teak. It has excellent rot-resistance but is not quite as hard or tough as teak. I've used it in many exterior applications, including handrails and toerails. To compensate for its lower strength, I increase the scantlings.

Teak may be nice, but it's not critical on a boat. Given the price and the availability of alternatives, it may be worth considering a substitute the next time you're confronted with the question: to teak or not to teak? 

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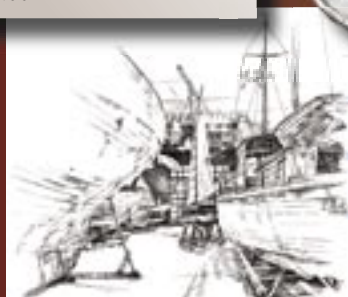
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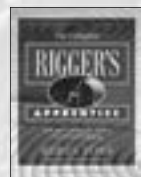


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1978 sloop. Beautiful traditional cruiser. Exc cond. Set up for bluewater cruising w/extensive sail inventory, gear, equipment. Newer Yanmar 2GM20F 18-hp diesel, Fleming windvane, wind gen, solar panels, stronger rigging w/insulated backstay. New interior cushions and foam. Metzler dinghy w/4-hp Evinrude OB, new Force 10 propane counter-top stove, 4 bilge pumps, 1-yr-old awning. 70-gal water, fuel for 250+ miles. Main, jib, cruising spinnaker, genoa, storm jib, main. Info, photos via email. In SW Fla. \$29,500.

**John Halpern**  
Orca36@copper.net  
941-505-1354



#### Sea Sprite 28

1985. Hull #48. Sailed about 4 weeks each summer. Bristol cond. Virtually all systems new, replaced, restored. Professionally maintained. Stored inside

during off-season. Very lightly used 9' Zodiac (new '01) a negotiable extra. Pictures by email. In Sturgeon Bay, Wis.

**Peter Schloss**  
pmslaw@kc.rr.com  
816-792-4242



#### CSY 37

1979 cutter. 2 staterooms, 2 heads, 3 sails, 2 anchors. Perkins 4-108 50-hp, new cushions, H/C water, 3 batteries, D/S, 120-V panel. Big cockpit, 6' draft. Ready to sail. Asking \$36,000.

**Peter Martini**  
piermartini@att.net  
516-365-9106

#### Catalina 30

1985. Tall rig #4078, 3rd owner, fresh water. Universal 21-hp, wheel, Standard electronics, Loran, depth new '03, Autohelm ST4000 '03, dodger '02, Schaeffer RF/forestay '00, AM/FM/CD (12 disc) w/Bose speakers '01, sails cleaned and reconditioned '99, 8' hard bottom (folding) inflatable, cradle, custom trailer, very good cond. In West Mich. \$28,000. <<http://homepage.mac.com/mikeallgaier/PhotoAlbum4.html>>.

**Mike Allgaier**  
mikeallgaier@mac.com  
616-355-7269



#### Contest 31HT

1982. Solid Dutch-built fin-keeled sloop, Bristol cond. Lightly used, very well equipped. LOA 31'2", beam 10'4", draft 5'9". New loose-footed, fully battened main, 2 RF headsails, asymmetrical spinnaker. All instruments and AP. Portable A/C, fully canvased, boat cover, all safety equipment, original manuals and drawings. Beautiful teak interior. Hard sailing dinghy. Owner regrets

having to go on shore leave. Near Deltaville, Va. \$36,000.

**Hal Aaslestad**  
aaslestad@earthlink.net  
540-886-1875



#### Alegra 24

1985 designed by Bingham. Very similar to Bingham's Flicka. Sleeps 4. 10-hp Nissan LS.

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#### John Illingworth 37

1963 37-foot John Illingworth-designed MAICA-class wooden sloop. Cold molding over strip planking. World cruising history. Fastnet Race veteran, circumnavigator. Rebuilt Yanmar '03, new mainsail. Lots of recent restoration work done by Crocker's Boat Yard. See the article about Corrine's new toerails in *WoodenBoat* #175. Info and photos <<http://mysite.verizon.net/vze2nthi>>. Mass. \$49,500.

**Harvey Schwartz**  
harvey@TheEmployment  
Lawyers.com  
978-356-9928



#### Southern Cross 28

1979. Hull #16. Double-ender, cutter rigged. 2 full sets of sails. 8-hp Yanmar w/good compression (currently out of boat, sitting on pallet, shaft cylinder is sealed). 6'2" headroom. New cushion

covers, dodger, curtains. Wired for all electricals but not in use. Fresh water last 4 years. Lying Atlanta, Ga., on Lake Lanier. Saltiest boat on the lake. No time to use. \$16,900.

**Jim Drew**  
jdrew@rambosales.com  
678-427-8339

#### MacGregor Venture 222

1972. Stripped to hull and deck and rebuilt '00/03. New mainsail, Porta Potti never used, rebuilt keel, new electrical, rebuilt trailer, etc. For more info, see "Junkyard wars for a boatless sailor," Page 23, this issue, or go to <<http://www.sailingsmall.com>>. In Chattanooga, Tenn. It was fun; I'm ready to do it again with a little larger boat. Trades in good cond considered. \$4,550.

**Brian Gilbert**  
hammerguy@mindspring.com  
423-876-1016



#### Saugeen Witch 34

1980. Colvin design, professionally built by Burr Bros, steel, gaff ketch, flame zinc sprayed, rebuilt '93/94 w/new rigging, sails, interior, Saab diesel 10-hp, 235 epoxy bottom '03, 4' draft yet ocean capable. Very good cond. In Va. \$29,900.

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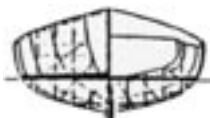
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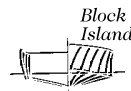
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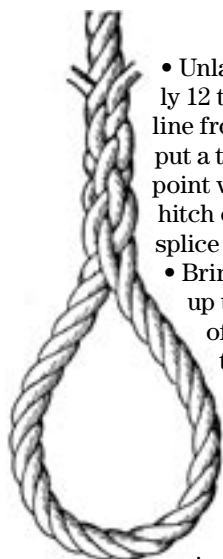
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- Unlay the line for a distance of approximately 12 times the line's diameter. To keep the line from further unraveling, it's a good idea to put a temporary clove hitch or whipping at the point where the strands begin to unlay. This hitch or whipping should be removed after the splice is formed.
- Bring the unlayed, working end of the line up to form a loop. Untwist the standing part of the line at the point where the splice is to start. All tucks are made against the lay of the line.
  - Pass the middle, unlayed strand under one of the strands in the line. Pass the left unlayed strand over the strand that the middle unlayed strand went under and then pass it under the next strand in the line to the left. With the loop turned over, pass the remaining unlayed strand under the last laid strand. With the loop turned back over to its starting position, pull all working strands tight.
- From this point on, working from right to left (with a right-laid line) in a series of three over-and-unders, with a snugging pull in between, the unlayed strands are braided into the line until they are too short to work. The ends can then be trimmed off and the splice made "fair" by rolling it underfoot or pounding it gently with a wooden or rubber mallet. 

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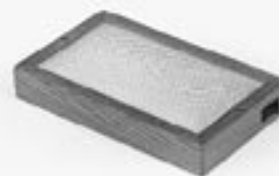
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# Reflect on this

*One sun, one mirror,  
and you've got  
The Best Darned  
Lifesaver, Period*

*by John Butler*

**G**ATHER AROUND, FELLOW SAILORS, AND HEAR THIS TALE about a simple little device that was revered by World War II pilots and seamen. It is still carried by military fliers. It needs no satellite or batteries to work. It can be used heavily without running down. And yet it is virtually unknown to pleasure boaters. No boat should ever leave port without at least *one* aboard.

My mind was wandering as I sailed the *Mary Lu Too* south on the Mississippi Sound. I was likely daydreaming of approaching the Cape of the Eleven Thousand Virgins, mentally deciding if I would then turn starboard for the Strait of Magellan or run on to the Strait of Le Maire with that other Staten Island to my port, then turn southwesterly to Horn Island with its 1,391-foot Mount Fitzroy rising above the cape.

I should have been laying a more prosaic southerly course to pass between Ship Island and Horn Island, just offshore of my home port of Ocean Springs, Mississippi. I wanted to leave the islands behind me and venture into the Gulf of Mexico where predicted 10- to 20-knot southerlies, with waves running 2 to 4 feet, promised sailing about as exciting as I could get in a day's solo sail.

I was still learning my old 28-foot, home-built cutter: how she sailed, how she rode, how she hove to, and when she needed to be reefed. But on that day she had a different agenda she would teach me most forcefully.

As my mind's eye spotted Cape Virgin's Monte Dinero, *Mary Lu Too's* keel did more than spot the gradually sloping sand bottom while approaching the north side of Horn Island. My nice 6 knots ground to an even stop, and my heel to port was now permanent, even after I dropped all three sails. Hard aground.

*"...what other signaling devices are  
not subject to battery or chemical  
exhaustion, have an indefinite shelf life,  
are inexpensive, are easy to carry, have  
such enviable records of facilitating  
rescues..."*



**Karla Houdek, that cheerful voice on the phone when you call *Good Old Boat*, tries out the floating signal mirror the editors bought for their boat.**

## **Firmly stuck**

I tried the usual remedies: walked a kedge well astern; tensioned the nylon rode, stretching it close to the breaking point with a tackle; put the engine in reverse; and rocked the boat from outside. But no joy. I even tried the old remedy of swinging the boom far off to port and hung on it, trying to reduce *Mary Lu Too's* draft. Still no joy. The very moderate tide was flooding, but any measurable rise was many hours off. The rise of the Gulf Coast's tropic tide — only one high and low tide each day — doubled the times between low and high.

This was in those pre-VHF, pre-cell phone days, and no one else was out enjoying the early spring day. I spotted a Navy helo out of Pensacola, flying west over the barrier islands toward New Orleans. I grabbed my Best Darned Lifesaver, Period, and nearly blinded one of the pilots with a bright beam of light.

As the helo came to a hover, I wrote AGROUND, CALL COAST GUARD (phone number) FOR A TOW on the back of an old chart with a heavy black marker. The pilot moved a bit closer, read it, wrote on his handy knee board, gave me a thumbs up, and continued on.

Time for my peanut-butter-and-jelly lunch, hot tea from the thermos, and a cob pipe as I waited. It wasn't long before the 40-footer out of Gulfport approached me... very cautiously. With his shallower draft, the coxswain maneuvered alongside, came aboard with a heavy line that he looped around the mast and cabin, thence aft to his tow cable.

## **You look familiar**

As he started to fill out the necessary paperwork, he looked at me closely. "Don't I know you?" he asked.

"Yes, I issued you your new ID card last week," I replied.

*"Three factors determine the effective usefulness of a signal mirror: the light-gathering ability, the ability to reflect a large portion of the light gathered, and the ability to aim that light where you want it."*

"Oh, yeah, Lieutenant Butler. Glad to return the favor, sir," he said. The Coast Guard was, and still is, a small world, smaller than the New York City Police Department but a bit more widespread. I had recently returned from a two-year tour of duty in the Philippine Islands.

"We got a phone call from the Keesler Air Force Base tower that took a message from a passing chopper. How did you wave him down?"

I showed him my Best Darned Lifesaver, Period: a standard GI signal mirror.

"Oh yeah," he said. "You fly boys always carry those, don't you, sir?" I answered that I wouldn't leave home without it whether flying or sailing.

While I held the tiller steady amidships, the 40-footer took a strain, and the *Mary Lu Too* slid back into deeper water. I unfastened the towing loop around my mast and cabin, tossed it overboard for him to retrieve, gave him a hearty thanks, and waved goodbye.

### No batteries

Did I exaggerate? Is the lowly and ancient signal mirror The Best Darned Lifesaver, Period? Maybe not in all situations, but what other signaling devices are not subject to battery or chemical exhaustion, have an indefinite shelf life, are in-

expensive, are easy to carry, have such enviable records of facilitating rescues, and have a more interesting and extensive history?

True, most will not work in the dark, but a good mirror

will still have some effectiveness on thinly overcast days, even in bright moonlight. If you can just see a faint shadow, the mirror is worth trying. There are even a few mirrors that have a reflective back that will return a searchlight or flashlight's beam at night.

OK, what is available? Defender's Orion Signal Kits each show a signal mirror, but the last one of those I bought had a mirror only somewhat better than a Cracker Jack toy. The 3 x 4 stainless-steel mirror in the BoatU.S. catalog is better, and the mirror in the West Marine catalog might be better too. But how can you tell, since size and material are not specified? The claim "U.S. Coast Guard-Approved" doesn't tell you as much as you'd like to know either. The Coast Guard established specifications in 1944, based upon what aviators and life rafts were being equipped with at that time: glass and metal mirrors having a reflecting area of at least 17 square inches; plastics hadn't reached today's remarkable state of development.

Except for one excellent plastic mirror receiving a special dispensation, that bureaucratic logjam leaves out some fine plastic mirrors, but my preference, with one exception,



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is still the old GI 3 x 5 glass mirror.

### Three factors

Three factors determine the effective usefulness of a signal mirror: the light-gathering ability, the ability to reflect a large portion of the light gathered,

and the ability to aim that light where you want it.

**Size:** A credit card has almost 7 square inches; a CD disk has more than 8 square inches. My favorite GI mirror has just about 14 square inches, counting the rounded edges, the lanyard hole, and the aiming hole in the middle.

A credit card? Four people were rescued in 1991 after drifting 100 miles in the Gulf Stream from where their plane had crash landed. They used a credit card as a make-shift signal mirror.

**Reflectivity:** Hold a credit card or CD disk by the edges and try to bend it a bit: easy. But when the surface is not perfectly flat, the sun's rays are dispersed, not directed. Try as you might, you can't bend my old GI 3 x 5 glass signal mirror.

On a bright sunny day, try a cosmetic mirror (a high-quality, 4- to 6-inch diameter mirror), a CD, and a credit card. Take them outdoors and aim them at a wall, up sun and

shadowed, and note the light spots you make. Bend the CD and credit card and note the loss of spot. Try to bend the mirror and note that it continues to make a nice bright spot.

Reflectivity not only concerns the perfect flatness of the reflecting surface but also the efficiency of that surface in reflecting the maximum amount of the sun's rays. Nothing can beat a good glass mirror. A top-quality plastic mirror will reflect less of the sun's energy but can still be very good to excellent.

Tests conducted with a digital light meter indicate a wide range of quality in plastic mirrors, from a low of reflecting just 11 percent as much light as a glass mirror to a high of 95 percent. For the price of a moderate dinner out for two, you can go from a cheap plastic toy to an excellent precision instrument.

Marring and scratching the plastic mirror's surface will further reduce reflectivity. Some plastic mirrors have a hard coating to protect the surface; others may have a protective cover. Even a glass mirror may be scratched, but cheap plastics are much more subject to scratching, and each scratch line will disperse, not reflect, light.

Stainless steel is poorer still. Have you ever tried to comb your hair in your reflection in that stainless-steel mirror in a highway rest stop? Worse, some cheap steel-plated mirrors will corrode in salt water.

**Aiming:** You probably didn't have too much trouble aiming the mirror at that nearby wall, but could you aim it at a search plane 20 miles away? Any mirror or other shiny

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surface can be roughly aimed by reflecting sunlight through a V on one's outstretched hand. Sight over the mirror (or through the CD's center hole) and through the V at a distant target. Better than guessing, but how much?

The very, very best means of aiming a signal mirror is with the built-in aimer found in the best signal mirrors. This should be an integral part of the mirror, not a pressed-into-place aimer that I found on a cheap plastic mirror included in an otherwise pretty good emergency kit. When pressed into place, it was not quite on the same plane as the mirror, so the aiming spot and the reflected light did not coincide. The aiming bright spot and the sun's rays diverged.

A good built-in aimer is about an inch in diameter, in the middle of the mirror, and produces a fireball or aiming bright spot. This is generated by retrodirective reflection from small glass spheres on a mesh grid with a center hole. Aim that bright spot at a distant boat or rescue aircraft. If anyone is looking in your direction, he will see it.

If you don't see any rescue craft, don't assume there aren't any looking for you. This is a frequent and fatal mistake. If the plane or boat is downwind from you, you will likely not hear it. If it is a bit distant, you may not even be able to see it with your naked eye, but a person aboard it will still be able to see the sun flashing from your mirror.

### Searching questions

Do you already have a signal mirror aboard? Do you know where it is? Is the reflecting surface free of scratches? Does



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it have a good aimer? Does the aiming bright spot coincide with the sun's reflection? Have you practiced using it? Can your regular sailing partners and guests make positive responses too? If you don't have one aboard, what are you waiting for?

### In an emergency

- Don't give up and curl up in your life raft or sit helplessly in your cockpit waiting until you hear or see a rescue craft. Worse yet, don't wait until someone happens to fly or cruise by, see you, and wonder what you're doing with your mast lying over the side like that.
- Stand as high as you possibly can. Admittedly, this is not easy in a soft-bottomed life raft, but if you are not alone, one person can signal while another supports him. When the sun is high in the sky, you can signal a full 360 degrees around the horizon. In the worst-case scenario, say if you are low in the water (life raft or sinking boat) and any potential rescue vessel is also relatively low, the curvature of the earth may limit your range to not much more than 6 miles. But you would still be covering a circle of some 100 square miles around you.

- A better scenario: With a practical, 20-mile, surface-to-aircraft spotting range, you could cover more than 1,200 square miles very quickly.
- Even if you are not officially overdue or if you were unable to get out a distress message, some pilot (boat or plane) may get curious about the flash of light on the horizon and come to investigate. Isn't that a whole lot better than making like a fetus in a life raft or cursing the fates in your cockpit?

### Observe these cautions

There are cautions to be observed with signal mirrors. First and foremost, don't aim it at someone nearby as a prank. The bright light can temporarily blind a person. This is not good if that person is driving a car or an airplane.

If you break a glass signal mirror, guess what those sharp edges can do to you? Of course, in a real down-and-out survival situation, perhaps (only perhaps) a sharp edge would be more valuable than a signaling device.

And if you didn't first fasten the lanyard to yourself and accidentally dropped it overboard, your valuable mirror would join that multitude of lovely stainless-steel tools you have already consigned to the deep. An excellent plastic signal mirror is available with built-in flotation, a smart idea for mariners.

### Some history

In case you think signal mirrors are just a World War II innovation, consider this: one of the Seven Ancient Wonders of

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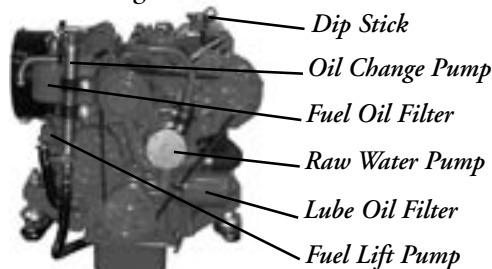
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the World used a signal mirror. Ptolemy Soter, who became the king of Egypt in 331 B.C., had the Pharos built in the harbor of Alexandria. Completed about 280 B.C., this early lighthouse was more than 400 feet tall, with a base larger than 300 square feet. During the day, the sun's rays were reflected by convex mirrors, which created a beam visible as far as 33 miles across the Mediterranean Sea.

At night a dung fire at the base made bright flames that were reflected to sea. While it was an operational lighthouse for only 921 years (check that statistic, Coast Guard!), this largest and grandest lighthouse stood for more than 1,600 years. If it were still standing, wouldn't it make a grand bed-and-breakfast inn?

Fast forward a millennium, more or less. When the Italian traveler, Marco Polo, journeyed to the Far East in the 13th century, the Emperor of China was made aware of his approach by sunlight signals reflected between mountaintops along his route.

In the 19th century, the heliograph was introduced as a modern scientific appliance that was used by the British Army in northern India and Afghanistan. The heliograph also played an important role in vanquishing the Apaches and bringing an end to American Indian uprisings in Arizona in 1886. For that battle, a detachment of 11 soldiers equipped with 34 heliographs, 10 telescopes, and 30 marine glasses established a heliographic system as a communication means for the U.S. Army's Signal Corps. This is perhaps not as efficient as satellite communications today, but it was light-years

## Resources

Aviation writer Douglas Ritter's website has detailed descriptions and unbiased evaluations of signal mirrors: <<http://www.equipped.org>>.

### Manufacturers:

#### Rescue Reflectors, Inc.

220 East Texas Avenue  
Baytown, TX 77520-5257  
281-427-5923;

<<http://www.malcolmmurray.com>>

Manufacturer and distributor of top-quality buoyant and non-buoyant plastic and glass mirrors for rescue signaling and tank inspection. A dozen models ranging 2 x 3, 3 x 5, and 4 x 5. The Rolls Royces of signal mirrors, these are handmade in the United States and individually tested.

#### Survival, Inc.

2633 Eastlake Avenue East, Suite 103  
Seattle, WA 98102-3231

800-292-4707; <<http://www.survivalinc.com>>

Buoyant plastic mirrors in sizes of 2 x 3 and 3 x 5.

#### Aviation-Marine Specialty Products, Inc.

6626 Easton Road  
Pipersville, PA 18947

800-530-1392; <<http://www.avmarspecprod.com>>

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ahead of the signal flags used on naval ships and the smoke signals used by the Indians.

### Distance covered

Really, how far can a reflected ray of the sun be seen? A GI heliographic mirror just 8 inches square reflected a reliable signal 125 miles in 1890, and in 1895 a

record 183-miles distance was established between Mt. Ellen, Utah, and Mt. Uncompahgre, Colorado. (Clear, thin, mountain air certainly helps.)

Coast Guard records indicate that signal mirrors have been spotted from more than 100 miles by rescue aircraft. As a Coast Guard search-and-rescue team, my crew and I have seen signals from 43 nautical miles away.

And here's another bit of personal history. My wife and I were more recently out on our Beaver Lake in our (her actually — she prefers power to sail) old stern-drive cuddy cruiser. This beautiful manmade lake in northwest Arkansas is noted for many things, not the least being the spectacular sheer stone bluffs, the legacy of when the White River meandered through the area, cutting deep beds overshadowed by bluffs that refused to be eroded away.

*“Coast Guard records indicate that signal mirrors have been spotted from more than 100 miles by rescue aircraft. . . My crew and I have seen signals from 43 nautical miles away.”*


I was photographing a beautiful bluff, glowing in the afternoon sun, for an article on the lake. We were drifting in neutral while I shot. Pictures taken, I shifted into forward, gave her a bit of gas . . . nothing!

No time to diagnose troubles then, the seasonal southwesterly was rapidly blowing us toward the sheer bluff, rising some 50 feet above us, with the lake's bottom 100 feet below us. I hastily cobbled together all the spare line aboard to the anchor, threw it as far into the wind as I could, and hoped for the best.

It held, at least for a while, so I put Mary Lu to work signaling for help so I could get on with the troubleshooting. It took her no time at all to master the signal mirror I had put aboard even before life jackets. As she dutifully swept the horizon to the southwest, west, and northwest of us, I cursed stink boats for having no backup propulsion. The long paddle I had aboard was ineffective with the high freeboard and stout breeze.

Good news! Mary Lu said it looked like a bass boat was heading our way. Some of those Bad Boys will do 80 knots or more, so he was on us in a jiffy.

“What kind of spotlight you got in there? You were nearly blinding us as we were launching our boat at the ramp,” he said. The launching ramp was about 2 miles away to the west.


I held our signal mirror up for them to see. And to marvel about. Once again, a signal mirror had meant the difference between a long wait or sure disaster if the anchor dragged. 



boat I'll own — looks, smells, and feels like a nearly new boat. And I've kept at least one boat from the junkyard for a while.

If I were to do it again, I'd do a few things differently.

First, I'd look for a boat that was a little less modified by the previous owners. Some of these fixes could not be repaired because of the inordinate amount of work and money required. Second, I'd look for a boat that wasn't quite so badly neglected, has an interior liner, and has a higher resale value than mine does . . . one that can be sailed immediately would be ideal. Of course, now that I have a boat, I can be a little more selective.

In fact, I'm hoping to put my experience to good use on my next boat, maybe something big enough for a Tennessee family of three to sail downriver and spend a season in the Caribbean. 

### Spiffing up the spars, Continued from Page 41




### Spot-paint first

Mix a small amount of paint with 10 percent brushing thinner, pass it through a strainer, and spot-paint over just the primed areas. This will help bring the repaired areas up to the level of the surrounding paint. Let this spot-coat dry overnight before sanding.

The next day you can lay down a top coat of paint. Tape off an area larger than the repair to be repainted. For example, the photos for this article show a mast being repaired and repainted. Although the damaged areas were relatively small, the mast was taped off from the deck to the boom for repainting. When finished, the paint over the repaired areas blended into the paint job over the lower portion of the mast, leaving only a thin line around the mast to indicate that it had been repainted.

*“The paint can be applied in any direction; however, the final brush strokes should be vertical to keep the paint from sagging and creating the dreaded ‘curtains effect.’”*

Hand-sand this entire area with 220-grit paper and wash well with running water. Dry the area with clean cotton rags. Then mix your paint with 10 percent brushing liquid, pass it through a filter, and apply a thin coat of paint with a natural-bristle brush. The paint can be applied in any direction; however, the final brush strokes should be vertical to keep the paint from sagging and creating the dreaded “curtains effect.” Let this coat dry overnight and then repaint the entire area one more time the following day.

How well does this type of repair hold up? Well, two years later, the mast shown in these photos looks just fine, thank you. It may take another two years before it needs a new coat of paint. 

# Winch switch meltdown

## Here's a quick fix for a serious anchor winch failure

by Alan Lucas

**T**HE TYPICAL FOOT-OPERATED ANCHOR WINCH SWITCH LIVES just a membrane away from a very hostile environment. This membrane is the neoprene pressure pad domed above the switch. The environment is the foredeck where wet and muddy chain cable is a constant fact of life.

All things considered, switch failure should be more from a moist and salty atmosphere than from anything else. Yet, with plastic-bodied units, this is rarely so. As long as hairline cracks in the neoprene are monitored carefully and the pad is replaced before it fails, the simple mechanics of this type of switch survive very well. Heat, not moisture, produces the malfunctioning that eventually results in total failure.

What happens is this: when the anchor switch is depressed (turned on) for lengthy periods of cable hauling, one terminal overheats and starts sinking into its plastic base. Some of this plastic also smears across the terminal's contact surface, which initially produces intermittent operation.

This is Stage One of inevitable total failure because over the months, as the terminal sinks farther into its plastic base, it loses contact entirely with the contact disc when it is pushed down to bridge across the two terminals. As a result, the switch cannot work, regardless of how many times it is stomped on.

That this failure might happen under dramatic and threatening circumstances hardly needs to be mentioned, making the premature replacement of any suspect switch a very sensible option. At the very least, a spare should be carried in anticipation of failure.

### Opt for short bursts

The life of a plastic-bodied switch is prolonged by avoiding long, continuous periods of operation, opting instead for short bursts with many breaks in between. Where circumstances deny this (and they mostly do over the long term), be alert for the first sign of trouble and replace the switch immediately. If, however, total

This exploded view of the winch foot switch (without casing) shows the basic parts: A, washer; B, spindle; C, contact disc; D, spring; E, terminals; and F, power cables. The most common — and often only — problem with this type of plastic-bodied switch is one of the terminals overheating and sinking into the softened plastic casing, which is always associated with serious deterioration of the terminal contact surface.

failure is immediate and no spare is carried, the following temporary remedial treatment usually works well.

When you remove the footpad, you expose the top of the spindle (plunger). It protrudes from a lower, separate plastic body that is released by undoing two self-tappers whose heads are usually obvious. Before releasing, take the power cables off their terminals and have someone belowdecks to catch the body when it drops.

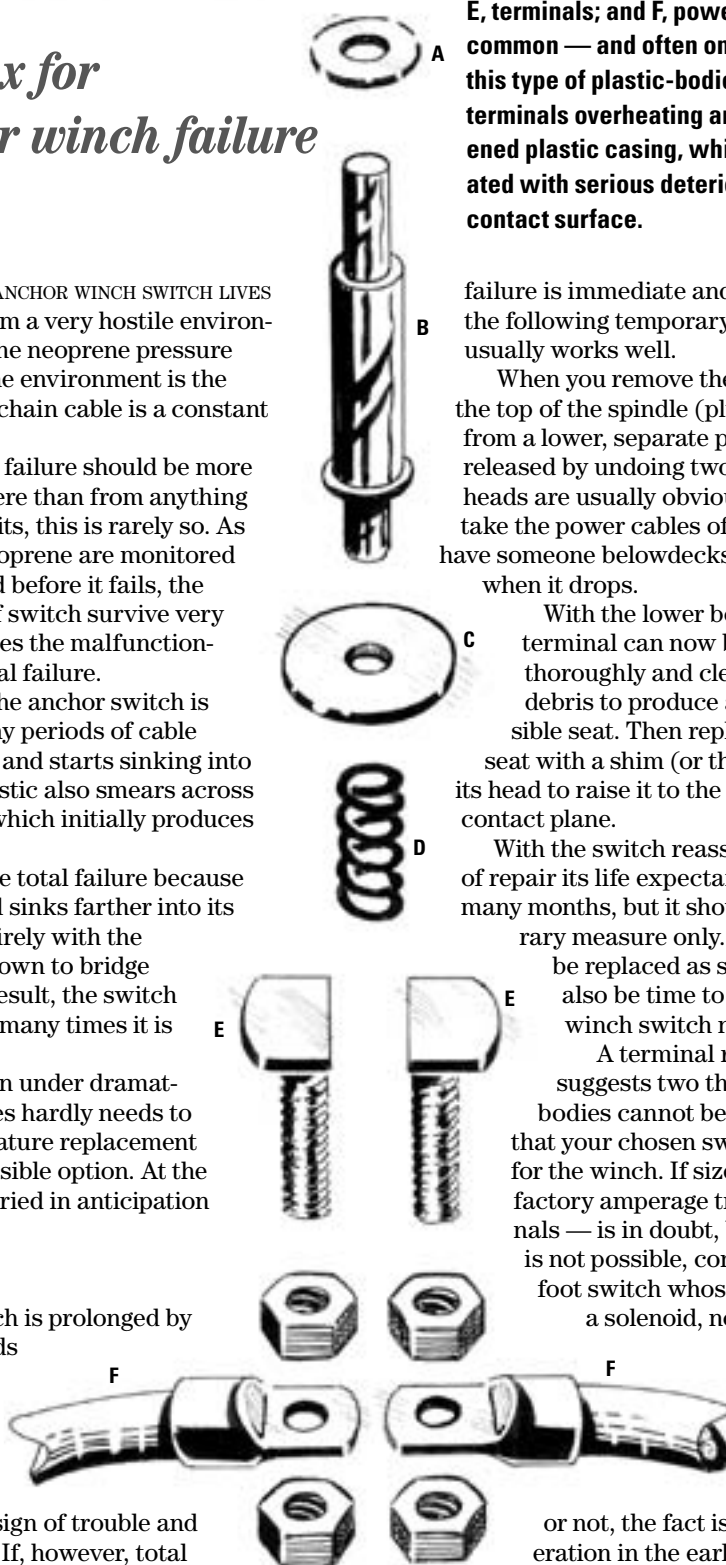
With the lower body freed, the wayward terminal can now be removed. Clean it thoroughly and clear its plastic bed of all debris to produce a fresh, level-as-possible seat. Then replace the terminal in its seat with a shim (or thin washer) beneath its head to raise it to the neighbor's electrical contact plane.

With the switch reassembled after this type of repair its life expectancy might run into many months, but it should be seen as a temporary measure only. The whole unit should be replaced as soon as possible. It may also be time to reassess your anchor winch switch needs.


A terminal running hot like this suggests two things: first, that plastic bodies cannot be trusted and, second, that your chosen switch may be too small for the winch. If size — and therefore satisfactory amperage transfer between terminals — is in doubt, buy a larger unit. If that is not possible, consider using a smaller foot switch whose function is to operate a solenoid, not the winch directly.

Regardless of the exact nature of a winch switch problem, or whether it can be permanently cured

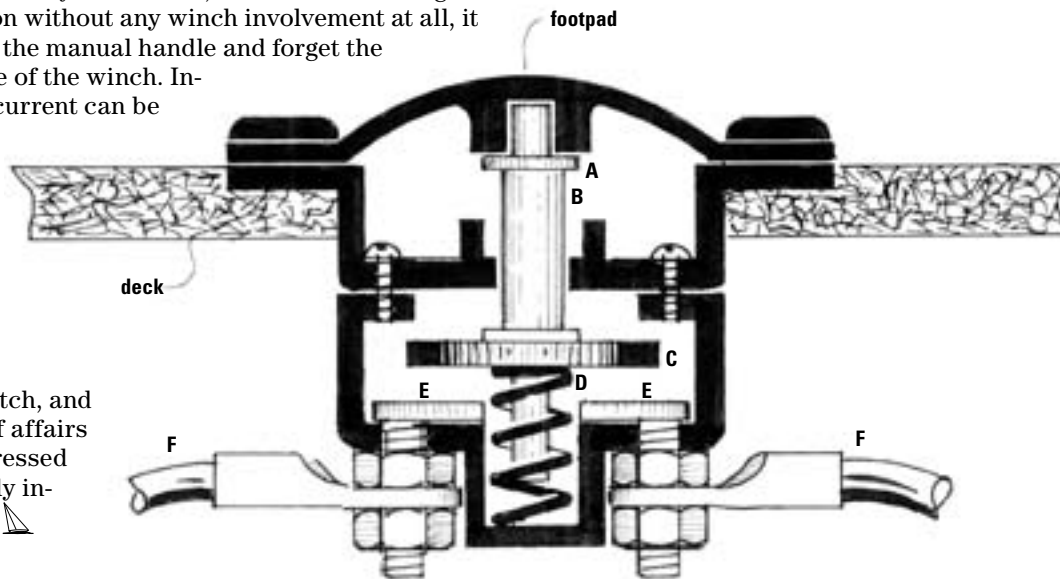
or not, the fact is that intermittent operation in the early stages of failure can



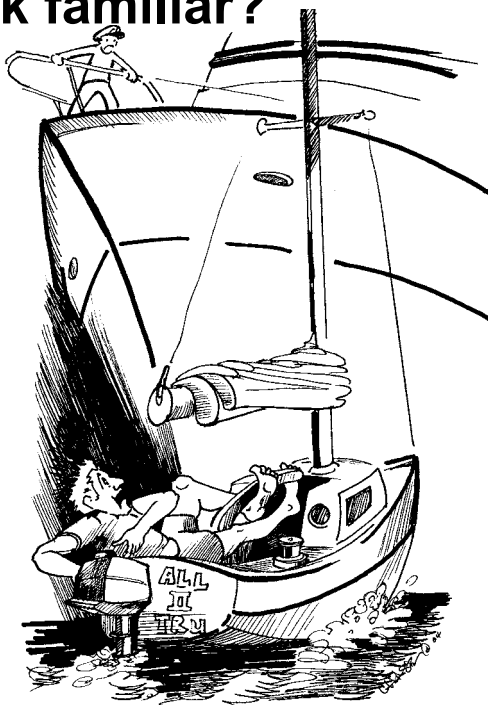
try a person's patience to the extreme — especially when it fails at a dramatic moment. This can lead to distraction and that can be followed by serious injury when accidents happen. Typically, there is the temptation to hand-haul the chain every time the switch goes dead. If your foot remains planted on the switch and if the switch suddenly pops into life, fingers can be pulped in the gypsy.

Except on very small craft, where hand-hauling is a viable option without any winch involvement at all, it pays to use the manual handle and forget the electric side of the winch. Intermittent current can be worse than no current. But better than any emergency system is a healthy switch, and this state of affairs is best addressed by very early intervention. 

With all the parts (see exploded view on Page 77) within their plastic casings, the switch's function is better understood. When pressure is applied to the soft rubber dome (footpad), it bears down on the washer (A) and forces the spindle (B) to bridge the contact disc (C) across the terminals (E). Current can then flow across the cables (F).



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# The knife with the curious handle

*Not even Sherlock Holmes would have solved this mystery*

by Geoffrey Toye

ON THE DESK IN MY STUDY THERE IS A CURIOUS THIN-BLADED paper knife. As an item of intrigue it would not have disgraced the Baker Street breakfast table where Holmes might have directed Watson to apply his methods and deduce its mysterious provenance.

It has an ambience that might have been won, on the turn of a card, from a shellback whalerman in the dingy back room of a dockside beerhouse that time we wintered in Hamburg...or might have been found quivering in the mizzenmast one humid night while the Dacoit who had thrown it with near-deadly skill slipped soundlessly over

the side and into the dark waters of the Pearl River...

In truth it began its long life as a Finnish filleting knife. In its youth it had a Scandinavian birchwood handle, long since succumbed to the ravages of time. Its slender tang is now dressed in a haft of a singular horn-like material that has brought out many a Watson amongst the dinner guests at the beach house but, so far at least, not a single Holmes.

With its fine grain and marble polish at the pommel, horn is a more favored hypothesis than timber, although it could be said to resemble polished olive, and some of the more exotic thorns have been candidates. Less exotic was



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the suggestion that I had made it out of some form of resin that I use on the boat. The fantastic ran to whale-bone, the utterly chimerical to Narwhal tusk.

Easily the most macabre conjecture, and one that perhaps says something of how our friends view my shadowy art of crime writing, was that in some dark moment I had fashioned it from a human bone.

The fact is, it is a piece of seaweed.

### Survival expert

We had been watching a television program in which an Australian survival expert showed viewers what to do if they are ever stranded on a seashore with a knife that has lost its handle. The knife has to be the type that has a narrow tang, the seaweed has to be kelp. The instruction was simply to chop off a likely length of kelp, shove the tang down into the center of the stalk, and let it dry. We happened to be walking on the beach some weeks later, after a storm that had thrown up some kelp, and we caught sight of a few robust-looking stalks.

Remembering our Australian survivalist's advice, and the old filleting knife with the missing handle, we picked some up and took it home. It was not much of a task to chop

*"Shrunkened to about half its original diameter, it was hardly a thing of beauty, admittedly, somewhat wrinkly and gnarled, but never let it be said that this old kettle would call a pot black. It was a serviceable handle."*

off a piece from a stalk and hardly a challenge to push it steadily onto the tang. It was so quick and simple it was almost disappointing. I made one concession to art by utilizing a piece that included the nobbly end that attaches to the rock.

For slow drying, we used the old survivalist's trick of propping it up next to the television. Senility did the rest. I simply forgot about it for a month or so. By that time the stalk had, so to speak, withered onto the tang with tenacity. All reasonable tests failed to budge it.


Shrunkened to about half its original diameter, it was hardly a thing of beauty, admittedly, somewhat wrinkly and gnarled, but never let it be said that this old kettle would call a pot black. It was a serviceable handle.

### Routine precaution

An archery friend dropped by for tea. Knowing that he was the sort of fellow who, when driving to the office, would, as a routine precaution, carry a flint and steel inside his long-bow grip, I showed it to him. He was impressed, responding with a pivotal suggestion, which, I have to admit, had not for one second occurred to me: sand and polish it.

Setting-to with a creative enthusiasm, I found that the dry kelp was pretty strong. The root, where it widened into what would become the pommel, carved cleanly with a utility knife to produce a waxy surface, while the main length of the handle could be sanded easily by hand, using medium and fine paper.

I guessed that sealing it against water ingress would be vital, so I diluted some yacht varnish with thinner, more thinner than varnish, and applied it to the kelp, much as we used to do on old fishing rods by rubbing it in hard with the finger. This time, however, knowing a little more about toxins and not wanting my next sandwich to be imbued with the Great White Spirit, I deferred to modern practice and used a leather pad and gloves. When that was dry I applied a simple polish, cooked up a couple of years previously when I was restoring an antique German guitar. The principal ingredient was beeswax. I rubbed it to a fine sheen by hand.

The result was quite elegant and delightfully mysterious. I cannot absolutely vouch for its strength or longevity, but a few months have gone by and so far, so good. I am moved to try the idea on other things: a spike, a pencil, a comb for a mermaid. So, if your tang has lost its grip, if you are storm-bound in some anchorage where there is a beach and you want to keep perhaps a younger crew member occupied, then kelp may be at hand in the quest for the seaweed Excalibur... an hour to find it, a minute to fit it, and six spellbinding weeks watching it wither. 

*For further reading...*

If you liked *this* mystery, Geoffrey Toye has published several books of intrigue. *Telegram from the Palace* weaves a lot of sailing into the plot. Available at <<http://www.goodoldboat.com/bookshelf.html>> or by calling 763-420-8923.



BoatU.S. photo

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# Dinghy keel extension

*A simple but effective idea to improve a dinghy's tracking*

by Paul Clegg

I HAVE MADE MANY MODIFICATIONS TO OUR HUGHES 26, *SMOOTH Moves*, over the years. Some have been real improvements, some not so much so, and others were abandoned. What follows is probably the single best thing I have done to improve life aboard.

My wife and I have elected to stay with a 7-foot 3-inch Boatex dinghy powered by oars. We like the convenience of its small size and simplicity. In addition to making short trips to shore when anchored, we use the dinghy quite extensively as a pleasant means of exercise and for poking around in anchorages.



Fool a short dinghy into acting like a bigger boat by adding an extension to the aft end of the keel. The removable extension Paul developed attaches by inserting the tube at the top of this photo into a fixture he added to the keel of his Boatex dinghy. The line keeps the extension from being lost and sinking during the critical seconds it takes to attach it to the dinghy.

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Like all short craft with a fairly wide beam, the dinghy doesn't track well, particularly when the wind and/or waves are approaching from the side. It occurred to me that a longer boat would solve the problem. But wouldn't a longer keel accomplish the same thing? Yes, it would, and it did. After installing my "extend-a-keel" three years ago, it took about four strokes of the oars to realize how well it worked. The boat will actually glide in a straight line.

I don't claim that my dimensions and materials are the best ones for this project — they resulted mostly from some odds and ends that I had access to at the time and can be readily purchased at a well-stocked hardware store.

The fin does not protrude any deeper than the existing keel and, because it is easily inserted and removed from inside the boat, it can be taken out when going ashore on beaches to protect it from damage.

### Fairly loose fit

The hollow aluminum tube is  $\frac{3}{4}$ - by  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch inside dimensions, while the solid aluminum bar is  $\frac{5}{8}$  by  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch. While this allows a fairly loose fit, the screw heads protruding into the tube take up some of this slack. Also, the loose tolerance allows easy installation and removal of the fin, especially desirable when "sea stuff" grows on it. The  $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch locking pin is inserted into  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch holes for the same reason.

The through-holes for the locking pin should be bored after the rest of the installation is complete so they can be aligned with the fin at its natural stop position. This allows for pin insertion without having to peer over the transom to get the holes aligned.

I also included a snap hook on a lanyard that I attach to



*"It occurred to me that a longer boat would solve the problem. But wouldn't a longer keel accomplish the same thing? Yes, it would, and it did."*

the transom before inserting the fin. If I happen to drop it, it won't be lost.


Because I own a table saw, it was a simple procedure to make a  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch by  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch deep dado in the aluminum bar into which the  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch-thick plastic fin fits snugly. I then reinforced this joint with three machine screws and nuts. But for anyone without a table saw, the fin could be just screwed from the side of the bar.

While the plastic fin is susceptible to damage, it can be replaced easily. The rest of the installation is quite sturdy. As I stated, I used materials I had on hand. The fin could be replaced with aluminum stock

or perhaps copper or some other material. Except for shallow-water beaching or rowing over rocks, the fin is quite safe. Ours is undamaged after three years of use.

### Just seemed right

The actual fin on our boat is 4 inches by 32 inches. The 4-inch width is the same as the boat keel at the stern, but it could be 3 inches or 5 inches. The 32-inch length just seemed right to me — long enough to make a difference but not so long it becomes a nuisance when rowing and stowing.

What are the drawbacks? Not many. Because the boat behaves like a longer craft, it doesn't respond or turn as quickly, of course. I honestly can't perceive any extra drag. Any additional muscle power that may be exerted is more than compensated for by not having to continually straighten the boat. As for the extra hassle of inserting the fin in the tube, it's minimal; however, if we're just rowing a short distance to the dock or a beach we don't bother using it. The purpose of our "extend-a-keel" is to better enjoy those longer rows. 



Calling his addition an "extend-a-keel," Paul added a bracket to accept the extension, shown above, and a long removable tail to the keel of his dinghy, shown at left. Does it work? He says it behaves like a longer craft and is the single best modification he's made to improve his boating life over the years.

## Hurricane hit

I am responding to your gracious offer to extend for one year the subscription of anyone hit by this year's onslaught of hurricanes in Florida. We took a direct hit by Hurricane Charley on August 13. We live in Punta Gorda, Florida, and our 1980 Endeavour 37, *Island Tyme*, received substantial damage, although I believe it all to be repairable in time. We had her double-tied in every direction, and I am proud to say we didn't break a single dockline or lose a cleat. But the slip is narrow, and it was impossible to keep her from banging the concrete pier and the side pilings. So she has rubrail and toerail damage, scratched gelcoat on the hull, broken/bent stanchions, and some damage to standing and running rigging, plus the bilge pump burned itself out. But she did not blow away or sink, so we feel we were victorious!

Please extend my subscription. Although we fared better than many, the help is much appreciated as we repair our boat, both of our cars, and some minor damage to the condo. Your kind offer is much appreciated. We have been subscribers for a couple of years now and love your magazine. You replaced *Cruising World* as our preferred sailing magazine. Your magazine is far more "real" to us "average boaters."

**Don and Gail Buck**  
Punta Gorda, Fla.

## Hurricane condolences

Hurricane Ivan came ashore in Gulf Shores, Alabama, about 90 miles east of Gulfport, Mississippi, where our 1981 Hunter 36, *Short Circuit*, resides. We were traveling, so the day before Ivan hit, our daughter and son moved the boat out of the Keesler Air Force Base Marina and anchored her with lines to shore in the Industrial Canal with several hundred other boats.

The water there was already high. After the storm we were communicating via email on the approach to take to get the keel out of the mud. After four days of waiting for a good high tide, Ben was able to rock the boat in forward and reverse and get her under way again. The only damage was a broken hasp from some greedy thief who broke in the night before she was brought home. The initial low loss estimate of a gaff hook and portable air horn was recently increased, however, when the actual inventory showed that my most expensive PFDs (two sailing vests), a new yet-to-be-installed Lectra/San, and two winch handles were liberated... selective shopping. I guess the \$900 inflatable was too heavy for the rats to remove, or they were scared away by an approaching boat. To all those less fortunate, my condolences.

**Jim Boernge**  
Lakewood, Colo.

## Lifeboat modifications

Michael Brimbau's modifications of his Fatty Knees dinghy (November 2004) were interesting; many of his mods were feasible and even innovative, but his comments about not taking an EPIRB were... how shall I phrase it... ill advised. I'm sure the whole thing is very heavy, and I'm sorry to say a single small wave will collapse his overhead tubing irreparably. If his sailboat went down slowly in calm conditions, he just might be able to get such a huge contraption into the water but — as a former commercial fisherman from the North Pacific — I can only say that the saga of a boat go-

ing out from under you sometimes occurs with horrifying rapidity, plunging you into frigid water with little warning. If you're lucky, you might get off a hasty SOS as you grab your EPIRB and survival suit.

Most of his design is impractical under emergency conditions. Having been on boats in bad blows, I've seen our decks swept clean of anything not constructed of ¼-inch steel. A dinghy with all those structural modifications wouldn't stand up to such a scenario. If he lost his Fatty Knees to a wave, what is Plan B: going into the water without an EPIRB? It's time for Michael to reconsider some of his ideas.

**Hugh Owens**  
Wilson, Wyo.

## Rod or wire bobstays?

How about getting some advice from your gurus as regards solid rod bobstays vs. wire? As you may recall, the rod on *Wind Ketcher* busted with great insult to her facial features. Apparently many boats in the mid to late '70s used solid rod rigging on the sprits or pulpit areas. I'm curious as to what Ted Brewer says about the rod-vs.-wire debate.

**Ed Verner**  
Plant City, Fla.

## Ted Brewer replies

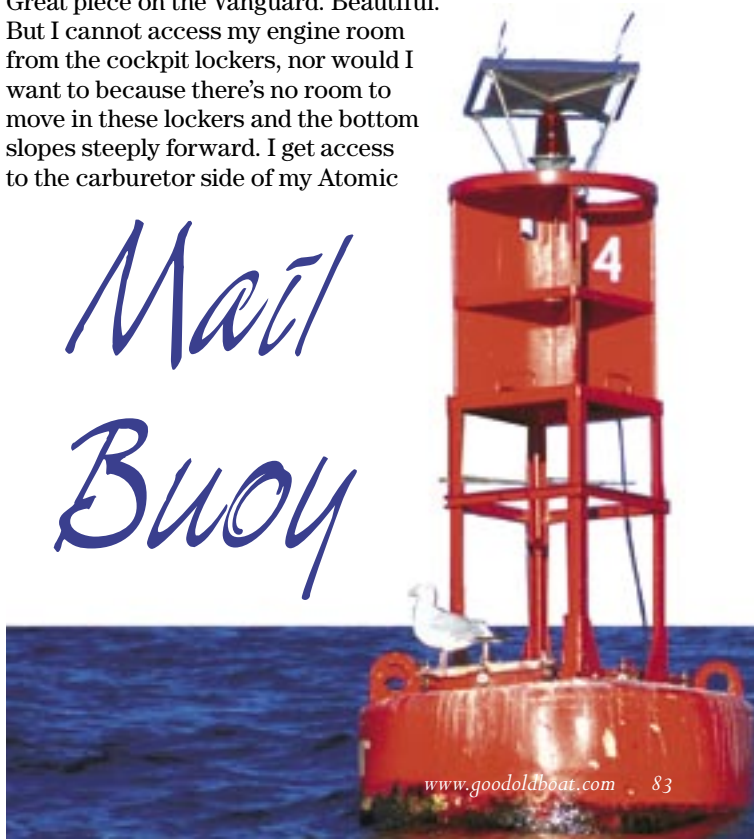
I'm strongly against solid rod bobstays. Unlike wire, if it strikes an object, such as a pier, the rod gets a permanent kink. Both rod and wire can corrode in salt water though, so that is not a major part of my objection. My preference is for a wire stay with bronze end fittings of the poured-zinc type.

**Ted Brewer**  
Gabriola Island, British Columbia

## Improved access

Great piece on the Vanguard. Beautiful. But I cannot access my engine room from the cockpit lockers, nor would I want to because there's no room to move in these lockers and the bottom slopes steeply forward. I get access to the carburetor side of my Atomic

*Mail  
Buoy*



# Mail Buoy



4 by removing the sink and the galley furniture. Removing the galley furniture requires a couple of simple straight saw cuts and the addition of a couple of cleats for reassembly, but it's very easy and I've been happy with it for many years.

**Conrad "Connie" Hoover**  
Editor, *The Vanguardian*  
Wilmington, Del.

## Thanks for the memories

Enclosed is my form for a free one-year subscription to *Good Old Boat*. I won this by placing first in the fin division (Performance Handicap Racing Fleet) of the Chesapeake Bay Good Old Boat Regatta. (I call them "regrettas.") Many thanks for sponsoring this regatta. Between Shearwater Sailing Club and your sponsorship, this is a great Corinthian-spirited event here on the Bay. It was heartening to have more than 90 good old boats entered in this year's event.

**Jim Mumper**  
Annapolis, Md.

## Vacuuming the core dry

First, thanks for the leads on my Columbia 28. They led to exactly the information I sought. Second, I read an article by the owner of a J/30 with saturated deck core in which a surveyor recommended that, rather than cut open the decks, he should apply vacuum bagging technology to dry the core. The vacuum, in physical terms, would lower the boiling point of the water to where it would be vaporized at room temperature. The claimed time to dry was 48 hours. Since I face a re-core, I found this interesting. The same materials and apparatus used to dry the deck could then be used to vacuum bag the epoxy job, thus ensuring perfect penetration of the resin. Does this make any sense to you? Do you have any leads I could follow up? Your wonderful magazine is much appreciated.

**Clayton Bailey**  
Montréal, Québec

*I suppose that would work in some cases. However, if there is core deterioration and delamination, just drying it out will not do much. Sometimes you have to remove the cores. If the area you are sucking on will not seal, you cannot pull the high vacuum. This happens when there are channels in the core. Otherwise, for minimal problems where the core is just wet, that process might save a lot of work. I don't have any leads for that one. I am interested in how it turns out, if you do it.*

**Jerry Powlas**  
Technical editor

## Fogging a diesel

Is it necessary to fog a diesel engine prior to winter layup? If so, how is it accomplished?

**Doug Cohen**  
Rotterdam, N.Y.

*I don't think you need to fog your diesel. Change the oil before layup, drain fresh water from the cooling system and muffler, pull the raw-water pump impeller, disconnect the batteries, and top off the fuel tank. In the spring, change the oil again, coat the raw-water pump casing and impeller*

*with Vaseline, and install the impeller. If the engine does not start right off, do the cranking duel with the raw-water intake seacock closed until the engine starts. Check to see that the engine is pumping water into the exhaust, and spin the prop for a few minutes. Then check and, if necessary, adjust the stuffing box.*

**Jerry Powlas**  
Technical editor

## Another lifeboat

I read with interest the article about the Fatty Knees modified as a survival dinghy (November 2004). We have just developed the Portland Pudgy — a new concept in boating safety, function, and fun — a multi-function service and survival dinghy. This dinghy was designed as a boat that addresses the issues of abandoning ship, as well as serving as a regular utility dinghy. It rows, sails, and motors equally well. It is exceptionally rugged and unsinkable. All

its equipment, sailing rig, exposure canopy, sea anchor, and safety equipment store within the sidewalls of the boat. It can be seen at <http://www.portlandpudgy.com>.

The one thing that troubles me after reading about the Fatty Knees modification is that capsize could be a serious issue. How would you right the boat (because of its weight), and how would you pump it out? The pump shown in the photo is not adequate for moving a large volume of water. One interesting feature of our boat is that if it is capsized, there are handholds in the keel that you use to roll it upright. The boat easily rolls back to an upright position. As it rolls back, it floats on its sidewall, scooping up very little water and coming up nearly empty. Ending up with a boat that is still not swamped, but instead is dry, is a very important feature.

**David Hulbert**  
Portland Pudgy  
Portland, Maine





## The Keeper's House

I started with the first issue and you're stuck with me. *Good Old Boat* is the only sailing magazine I subscribe to now. It's the most relevant to my kind of sailing.

Allow me to pass on a great experience in Maine: The Keeper's House Inn at the Isle Au Haut lighthouse. It's a 45-minute mail boat ride from Stonington, the mainland town. The food is terrific, and Jeff and Judi Burke are wonderful hosts. You stay in the keeper's house with candle, oil lamps, and a warm wood stove. What else could you to ask for? Such a beautiful place to be. In the morning they give you a gourmet breakfast, then they fix you a wonderful lunch, and off you go hiking or biking. Check their website: <<http://www.keepershouse.com>>, 207-460-0257.

**George Chase  
Barnegat, N.J.**

*George is pictured above at the Isle Au Haut lighthouse.*

## What did you say?

I enjoyed the article by Henry Cordova, "Passage to San Diego," in the September 2004 issue. I consider almost all sailboats aesthetically pleasing, if not beautiful, especially under sail, but Henry confirmed for me that beauty is definitely in the eye of the beholder. He described *Haiku*, a boat I am quite sure is a Bristol Channel Cutter, as "a squat ugly duckling of a boat." I'm sure all BCC owners and admirers had to take a deep breath to prevent apoplexy after reading that description. Here's a photo (at right) I captured of my BCC, *Fine Feather*, built in 1977, anchored in a bay of York Island in the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore as the fog rolled in on a mid-September evening. This is a beautiful scene, in my opinion, of course. Thanks for a great magazine.

**Dave Mills  
Barron, Wis.**

*Dave, we agree that it's a beautiful boat and a beautiful shot, but we figured Henry was entitled to his opinion. I hope you saw the article we did on the BCC eons ago, in May 1999. We didn't say anything like "squat ugly duckling" in that article. Instead we drooled all over the boat.*

## Who started that rumor?

Thanks for producing such a great and needed magazine. After 10 years of being off the water, I'm now considering buying another boat. I hear stories that I should stay away from fiberglass boats older than 15 to 20 years. What is a general consensus on useful life of fiberglass hulls? Have you done a story on that yet?

**Al Bergstein  
Seattle, Wash.**

*I don't think a general statement about fiberglass life is either useful or possible. Our boat is 29 years old and going strong. Many from that period are also. Some boats from the glass of the past were not built with either good materials or good processes and are going to be a problem.*



*Others were not properly taken care of by their owners. The two most common problems with fiberglass boats are wet cores from leaks through deck fitting fasteners and "boat pox," in which water enters the laminate below the waterline and causes blisters.*

*A surveyor should find the wet core areas in a normal survey. In fact, if he does nothing*

*else, that is the most important thing he can do. The blister problem is usually visible when the boat is hauled.*

*Both problems (delamination and blisters) can be cured, but both are prohibitively expensive to have done professionally. And each will require extensive time and effort, particularly if done by the owner, who typically will be less efficient in making the repairs.*

*I think there was a period when builders experimented with lower-cost resins (and fire retardants) and built boats that would quickly blister. I can't peg that period for you, but I bought a new boat in the middle '70s. It blistered in a couple of months. It was a racing dinghy, so we knocked off the blisters and drysailed it the rest of time we had it.*

**Jerry Powlas  
Technical editor**





## A great time!

The Good Old Boat Regatta held in Annapolis the last two weekends was a wonderful celebration of sailing! It was super to see all the good old boats nicely cared for and clearly much loved. I thank all of you at *Good*

*Old Boat* magazine for the excellent articles that help us maintain and appreciate our old boats and for sponsoring these wonderful regattas. I think a great time was had by all. Ninety-some boats and crews participating is a great sign of success!

Thanks also to Bob and Cindi Gibson for hosting the shoreside activities at their beautiful home, to the Shearwater Sailing folks who helped organize the regatta, and to Charlie Husar for his inimitable enthusiasm for wonderful "vintage" boats, good sailing, and great times!

**Ed Poe  
Towson, Md.**

*Ed, together with his crew and his Cal 29, Capricious, was the winner of the trophy for the Best Performance by a Chesapeake Bay Yacht Racing Association (CBYRA) Racing Boat and of the Good Old Boat Magazine Perpetual Trophy. This was Ed's second win of the perpetual trophy!*

*While we're relating stories, take a look at Cheater, the 1964 Columbia 5.5 in the photo at right. Jim Graham had just moved to Annapolis from San Francisco. The trailer had damaged his boat en route, but he had it repaired and ready for the second Saturday race. He rigged Cheater*

*in time and flew his former crew to Annapolis to participate. They won the full-keel class and are likely to cause renewed interest in the 5.5 in Annapolis.*

## Lesson learned

The auxiliary in my boat is a nearly new Beta Marine 20-hp diesel. I followed faithfully the sheet of detailed start-up instructions — which even included dipping the oil in the gearbox — and the machine started on the first touch of the key. It ran smoothly for more than half an hour. The next day I ran it for another 20 minutes, and then it stopped mysteriously. It would not re-start. There was fuel in the tank, but I put in another gallon to be sure. No luck. I telephoned the help line, and the service was excellent. I was told it might be air in the system and was advised how to bleed it and manually pump the fuel. I did this. The engine started, then stopped. I was advised to check that the fuel was getting through. It transpired that it was not.

The next trick was to syringe a few drops of fuel into the top of the fuel filter, get the engine running, and give it a good run to clear the system. I did, it ran for 20 minutes, but when I went to shut it off, the engine beat me to it and would not come back to life. I disconnected the fuel lead pipe. Dry as a bone. I connected a small hand pump to it and could not draw fuel through. Ah, ha! Must be a sludged-up in-line filter! I disconnected the other (tank) side of the filter and sucked some more. Nothing. Not a drop. Real vacuum resistance. Got it! Must be a blockage in the lead or at the tank. Could hardly be a rust flake; the tank is pristine stainless steel.

On our Macwester, the fuel tank is a sliding fit into a purpose-built lazarette locker. You take off the locker lid, and there's the filler cap. Ah, ha! The filler cap, of course! Why didn't I think of it? Air breather hole must be blocked! I checked it. Perfectly clear. I tried to slide the tank up and out, but the thing would go just so far, then come up against a solid stop ... some hidden impediment. I needed to get under the thing. The next locker along was full of bits and pieces, ropes, anchors, cones, balls, more ropes. Digging down I got to the bottom and found what was preventing the tank from lifting out. Protruding through the intervening bulkhead was a small, bronze fuel valve. *It was turned off!*

The diesel is running so much better now. I telephoned the help line and groveled my apologies. It seems I was not the first, nor likely to be the last.

**Geoffrey Toye  
Wales, Great Britain**



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# It's all about speed

*Whether you use it or not,  
you'll be judged by your speed*

*by Jerry Powlas*

**A** FEW YEARS AGO, I SET OUT TO WRITE A "TRILOGY OF EDITORIALS" dealing with time, speed, and distance. The time editorial (September 2002) was greeted with considerable enthusiasm. The distance piece (September 2003) inspired very little comment one way or the other. Speed has been the hardest of the three factors for me to write about. I have written three versions of the speed piece and trashed them all.

Speed, particularly as it applies to sailboats, is a relative thing. Most fast cruising monohulls are slower than a slow bicycle. The fastest of the cruising multihulls are slower than a fast bicycle. Compared to the most humble of powerboats, a sailboat seems to hardly move at all. Still, I am very concerned about the speed of my boat, which is only right and proper for a sailor.

Racing, of course, is all about speed. I have advised many would-be cruising sailors that the quickest way to learn to

sail and learn to sail well is to crew on a well-run racing boat. That might seem at odds with the content of our magazine, which rarely mentions racing. Still, we help sponsor several racing events, and, when I added up my own experience, it came to about 900 races, most of which I enjoyed thoroughly and all of which taught me something.

A skipper who wants to win trains his crew, keeps his equipment in good condition, and conducts every evolution from a tack to a spinnaker strike as if it were a finely choreographed ballet. Experienced racing skippers know that three-hour races are often won by a few seconds, so such skippers insist on very high-quality work and technique.

## **Broader experience**


Nonetheless, racing is about extremes, and I believe that cruising should *not* be about extremes. Cruising is a much broader experience, and the skipper can work the boat to accomplish a variety of objectives. The sights, sounds, and smells of the place are important. Tranquility can be sought and often achieved. Crewmembers might think it's fun to carry a large press of sail for an hour or two but not for a two-day crossing. All cruising crews want to feel safe and (at least occasionally) comfortable. They want to be with a skipper who will work the boat to these ends.

For the cruising crew, the question is how much speed serves the immediate purpose. A sail of a few hours' duration starting and ending in the same place (or one close by) can be done by working the boat hard (or not) as it strikes the fancy of those aboard. If the objective is to beat the next cold front and be tucked into a safe anchorage when the blow starts, all or almost all speed might be needed.

The best combination is a skipper, crew, and boat that are capable of good speed, should this be desired. I'm troubled when I hear someone say, "I don't need to go fast, I'm not going to race." This is usually a rationale for adding equipment and modifications to a boat that will make it hopelessly slow in the best of circumstances. Occasionally I am tempted to ask, "With a 6-knot boat, how many times do you want to give away a quarter of a knot?"

Then there is the intangible. Good boats have a sweet spot. When they are going the "right speed" for conditions, they feel "right." Often this is very close to the same speed a good racing crew would achieve in the same conditions. This is hard to define and may take some years to feel, but when it is right, I know it is right.

It requires a fair amount of skill to operate a sailboat, and sailors are often quite rightly proud of the skills they have acquired. These skills can be seen in a smart, crisp docking maneuver, when a sail is changed or reefed, or in a number of other evolutions, but the common measure, universally acknowledged, in a half-gale or a drifter, is how the boat and crew make speed. That's just how it is.

I wish you good speed. 





# DECIDING TO GO

CRUISERS ARE JUST  
NORMAL PEOPLE WHO HAVE  
WONDERFUL ADVENTURES

BY ELLEN LANDRUM



**I**S OUR LIFESTYLE IS SUITED TO CRUISING? OR IS CRUISING SUITED to our lifestyle? Which inspires the other? We haven't the slightest idea nor does it matter. We know simply that we are happiest on our boat.

Even on the Chelsea Creek, surrounded by rusty barges and generators and cranes, a salt yard across the way, and Exxon Mobil's holding tanks up the road, we couldn't be happier because we're close to the water.

**“AND THE REMARKABLE THING WE’VE FOUND AS WE’VE READ IS THAT THESE PEOPLE ARE NORMAL. THEY’RE ENDOWED WITH NORMAL (TO ABOVE-AVERAGE) INTELLIGENCE, NORMAL EARNING POWER, AND NORMAL INGENUITY. THEY ARE DOWN-TO-EARTH, REGULAR PEOPLE, WHO DO REMARKABLE THINGS AND LIVE REMARKABLE LIVES ON SAILBOATS.”**

We don't particularly like to work, though we've both pushed 50 hours a week in the past two years. We'd rather be passing time together, doing the small things we do to maintain our home and ourselves — cooking, sanding, sewing, reading, talking, working on our boat. We've agreed not to raise our children in a traditional way, if you can call parenting in 2005 “traditional.” We'll be sure to impart upon them the spice of American life — our love of cheeseburgers, an undying devotion to the Boston Red Sox, the freedom to write and speak and live the way we choose to live. So we choose to cruise, and after two years of talk, preparations are finally under way.


We are living aboard the boat we both love, paging through endless chronicles of other folks' adventures at sea.

**“OUR CELEBRITIES ARE PEOPLE WITH WHOM WE COULD SHARE A CUP OF OUR FOLGER’S INSTANT COFFEE. THEY DO NOTHING WE CAN’T DO.”**

On the shelf: Dave and Jaja Martin's *Into the Light*, Alvah Simon's *North to the Night*, Eric Hiscock's *Cruising Under Sail*, Don Casey's *This Old Boat* — about a boat very much like our own, Nigel Calder, Robin Knox-Johnston, Tania Aebi, Lin and Larry Pardey ... all the usual suspects. And the remarkable thing we've found as we've read is that these people are normal. They're endowed with normal (to above-average) intelligence, normal earning power, and normal ingenuity. They are down-to-earth, regular people, who do remarkable things and live remarkable lives on sailboats.

## Never crossed oceans

Most aren't rich. Some have never crossed oceans. Some sail in boats smaller than ours. The Martins have three kids; by all accounts they sound totally normal — not the unsocialized precocious “shrunkened adults” our friends imagine when they hear we hope to have a baby soon and cruise as a family. Tania knew less about celestial navigation when she left New York than I do now. Lin gets seasick. Alvah was lonely in the ice. They have flaws, just like us. Yet they manage to live blessed existences — blessed by our terms at least. Our celebrities are people with whom we could share a cup of our Folger's instant coffee. They do nothing we can't do.

We plan to go south in the fall, under the power of an engine we have yet to install and a rig we have yet to inspect. We hope to chronicle our preparations in occasional reports: “Dispatches from the Chelsea Creek” or “How I Sailed Away from a Successful Career in Boston.” Not that any of our ideas are new or unusual; perhaps they will provide a wee bit of inspiration, if not a few laughs. As Lin and Larry Pardey said 30 years ago, “Go small, go simple, go now!” The getting ready to go is half the pleasure. 



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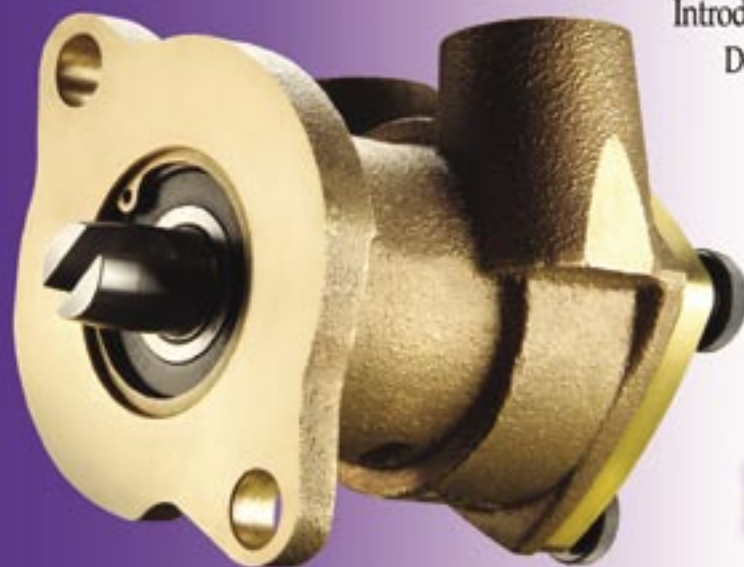


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