

Dockline

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Fleet Captain's Signal

I'm spending too much time on the Web. One of the funniest things I've seen, ever, is the Subservient Chicken, a promo for Burger King, at <http://subservientchicken.com> it does what you tell it to do (within reason and decorum). Try it, you'll like it! Try 'taco bell'. On a more serious note, Lois and I have talked for years about Florida, as a place to be in the winter. You know-- basking in the 55-degree rainy Florida weather, as it was during our Christmas visit to Boca Grande, for example. Well, the long and short of it is that we put our house on the market one Saturday a couple of weeks ago, and sold it on Sunday. We will move to St Petersburg in June, after our daughter's June 11th marriage here in Solomons. In late February we're going house-hunting down there. Of course, this poses a problem for Fleet 12 members -- you will be short one Captain for the balance of the year. I would like to have discussion on this point at the spring meeting. By the way, Lou Berman is doing a great job promoting the meeting. I hope we fill the place. I know we'll all have a great time together.

Happy sailing and fair winds --soon!

Eugene Norris



Editor's Corner

Well my new computer has finally arrived and I can finally produce my first edition of the Dockline. My concern from the first day of agreeing to this work was that I would not be able to provide a newsletter that would be informative and entertaining. However, the more I thought about it the less concerned I became. Why? Because Becky and I went to a meeting of our local sailing association and it occurred to me total strangers can have long and passionate conversations about sailing. We discussed everything from the type boat, how long we had sailed, review of last year's cruises and the anticipation of the coming sailing season. My goal for the Dockline will be to provide a conduit for members of the fleet to provide insight into the ways of sailing and remind each other of the joys as well as the heartaches of sailing. Toward that goal, I would ask each of you to take a few minutes to send an email with your thoughts. They can be in the form of a short antidote, a sailing tip, notice of up coming events in you area or simply to pass on information about a member. I am planning several upgrades to our boat this year, do it your self types and I'll make a few notes. In addition, I thought I would add a "want ad" section So, without further ado, please find a contribution by my Captain, Becky Strandberg, I more that happy to be her first mate.

CAP'T Hank @ Work

(Courtesy Ron Hill)

What no brakes!!!

I came to boating rather late in life, after my children were grown. I grew up on the water and love being on or near the water. The touch of the sun, the lapping lullaby of waves and the rocking of a boat are soothing companions, especially after my day job, lawyering. Larry had several boats, both power and sail but I knew that I wanted a sailboat. We agreed upon a sailboat. Late summer, 2003, we decided to go look at boats. It was a beautiful day to buy a boat, not too hot, sunny and cloudless. I usually research everything to death. Larry said that we really would not be looking, we would be buying. I said, of course not, we just need to see what is available. I immediately fell in love with the first Catalina 34 we saw and we did buy the boat that day. Just sitting in the cockpit and feeling the water under us was what sold us on the boat.

The Grasshopper is a 1987 Catalina 34 with a Tall Mast. Not much had been changed on the boat, but it is in good shape. We did our sea trial, had our inspection and low and behold, we owned a sailboat. Now the real dare, I was to be the Captain and pilot the boat. The challenge was not only learning to pilot the boat, but also learning to work together with Larry on the boat. Larry and I both are use to being "in charge" and knowing very much what we are doing at work. I was now a novice sailor and had lots to learn. My eyes do not have good depth perception, which means I do not judge distance well. Plus the boat was so big! It is a good thing I love a challenge. The hardest thing for me to learn in piloting the boat was that there are "no brakes"! I am cautious, so shifting from first into reverse and gunning the engine to make it stop are completely contrary to everything I have learned in driving a car. Plus, while I am familiar with starting a lawn mower by pulling on a throttle, on a boat, you pull on the throttle to cut the engine. Go figure.

Larry has a great deep booming voice, and keeps telling me that with 34 feet of boat he has to

"yell". On our maiden voyage, I started the engine and was looking at the shift and the throttle and slowly trying to back the boat out. I did not have any speed, so of course the boat just sort of swung back and forth. I then gave it more gas and it started swinging toward the pilings. Larry starts yelling to turn the wheel the other way. I kept turning the wheel, and nothing happened. Then the boat began to respond, and of course went too far. Larry meanwhile is at the front of the boat trying to make sure we do not hit the pilings, the boats next to us, or the dock. We eventually made it out of the slip without doing any damage. Thank goodness for rub rails. Our boat is a Shipwright Marina in Deale, Maryland on Herring Bay. There is a very narrow channel so it is hard for me to take my eyes off of the depth gage when we are in the channel. Fortunately it was high tide. As we went out through the channel, one of the men who had helped us with the purchase of the boat, yelled to move over to the middle of the channel. It looked to me as if we were between the markers, but as I found out on a later voyage, that was not the case. Finally, we made it out to the bay and boy was it worth it. I was now the owner of a sailboat. Now, I just had to learn to be a sailor.

Becky



Ron's Maintenance Tips

DUAL PURPOSE INVERTER – I'm sure you have noticed that every time you change to a new cell phone, the old 12V charger connection won't match your new phone! I'm sure the cell phone companies do this on purpose so they can sell new 12V chargers. Look in any marine catalog and you'll find small 75w and 175w cigarette lighter plug inverters. These inverters convert 12V DC into 110V AC so you can use the 110V AC charging cord that comes with the phone. I've seen these inverters on sale in West Marine for \$20 and \$30 respectively. You can also find them in almost any automotive parts store. They also act as a multi purpose piece of equipment. I use mine to not only charge my cell phone, but also power my small HP computer printer. Other uses might include charging the batteries of almost any other battery operated device, small AC drill, sander, etc. The small inverters use little power themselves and are easy to store in the Nav-table when not in use. Unless you want to power a microwave, hair dryer, blender, etc, and don't need a large/expensive permanently mounted inverter, this may be the way to go.

CHECKING WIRE CONNECTIONS – I've written before about inspecting battery connections to insure they are clean and tight. During the off-season, you might also want to look at the connections for the alternator and starter solenoid. The alternator connections should be tight and have a self-locking nut or lock washers on each connection. Vibration of the engine can hack off these connecting nuts. Word of caution – any time you are putting your hands in the confined area around the alternator, make sure that you've removed all rings on your fingers and metal watch bands or bracelets. You don't want to "light up" the engine compartment. Another option is to remove the positive battery wire at the battery(s) terminal(s).

There is a 30-amp fuse in the starter solenoid line. You need to inspect that fuse holder to make sure that the fuse and holder have clean contacts at each end. Note that engine vibration can also fatigue that wire. If you have an M25 or M25XP engine, and don't have the glow plug solenoid modification, now is a good time to install it. Go to the C341A web site and look in the Mainsheet Tech notes or Projects list. The M35 engine came with that solenoid.

EXERCISE YOUR THRU HULLS – Winter lay-up is an ideal time to exercise and lubricate them before the boat goes back in the water this spring. If the boat is on the hard, you'll be able to get at the top as well as the bottom of each of your 5 (or more) thru hulls. You should use waterproof or water resistant grease. With the thru hull closed and the inside hose removed, dab a little grease on the top and bottom side of the thru hull ball valve. Then turn the thru hull and on and off a dozen times. I have to admit that I only grease the holding tank thru hull from the outside, as taking the hose off that thru hull is "too tough!" It's a good idea to leave the thru hulls open during winter storage, but don't forget to close them just before you "splash" in the spring.

TEAK AND HOLLY SOLE – Over the past 10 or so years, I've had a spot near the center of the piece of sole that is delaminating. It's the piece on the head side. As you might guess, it is in a place that cannot be covered by a rug. I've made slits in the veneer with a sharp knife and injected epoxy to no avail. I can't tell you how many times I've refinished that single piece. It's too far in the middle to get at it and repair it from an edge. A price of a 4' x 8' sheet of teak and holly sole is \$150 wholesale! Another problem is that the teak and holly sole I've been able to find is metric and the MK I thickness is 3/8". A metric size is close, but "no cigar."

My solution was to cover it so I called Catalina Parts and ordered the flooring that they use in the galley of the MK II. That "rubberized" covering is called "LONCOIN" (Gray) @ \$45 per sq yd. To me it looks like a very light tan in color. It took 1-1/2 yards to cover the galley area. I removed the two pieces of teak and holly sole from the galley and traced them on to the LONCOIN material. I cut it with a scissors. Then I reinstalled the teak and holly sole and placed the LONCOIN over the top and used the same holes (longer screws) to mount it. Looks great. The only place that is a little too high is at the engine compartment and head entrance, which makes no difference. This same company (LONSEAL 800-832-7111) makes the artificial teak and holly sole (Formica type) that is installed in the new Catalinas.

Ron Hill APACHE #788



Dockside sales:

WANTED: Child size life jackets contact larryelogan@comcast.net

Memorial Day Cruise
Fleet 12
May 29-31

After all the springtime rain, the Memorial Day Weekend promised to be pleasant. Saturday at 3:20 p.m. BRIGADOON (Rupp) anchored in Tripp Creek in a brisk wind followed closely by APACHE (Hill). Ron and Phyllis dinked over to BRIGADOON for a Saturday night rendezvous. TREE HOUSE (Dunnigan) experienced their first cruise with Fleet 12 stopping at Mears Marina for a holding tank pump-out before anchoring in Tripp Creek, but they never made it to the anchorage. Jack could not start the engine; Mears wanted them off the gas dock and would not rent them a slip, so Jack had to call Oxford Marina to rent a slip for the night and called a towboat to tow TREE HOUSE to Oxford Boat yard. Walt and Ron gave Jack suggestions and agreed to a time on Sunday to motor over to Oxford Marina to help Jack and Linda.

Sunday SECOND WIND (Berman) was arriving by approximately 3:00 p.m., so Ron and Phyllis, Walt and Jan motored over to Oxford to help Jack and Linda. APACHE was almost to Oxford when the VHF came alive with Jack's voice telling us he got the engine started (a tripped breaker caused all the trouble) and TREE HOUSE was on the way to Tripp Creek.

APACHE went to Campbell's fuel dock (diesel \$2.12, slips \$1.50/ft.) and we motored back to anchor in Tripp Creek.

Soon the rest of the fleet started joining the APACHE raft. BRIGADOON remained anchored where she was and with Ron's taxi service, brought Walt and Jan to the raft-up. BLUE HORIZON (Schreider), SECOND WIND (Berman), TREE HOUSE (Dunnigan), WIND SPIRIT (Brener/Martin), APACHE (Hill), BRIGADOON (Rupp)—6 Catalina 34's had their picture taken for The Dockline. An unequalled feast was shared by all and the wine flowed (at times literally and liberally). A good time was had by all.

Monday BRIGADOON departed Tripp Creek at 6:03 a.m. and docked at our marina at 1:00 p.m. As we departed the creek 5 Catalina 34's were still rafted and we saw no one on deck. The Bay was as windless for our cruise home on Monday as it was for our cruise up to Oxford on Saturday.

In all the years Walt and I have sailed the Chesapeake Bay we have never seen an LNG ship at the Cove Point LNG platform. Monday when we cruised down the Bay from the Choptank a big ship with block letters "L N G" painted on its side resided at the platform, a red Coast Guard inflatable sporting an automatic weapon guarded the ship and 3 tug boats were anchored at the south end of the platform. The platform is long enough to accommodate at least 3 L N G ships. One-a-day tablets have been distributed to the residents of southern Calvert County in the event of an explosion. The atomic power plant and the LNG plant are in the same vicinity so we live under the umbrella of a potential hazard here in St. Mary's County and in Calvert County and as we sail on the Bay.

Our thanks go to everyone who made the Memorial Day Cruise a huge success during our beautiful weather.

Jan & Walt Rupp
Cruise Leaders

SAFETY

page 12

The first step in ensuring the safety of your boat is to make sure you have the proper equipment. This includes a life preserver for each person on board, a fire extinguisher, a first aid kit, and a VHF radio. You should also have a bilge pump, a fuel tank, and a battery. Make sure you have a map of the area you will be sailing in, and a compass. It is also important to have a good understanding of the rules of the road and the local regulations. You should also have a good understanding of the weather and the tides. Finally, make sure you have a good understanding of your own boat and its capabilities. This includes knowing the limits of your engine, the range of your fuel tank, and the capacity of your bilge pump. By following these steps, you can ensure the safety of your boat and your crew.



The second step in ensuring the safety of your boat is to make sure you have the proper training. This includes taking a boating safety course, which covers topics such as navigation, weather, and emergency procedures. You should also have a good understanding of the rules of the road and the local regulations. You should also have a good understanding of the weather and the tides. Finally, make sure you have a good understanding of your own boat and its capabilities. This includes knowing the limits of your engine, the range of your fuel tank, and the capacity of your bilge pump. By following these steps, you can ensure the safety of your boat and your crew.