

# Hope, Boats, and the Promise of Spring

Spring could not have come at a better time. Winters don't bring much drama here in Sarasota, Fla., but there's a chilly mood upon the land, and I'll be glad to finally be rid of it. Spring, no matter the latitude, brings with it new hope.

There is nothing quite like the first breath of May in northland, when a grey fog gives way to warm sunshine, and the promise of June suddenly becomes real. I remember well spring in my former home state of Rhode Island—cherry blossoms, red-wing blackbirds, and the faint whiff of summer when we finally shook the tarp clear of our O'Day Javelin, *Misty*.

There is a reason why we're alive, and spring reminds me of that. I don't pretend to know what it is, but I'm sure of what it's not. It's not to moan about missed chances, lament financial losses, or measure ourselves against marks set by other men.

A sailor, above all others, knows that good fortune is like the wind. Today's warm westerly will be tomorrow's nor'easter, and we must make the best of each. I can curse the foul tide at the top of my voice, but that won't make it turn. Turn it will . . . but in its own good time.

Like many people, I've spent the last few months considering what I could live without. I suppose that at some point, a sailor suddenly

finds himself with more water-line than free time, but for me, a tangible connection to the water is essential to my well-being. Floating or not, boats keep me sane.

My family's 14-foot Javelin, our in-between-boats boat, was built in 1972. Our *PS* project boat, a Catalina 22, is a 1974 model. Through some miracle of science, they are going strong, though neither are much to look at right now. We're trying different LPU paints on the Catalina. The Javelin could use paint, too, but it's a test platform for acrylic coatings, so I'm stuck with topsides of varying shades of blue for the next year or so. And that is just fine by me.

Spring also brings with it the reminder of how fortunate we are. I've got plenty to be thankful for these days. Thanks to your support, we've been able to greatly improve our independent testing program and reporting. The switch to color in 2006 added a much-needed visual dimension. Recently, we made it easier for subscribers to download electronic versions of current articles from our website, [www.practical-sailor.com](http://www.practical-sailor.com). As we have for 35 years, we stand alone as the most trusted source of information on boats and gear for sailors.

This month, you'll notice, we've reefed down to 32 pages, in part to help sustain the quality of our

test programs and print coverage, but also as an essential step toward a greener *PS* with a greater online presence. When you log on as a subscriber this month, you'll notice more online resources accompanying each feature. You'll also have access to an online Safety at Sea package, located under the "Current Issue" header on the left-hand menu bar. Next month, we begin using paper that meets the highest environmental standards set by the Forest Stewardship Council ([www.fscus.org](http://www.fscus.org)).

We stand committed to packing the same quality and scope of unbiased reporting in our print pages, but we'll be expanding that coverage with special packages, surveys, more photography, and supporting articles online. These changes are part of a spring renewal here at *PS*, and I think you'll be pleased with what's in store. A big reason for this magazine's success is because the people involved with it believe in its cause. We are grateful that you do, too—this season and seasons to come.

Darrell Nicholson  
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Cover photo: "The Rack" pauses for a photo en route to its permanent home atop the *PS* workshop.

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