

MAILPORT



Photo courtesy of John Lowe

ONLINE ARCHIVES

I am a subscriber to *Practical Sailor*, but when I go to your website and ask the system for the article done five or six years ago, it wants to sell it to me.

Am I reading the data wrong; am I not to get access as part of my subscription?

John S. Lowe
Hinckley Pilot 35
Dallas, Texas

We're trying our best to provide subscribers with the most value for their money, but for now, we must continue our policy of charging everyone to download articles published more than two months prior. Subscribers get a discounted rate on these archive articles, available at www.practical-sailor.com, and all subscribers have full access to this month's issue and the previous month's issue, as well as to other subscriber-only online content. Readers who register online get e-mail notifications, along with issue highlights, when each new issue is posted online. We encourage readers to download and save the articles (features are now available in PDF format) as soon as they become available. We recognize the value of having access to archive tests and are working to expand subscriber access.

To search by keyword, use the "SEARCH" button on the homepage. If you know the date of publication, the "Back Issues" button will work. An annual index of articles is published every December, and this month, there's an abbreviated index on page 31. For help logging on or finding a back article online, contact customer service (800/424-7887 or customer_service@belvoir.com).



John Lowe's newly purchased Hinckley Pilot 35 chomps at the bit in Maine, waiting for its new owner to turn it loose from its storage shed.

GLASSES TREATMENT

Regarding a reader's request for advice on keeping sunglasses clean (Mailport, April 2009), I've had good luck using Rain-X (www.rainx.com). It doesn't eliminate the salt buildup, but the spots are more uniform and easier to see through. I use it on cheap drugstore glasses, the kind I don't mind stepping on or losing.

Kim Hamilton
McGregor Venture 17
Los Gatos, Calif.

Many of the sunglasses reviewed this month touted hydrophobic coatings, but testers did not notice much difference when the saltwater really started flying. Rain-X is meant for windshields, and most sunglass makers do not recommend it on glasses, particularly those with plastic lenses. But we won't argue with what works!

LED CABIN LIGHTS

I read with great interest your February 2009 article "LED Light Bulb Shootout." I am about to buy several-hundred dollars worth of LED lamps, so I studied the article thoroughly. The narrative speaks well of the Dr.LED 3-watt lamp, and then without further discussion dismisses it because it "protruded from the fixture

and drew more amps." Does it matter if it protruded?

Jack Wilkinson
s/v *Pashka*, Island Packet 38
League City, Texas

The Dr.LED 3-watt element reviewed in the article was bright, but not suitable for the bulkhead reading lamp fixture used in the test. Because it sticks out from the lamp bell, it does not get the full benefit of the reflector. Furthermore, it is simply too heavy to seat securely in the tiny G-16 sockets. The light is available in other socket types (an Edison screw bulb

PRACTICAL SAILOR ONLINE

Our reader survey on favorite do-it-yourself boat yards will remain online at www.practical-sailor.com for another 30 days. Be sure to rate the best yard in your area. You don't have to be a subscriber to participate. A link to the survey is posted at the top of the homepage, and we hope that readers will share their views on this topic. Readers are also encouraged to check out some classic tests, DIY tips, and special reports resurrected from the archives in our "Tools and Techniques" section.



Midnight Rider's do-it-yourself freshwater flusher cuts down on head odors.

among them), and we presume these would stay put better. Look for our LED navigation light test in an upcoming issue.

CHECK OUT THE S.2

I have another suggestion for reader Al Otman of Minnesota, who wanted an easily rigged trailerable 20- to 26-foot boat, with a preference for one that is fast. I would recommend either the 22-foot S2 6.9 or the 26-foot S2 7.9. Both have lifting, daggerboard-style keels, with the benefits that they are easy to launch, and sit low on the trailer (much easier to board the boat while it's on the trailer). The keel has a high-aspect ratio that makes the boat very close winded, and much, much faster than any of the other recommendations. They are well constructed. Two able people can step the mast on my 6.9, or if a tabernacle

were rigged, one person could do it.

Since it was made in the midwest, I'll bet there are some out there.

Mark Helder
Sebago Lake, Maine

Thanks for the suggestion. The list of reader suggestions, along with those for strongly built, "tough" cruising boats, will be posted online in the near future.

A PROPER FRESH FLUSH

Regarding the \$300 Fresh Flush freshwater flushing system (www.freshflush.net) recently featured in the April issue, I took care of the smell problem associated with heads a long time ago and for a lot less money. At first, I used a flush bottle filled with treated water and poured it into the toilet every time we used it. Then I got

tired of filling the jug and decided to install a flush tank. Pretty easy really, just mount a tank—ours is 3 gallons—in close proximity to the head, connect the hoses and bingo, fresh water for flushing.

In the picture (at left), you will see the tank mounted just aft and to port of the shaft log on our Hunter 30. The tank inlet is connected to a fill tube, the outlet goes to the head, and a fill tube and through-hull filler mounted in the sole under the aft cabin.

We have no head smells, and I do not have to fill it so many times. Just lazy, I guess.

Doug Neureuther
Midnight Rider, Hunter 30

Both your system and the Fresh Flush are good designs in that the head fill tank is independent of the potable drinking water supply.

WATER TUNES?

I recall seeing in a past issue a hard, clear plastic case for an MP3 player. It may have also included speakers. I thought it was waterproof, but we don't intend to get water in the cabin anyway. It would be ideal to have a unit that would include everything I needed to run my Sony Walkman MP3 player.

Walt Wyatt
Precision 23
Michigan City, Ind.

The search for an affordable portable marine-ready player continues. The tiny-sounding \$30 iFloat featured in the November 2006 appears to be extinct. In August 2007, we tested the Ego from Atlantic Inc. (www.atlanticego.com), which has a line of portable waterproof systems starting at \$70. We are currently testing a small \$50 multi-charge (solar, crank, DC) speaker-weather radio-AM/FM system, the Activetrax On the Go Deluxe from Seattle Sports (www.seattlesportsco.com). The \$120 i-XPS 120 Outdoor, a rugged, splash-resistant player from Hercules (www.hercules.com) looks promising, but we have not tested it. Suggestions?

WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

SUNCOR STAINLESS

We had a problem with our do-it-yourself lifelines from Suncor Stainless (www.suncormarine.com). We notified Ed Mayo of Suncor in Massachusetts last fall and he offered to come to our boat, which was in Noank, Conn., at the time, to remedy the problem. Weather and winter intervened but he came through for us with flying colors, actually replacing all the DIY fittings (which had a rusting problem which Suncor has

since rectified) with the newest version. They even replaced the pelican hooks (which I had clumsily dropped overboard while checking out the rusting situation) with no extra charge. This company goes out of its way to insure customer satisfaction and should be commended.

John Fyfe
Rights of Man,
42-foot Geiger-Whitholtz ketch
Avondale, R.I.

ACTIVE RADAR

I am installing a Raymarine Automatic Identification System (AIS) on my 35-foot Wauquiez Pretorien sailboat, but I also want to install an “active” radar target enhancer (RTE). A British product called “Sea-Me” is the most prominent player on the market. Another product, the “Activ’Echo,” a French RTE, seems to be common among the Open 60 and Open 40 classes, but they appear to be no longer in production. There does not seem to be a great deal of information on these units, although the general opinion seems to regard RTEs as substantially better than a passive radar reflector of any design. Do you have any advice on these products?

R.D. Buchanan
Fianna, Wauquiez Pretorian

We are in the process of putting together tests for a variety of AIS devices as well as these radar target enhancers. Both are relatively new devices in the cruising market. Certainly anything that enhances your visibility to other ships at sea is helpful to avoid collision. We are concerned about how some of these devices are being marketed, however. They are NOT a substitute for conventional radar, and this should never be implied in any marketing literature. AIS receivers can receive key navigation data, including course and speed, from ships equipped with AIS transceivers. (International rules require large ships to carry this equipment, but most smaller vessels, including fishing boats, are exempt.) More expensive Class A and Class B AIS transceivers can both send and receive AIS signals, so the operator can, in effect, see and be seen by ships in the area. ETRs enhance a boat's radar target to ships operating ra-

dar. However, both these systems place more reliance upon the technology and watchstanding capabilities of other ships to avoid collision. Radar, by comparison, enhances the sailor's own watchstanding ability independent of what electronic devices other ships have on board or who is operating them. In addition, radar is an excellent navigation and weather tracking tool. We were very disturbed to see a testimonial letter on the Sea-Me website, www.sea-me.com, describing a sailor who happily removed his radar system and installed an AIS unit and the Sea-Me target enhancer, implying that this was the safer choice.

Practical Sailor welcomes letters from our readers. Please include your name, home port, boat type, and boat name. Send e-mail to practicalsailor@belvoirpubs.com and mail to *Practical Sailor*, 7820 Holiday Dr. S., Suite 315, Sarasota, FL 34231.

PRODUCT NEWS**Garmin, Kidde Issue Recalls; New Windlass Service Launches**

Garmin is voluntarily recalling its 2009 version of BlueChart g2 and g2 Vision data cards. The affected data cards were sold between April 8 and June 3.

In certain waters, the data card provides inaccurate indications of the depth of the water. Specific reports of errors were noted in charts of the waters along the coasts of Sweden and Denmark, but out of caution, Garmin is calling for a global recall.

Boaters should not use BlueChart g2 or g2 Vision 2009 data cards dated March 2009 for navigation. Anyone who owns BlueChart g2 or g2 Vision v2009 will be given a replacement traditional BlueChart card or g2 Vision card v2008.5 (dated July 2008) free of charge and will also receive the 2009 card free of charge when it is re-released. Affected customers may contact their retailer or Garmin directly at 800/800-1020, via e-mail at cartography@garmin.com, or online at www.garmin.com/bluechartrecall.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER RECALL

Walter Kidde Portable Equipment, manufacturer of portable fire extinguishers, is recalling approximately 167,000 of its products made in Mexico. The recall involves the Kidde XL fire extinguishers, model numbers FX340SC, FX340H, FX340GW, XL5MR, FX210R, FX-

340SC-2, FX210W, XL2.5TCZ-4, E-340-3, with manufacture dates between October 2007 and April 2008.

If your extinguisher is one of these, you should immediately inspect the pressure gauge. If it points to the red zone, contact Kidde to receive a free replacement extinguisher. If the gauge is not in the red zone, but you have questions about an extinguisher within the listed model numbers, contact the company. Kidde representatives can be reached at 888/345-4407 or online at www.Kidde.com.

**SEATIGER WINDLASS SERVICE**

A former employee of Simpson Lawrence has set up manufacture of the complete Seatiger windlass and is now able to supply parts, as well as complete windlasses.

Although the company is based in the UK, it is able to supply customers all over the world via its website, www.slsparcs.co.uk. In production for many years, the manual Seatiger is a common sight on foredecks of U.S.-built boats.