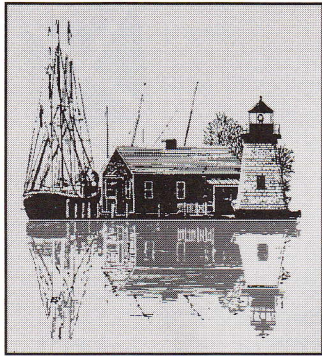


SCUTTLEBUTT

News on the Docks



CHARTS MADE OF PAPER

While sailing with a friend in South Carolina, near Georgetown, we had a cruising sailboat call us on the radio. There is some open water in this area and he said his laptop computer, which had his Waterway charts on it, had crashed. He did not have any back up charts, so he asked if he could follow us to our next stop so he could see about fixing his computer.

We drew about a foot more than he did so he followed us along to Charleston, where we had planned to spend a day with friends. We ended docking for the night. We gave Joe, our new-found friend, a ride to town the next day to get his computer repaired. Joe's wife, Jane, also asked him to get some paper charts to back up the computer software in case another crash of the computer might cause a crash of the boat ~ which would spoil the rest of their trip around to Alabama. Later that evening, after we returned from a fantastic day at the Charleston Skeet Club (and were counting our winnings from a good day of shooting), Joe invited us over for cocktails. After a few good rums, Joe gave us the details on his computer repair experience. He said something about the motherboard hard drive override. He said it was a good thing it was only that or it would have been \$1,200 instead of \$600. *What a break*, I thought to myself.

At about 2300 we all retired to get a good night's sleep for next day's journey. Joe and Jane said they were

leaving around 0600. "Well, you will be ahead of us," says I. "We plan to have a leisurely breakfast and shove off around 0830, so maybe we'll see you tomorrow night. We usually run late into the evening."

Well it wasn't late into the evening. We shoved off around 0930, heading for Savannah, and what do you know, about 12 miles south of Charleston, there was Joe's boat aground with the anchor out waiting for the tide to come in just a little more to lift them off the bar. The computer had crashed again. Joe had not bought any paper charts to back up the computer because it had cost so much to repair the computer that he did not feel justified in spending the extra \$90 for charts. Besides, he said, the computer repairman said he guaranteed the computer would not crash again. We waited for them to get off the sandbar and again they followed us.

At about 1530 some bad rain storms come through our area and the visibility dropped to 50 yards. Now we were responsible for the navigation of two boats as Joe had no idea where he was. These storms lasted, off and on, for about 1-1/2 hours. It was quite tense but we managed okay.

After we got into port and secured everything, Joe and his wife took us to supper for an excellent seafood dinner. Back at the boats, Joe asked for advice on charts. I recommended the large regulation government charts, rather than the Waterway strip charts. These are a little more expensive but give a larger scale and cover further in on each side of the Waterway. I also suggested a couple of good cruising guides on each area he was going to cruise through. With the larger charts you can find more and better anchorages further off the Waterway and out of danger from barge and commercial traffic which often travel at night. My wife told Joe and Jane

that over the last 5 years we have helped over a dozen other cruisers who were relying solely on electronics. This stuff is great, but you need an old-fashioned back-up.

On my last delivery we had three GPS receivers aboard but I still brought my old sextant and sight reduction tables just in case, but on the electronics side I also brought my portable VHF, cellular phone, and a hand-held depth finder. The last folks I helped to equip their boat spent \$300 for an anchor. For another \$300 they purchased a radio, a depth finder, and GPS, all \$99 each. Can you beat that?

Also on the same job I purchased drinking water to go to the Bahamas. It was from Arkansas and cost \$1.20 per gallon. We also purchased diesel fuel for the same trip, and it was only a dollar a gallon, and it probably came from half-way around the world. Those prices surely seen out of whack. I'm sure there are some land sharks in there somewhere when water costs more than diesel fuel.

BOTTOM SPRAY

Unfortunately, most of my friends have learned my tricks for getting them to help out in the boatyard so it's hard to get anyone to help anymore. When they call to ask if I'm going out on Saturday I just say why don't you meet me at this address; they think they're going out for a daysail so they pack a lunch. Much to their surprise the boat is out of the water and the bottom needs sanding. With much protest they usually give in and realize all the times they went sailing, and it's only fair to help me maintain the boat. Usually I get comments from the yard foreman. "How do you get all these people to help you with your boat?" I just tell him I have a little pirate in my blood.

Anyway this last trip to the boatyard I had a chance to try a new cleaner



from aqua-chem. It's for removing barnacles from the bottom. After the boat has been hauled and wash down, I let it dry and spray on the remover. I let it foam up for 10 minutes and then wash it off. It penetrates the surface and removes small muscles and the grass up on the boot stripe, which can be a big pain in the neck. The spray doesn't seem to hurt fiberglass or metal

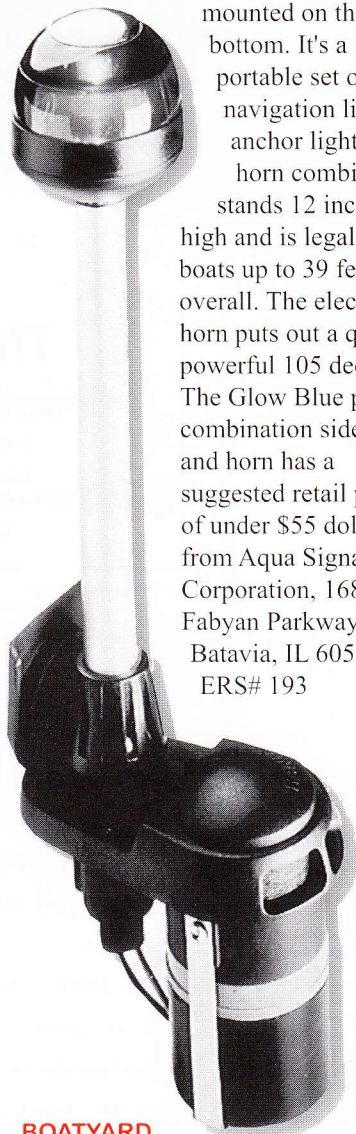


surfaces. It's also environmentally sensitive, so the tree-lovers will not get upset. You can also apply this product with a roller. The costs is about \$15 dollars per quart and \$48 per gallon. You can purchase Aqua Chem directly from Marine Group, 36 Pine Street, Rockaway, New Jersey 07866, (800) 221-4466. ERS #192

LIGHT AND HORN COMBINATION

Every year I do 5 weeks of charter-captain work for the Sea Scouts in the Florida Keys. Usually the owners donate the boats, claim a tax deduction, and do a good deed at the same time. This year, one of these donated boats was a 55-foot schooner from Maine. We took her out for a test sail and stayed overnight. We anchored in a harbor that had a nice little restaurant, so we took the launch to the dock. On the way in I noticed

the launch had a combination navigation light on top of a small shaft with an electric horn mounted on the bottom. It's a portable set of navigation lights, anchor light, and horn combined. It stands 12 inches high and is legal for boats up to 39 feet overall. The electronic horn puts out a quite powerful 105 decibels. The Glow Blue plug-in combination side light and horn has a suggested retail price of under \$55 dollars from Aqua Signal Corporation, 1680 East Fabyan Parkway, Batavia, IL 60510. ERS# 193



BOATYARD WISDOM

Due to what we refer to in the charter boat business as being broke (we prefer to think of it as limited resources), we do our own work at "do-it-yourself boatyards." The only requirement is that you purchase your bottom paint from the yard (usually at retail prices). It represents quite a savings from the regular boatyard where they do all the

work. If you're in the yard for more than a week you usually meet other sailors and cruisers from whom you can learn other ways to save money. On about the third day of this last trip to the yard, they put a 40 foot wooden sailboat next to my boat. I asked the owner if he was going to paint his top sides because they looked faded and had a powdery look to the surface. The owner of this beautiful old boat said they'd had a bid to paint the topsides for \$600. Instead, he was going to try to get one more year out of the paint by waxing the top sides. In the process of watching this operation I learned something new. He did this wax job early in the morning so the surface was cool. The product he used was from 3M Marine Corporation called Finesse-It II Finishing Material. It took off the excess paint and seemed to fill in small scratches. On the third day when they put the boat in the water the finish on the top sides was beautiful. I

asked them if they had just washed down because the topsides looked wet. He said, nope, it was the wax-job.



Finesse-It II comes in a 16 ounce bottle and costs about \$19. It's in most marine stores or you can purchase it directly from 3M Corporation, 3M Center Building, 223-6S-06, St. Paul, MN 55144.

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