

Question: Has any one come up with a solution for the hard starting problem ethanol introduces to my outboard?

Wilma, Mastic

Answer: I hear all kinds of horror stories concerning loss of power, not starting, and stalling out at any time with ethanol gas. My own outboard has been in the shop five times this season with non-starting problems after being run for a period of time. Inspecting the carburetor reveals a slime of undeterminable origin. We have replaced the rubber hoses with plastic ones and we are yet to see the results, since the weather has been uncooperative for a sail.

I do have a brand new four-stroke lawnmower that worked once and then would not start after a two week hiatus. The solution to the problem was to inject Dry Gas into the carburetor and the tank and let it stand for half a day. The engine started up easily, and I wait for the next mowing time with baited breath.

Question: Is there an advantage, one over the other, when it comes to choosing between a tabernacle-mounted or keel-stepped mast?

Richard, East Hampton

Answer: Vessels up to the mid-thirty-foot size are the ones usually considered candidates for the tabernacle installations. Over that size the masts are ordinarily too heavy to be supported with a bridge beam over a cabin bulkhead or post and a tabernacle. On vessels less than thirty feet in length, a tabernacle allows for greater ease of moving about below decks. Larger vessels have the mast above the salon, so a post is necessary under the bridge beam. The post in most, smaller vessels, though a good handhold in a blow, does restrict the movements of the crew. With the advent of composite lightweight masts, I believe that some larger boat manufacturers may elect to build with tabernacles.

As for an advantage of one over the other, the one that comes most easily to mind is the ability to drop or lower the mast when opting to sail under a bridge too low for the raised mast to clear. This can be done without the need for a gin pole or a crane to un-step the mast. Properly tuned, either will perform well for the vessel on which it is rigged.

Question: I have small winches on my twenty-two foot Catalina. My wife sails with me and she has trouble sheeting in on a tack. There is no provision for winch handles. How can I make it easier for her?

Daniel, Point Judith

Answer: The most common problem for jib sheet trimmers is to trim (haul in) after the tack has been completed. Without winch handles, there is little one can do to pull against a sail full of wind. Without self-tailing winches, it becomes almost unmanageable for one person to trim the



by *Captain Stan Glatzer*

Ethanol & Water
Stepping Masts - Sheet or Trim
Atlantic Crossing
Most Important Safety Items

sheets at this time.

A considerate Skipper (S) would tack slowly giving the trimmer the time to trim while the tack is being made and then come upwind slightly allowing the trimmer the opportunity to over trim and be able to ease the sail on the final course. Another idea is to tack quickly to prevent coming into irons and then come slightly upwind as in suggestion one. (Needless to say, if you are a racing-minded Skipper, you would not ask your wife to trim the sheets.)

Question: What was the smallest boat to cross the Atlantic Ocean?

Dana, NYC

Answer: On September 26, 1993, Hugo Vihlen, in a coffee table-sized boat of 5'4", completed a crossing of the Atlantic Ocean from Newfoundland to Falmouth, England in 105 days. His greatest concern was, having provisioned for eighty-five days, that he would run out of food and water.

The provisions were nothing like Tristan Jones, Lynn Pardey or Hal Roth would attempt to make a crossing on: 65 Ready Meals, 2 gallons of M&Ms, a gallon of dry fruit, 100 cans of Hawaiian Punch, and 34 gallons of water. Vihlen seemed to have weathered the voyage in good health. There are some people, both men and women, who perform feats that most of us only wish we could do. They are a breed with a dedication far beyond what is found in the general population.

Question: What are the three most important safety articles you recommend to have on your boat?

John, Cape May

Answer: Your question is rather vague and open-ended. Do you refer to personal safety items? Do you refer to navigational

items? Do you refer to items necessary for boat protection, as in docking, fire fighting, etc? The complete list of three items for each category would take a dissertation of some length and is a good topic for a future article. I will, however, take the opportunity to recommend three personal safety items I have continued to stress for recreational boaters, both power and sail. The basis for recommending the items that follow is one of individual experiences. No doubt many boaters never have been subjected to an incident where the use of one or more of these items was the difference between life and death. I either have been in need of one or been witness to the need of all three.

The number one item for personal safety, in agreement with the US Coastguard and all boating organizations throughout the world, is a properly fitted PFD.

You may have read or even attended lectures, (I have been to one), given by world circumnavigators who claim that they NEVER wear a PFD, saying that it produces a sub-conscious feeling of security and thus reduces their alertness to foot placement and hand holds when moving about the deck. This kind of thinking can and does result in more fatal mistakes than any other incident, according to Coast Guard statistics.

Second on my list for both power and sail operators is a properly fitted and tethered harness. There are many occasions onboard when a crewman is required to place himself/herself in a precarious position where one easily could be subjected to a fall from a height, or worse, lose one's balance and slip overboard under a rail or over a lifeline. Even just going forward in sloppy seas to tend an anchor or a loose sheet could be fraught with severe consequences. Wearing a harness at the right time allows for freedom of both hands to perform the task at hand.

*Third on the list, but not less important than the preceding two items when the need for one arises, is one that generally is overlooked by recreational boaters but never by professional seamen. I speak of a sharp, dedicated for emergency use only, serrated knife. The item can be the sheath type or capable of being opened with one hand. It should be placed in a position that allows it to be reached with either hand, should one hand or arm sustain an injury.

*NOTE: For examples of incidents where a knife was the difference between life and death see "Nautical Musings - Knife? What Knife?" in this issue.

There are items that some Skippers feel are higher on the list than those above. It is a subjective and highly personal choice. I base my choices on my experiences and boating statistics concerning loss of life.

Capt Stan

