FANSHAWE YACHT CLUB
AND SAILING SCHOOL - LONDON ONTARIO

Dockside Scuttlebutt

JUN/ JUL 2021 EDITOR: SUZANNE GOLDT VOL 21 ISSUE 3

Preparing the sailing club for opening for the 2021 season | PHOTO: R. Goldt

Look for us
www.fyc.on.ca

Newsletter submissions always welcome
Editor Sue: oldgoldt@gmail.com

From the Desk of the editor – Covid summer 2.0

Now that I am fortified with coffee, I am considering what information could be relevant to our sailors and FYC in this year+ long epidemic.

The club is now ready to open as we reach stage 1 with the necessary precautions found later in this issue. Our Commodore, Bonita Magill, will keep you apprised of the situation as it changes as well.

The public ramp for the Fanshawe CA near the dam has been open since late May and if you have been to the club, it seems the canoe and kayaking population is growing fast this summer. A **UTRCA 2021 Notice to Boaters** in this newsletter suggests the CA will limit number of boats on the water this year!!

FYC Spring Work party - successfully completed!!

As sailors, we are already aware of how important teamwork can be in sailing, one of the first things the Sail School students learn!

If you watched the Volvo racing on hydrofoils or the GT sailboat racing this spring.... you can't miss how critical teamwork is both on an off the water

.

A lapse in attention can lead to problems— Such as a failure to watch below the sail!

CASCAIS, Portugal (June 6, 2021)

It was not the start they were looking for, but 11th Hour Racing Team is back out on the water and has resumed racing in Leg 2 of The Ocean Race Europe, following an incident shortly after the IMOCA 60 fleet crossed the start line for Alicante, Spain.

Two miles after the scheduled start of the race, the Team caught the anchor line of a small motorboat with their port foil. There were no injuries onboard the motorboat and the team immediately sent a RIB alongside to ensure its safe return back to port, which it did unassisted.

That same teamwork is necessary before we even step into our boats with the organization and running of the club. I'm thinking that we each know how important our time contributed is.

Thanks to everyone for being at the work party – we are set to go....um.... when we can!

This spring's work party to open the sailing club for the season did not get underway until the last week of May to the first week of June. The work groups needed to meet the government requirement of groups of 5 or less in outdoor spaces; along with the Club's Code of Conduct and Waiver for Covid. Some groups, such as those painting the club boats, arranged separate times.

We definitely had a need for more hands than we had, Jens worked on both ramps removing unwanted vegetation and digging a trench for rainwater mostly on his own. Thanks so much for the heavy work Jens!! The heavy work of moving docks was also a tad undermanned this year. A hearty thank you to those who did come out to do the work over the last few weeks...moorings are set and boat motors overhauled (Jim and Carleen), club boats and marks were painted and launched, docks cleared with bumpers set, floating docks reconfigured along the shore, sail school boats prepared. These photos depict some situations which can't occur without your volunteer hours. Please join in whenever you can!

2021 FYC Informal Wednesday Racing has begun!!

Hello FYC sailors
The race marks are set up, so its time to put them to use.

I will start the evening racing the week of June 6.

For those that can't remember, for the last couple of years, we have used a flex-date system to allow us to get better wind conditions for our race evenings. Each Tuesday, I will be looking at the Weather Network, to see their weather prediction for Wednesday and Thursday evenings. The primary race evening is Wednesday, and only if the forecast for Wednesday is terrible, then Thursday would be the alternate evening for racing. By terrible, I mean no wind forecast (I'm not keen on just sitting out there floating around), or being faced with survival conditions. So, Tuesday evening, I will make the choice of Wednesday or Thursday for racing. I also know that when I've picked Thursday in the past, race attendance goes down, so I try not to move it.

For May, June, and July, the race initial warning ,2 or 3 beeps from the race hut, will go around 6:20 pm, so the race 5-minute warning should go at approximately 6:25, and the race start will be approximately 6:30 pm.

Into August and September, I start to move the starting sequence forward, because the evenings are getting dark early. I mention 2 or 3 beeps for the initial warning, it's been a long winter, and I can't remember if its 2 or 3 beeps.

The race course will be posted on the race hut wall facing the lake, and there is no one monitoring the starting line, looking for early starters.
For those not familiar with the starting sequence:

- 5 minutes before start – one beep
- 4 minutes before start – one beep
- 1 minute before start – one beep
- Start – one beep

I contact all those interested in coming out for these informal races by email. If I don't already have your email, or yours has changed from last year, send me an email to jb4designs@outlook.com

So, come on out. Racing is a great way to improve your sailing skills, and meet fellow sailors. No handshaking, just friendly waves - for now.

See you on the water.
Jens Biskaborn – Wayfarer W7663, Laser 20791, Opti 1404

2021 FYC Covid Protocol at FYC and stage guidelines from the London Middlesex HealthUnit

At the time of writing of this article, the Ontario Government has moved the start of Stage one to June 11.

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Vaccination rate plus key public health and health care indicators	Vaccination rate plus key public health and health care indicators	Vaccination rate plus key public health and health care indicators
60% Adults with one dose	**70%** Adults with one dose 20% Fully vaccinated	**70-80%** Adults with one dose 25% Fully vaccinated
Permit with restrictions Outdoor spaces begin reopening, limited indoor settings with restrictions	**Permit with restrictions** Open indoors with small numbers and face coverings and expand outdoors	**Permit with restrictions** Expand indoors where face coverings can't always be worn
• Outdoor social gatherings and organized public events for up to 10 people • Outdoor dining for up to 4 people per table • Essential retail capacity at 25% • Non-essential retail capacity at 15% • Religious services, rites and ceremonies indoors at 15% capacity and outdoors with capacity limited to permit physical distancing of 2 metres • Outdoor sports training (no games or practices), fitness classes and personal training up to 10 people • Day camps • Overnight camping at Ontario Parks • Outdoor horse racing and motor speedways without spectators • Outdoor pools and wading pools	• Outdoor social gatherings and organized public events for up to 25 people • Indoor social gatherings and organized public events for up to 5 people • Outdoor dining for up to 6 people per table • Essential retail capacity at 50% • Non-essential retail capacity at 25% • Larger indoor religious services, rites, or ceremonies, including wedding services and funeral services with capacity limits • Overnight camps • Personal care services where face coverings can be worn at all times • Outdoor meeting and event spaces • Outdoor amusement and water parks • Outdoor sports games, leagues and events • Outdoor cinemas, performing arts, live music events and attractions	• Larger indoor and outdoor social gatherings and organized public events • Indoor dining • Essential and non-essential retail with limited capacity • Larger indoor religious services, rites or ceremonies, including wedding services and funeral services with capacity limits • Indoor meeting and event spaces • Indoor sports and recreational facilities • Indoor seated events • Indoor attractions and cultural amenities • Casino and bingo halls • Other outdoor activities from Step 2 permitted to operate indoors

On the sailing club website, www.fyc.on.ca, you will find the documents for Covid Code of Conduct and the Waiver form at the top of the page. Please read these through. When you arrive at the club on the first visit, please put your signed waiver in the box provided. For all other visits, sign in in the book provided so that the club is able to trace contacts if someone should be have Covid.

Bring your hand cleanser and a mask and a spare and remember to wear the mask.

There have been two large tent shelters purchased by the club to provide more covered space for people to be able to spread out in. One is for the sail school, the other near the DM Hall (clubhouse).

Photo: Bob Magill

Being safe on the water in 2021

ED NOTES: With the large increase in kayaks, canoes and small fishing boats with the usual groups of sailors, paddlers and scullers, we need to keep safety on our mind maybe even more this year. **In the notice to boaters next page, UTRCA can limit the number of boaters on the lake this year.**

IT IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO AVOID A COLLISION

1. Always wear your P.F.D. on the water.
2. Sail powered craft have the right of way over power craft, paddle and rowing powered craft.
3. A port tack sailing vessel shall keep clear of a starboard tack vessel.
4. A windward vessel shall keep clear of a leeward vessel.
5. A vessel clear astern shall keep clear of a vessel ahead.
6. Any vessel overtaking another shall keep clear
7. A vessel tacking or gybing shall keep clear of a vessel on a tack.
8. Children on the shoreline, docks or ramps should be wearing lifejackets.
9. Leave room for boats to launch when tying to the docks near rams.

Common sense goes a long way toward maintaining a safe environment.

Don't assume that the other boater is aware of the rules of the road on water!

Club Steward Bob Magill tends to the sail club lands this spring!
Photo: Gerry Triesman, our new Membership Chair

UTRCA NOTICE TO BOATERS
Spring 2021

Are you considering buying a 2021 Season Boat Pass for Fanshawe, Pittock or Wildwood Reservoir?

PLEASE READ THIS FIRST.

UTRCA Dams & Reservoirs – what are they for?

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) operates three large dams and reservoirs.

Fanshawe Dam and Reservoir:

- Reduces flood damages downstream, mainly within the City of London.

Wildwood and Pittock Dams and Reservoirs:

- Assist in reducing flood damages in downstream communities, and
- Support downstream water quality and aquatic habitat by supplementing water flows during the dry summer and fall months.

How are Wildwood and Pittock Reservoirs operated?

In the late winter/early spring, Pittock and Wildwood Reservoirs are filled by storing runoff from snowmelt and winter/spring rains. The stored water is then gradually released to supplement downstream flows, usually beginning in mid to late June.

Over the course of the summer and fall, these two reservoirs are gradually drawn down as water is released. As a result, areas where boating is possible in the spring and early summer are not accessible in the late summer and fall due to the lower water levels.

Upper Thames River watershed experiencing Low Water

On May 11, 2021 the UTRCA issued a Level 1 Low Water Advisory. The watershed received about 61% of the long term normal amount of precipitation for April, and about 46% of normal for February to April. Stream flows across the watershed are also well below normal for this time of the year.

How is the lack of rain affecting the reservoirs?

The unusually dry weather is impacting water levels at Wildwood and Pittock Reservoirs:

- **Wildwood Reservoir** - still about one metre below its summer target elevation due to the lack of runoff.
- **Pittock Reservoir** - currently full and UTRCA water management staff hope to maintain that level until mid-June, when reservoir draw down typically begins to augment flows downstream.

How does this impact boating for the 2021 season?

Without significant additional rain, we anticipate a shorter than usual boating season. Conservation area staff will be required to introduce operational changes throughout the season to ensure the safety of reservoir users as water levels decrease. These changes may include:

- expanding no wake zones,
- implementing full no wake reservoir acti
- limiting reservoir boating capacity,
- motor size restrictions (FCA restricts moto 9.9 hp maximum all season),
- restricting motor boats altogether.

2021 road construction on Clark Road and VMP

Just letting you know that L82 construction is scheduled to close the roads in the coming days to complete the top asphalt around the new VMP and Clark roads.

Huron street will be closed from Clarke to VMP from June 2 through to and including June 7 2021

Clarke Road will be closed from Huron Street to VMP from June 9 through to and including June 14 2021.

Detours will be posted, access to the park will be open. You may need to just do a loop around.

Steve Musclow, UTRCA

FYC Position to be filled – posted June 8, 2021

As you may be aware Kevin Biskaborn, in a volunteer capacity, has created a fabulous website for Fanshawe Yacht Club and Sailing School over the last 20 years. He is now stepping away from this position. However, Kevin states we may find someone with the right background, so here are the main skills required.

Writing and editing coding languages in a non-GUI environment (text editor): raw source code editing
Writing and editing object-oriented PHP code

Writing and editing queries for a MySQL database, as well maintaining it using phpMyAdmin
Writing and editing HTML, JavaScript, and CSS
Manual FTP transfers
Managing email accounts and other server settings in cPanel
Maintaining incremental backups of site files and database

Alternative suggestions from Kevin are listed below:

The future of the club's website may very well rest with a popular content management platform like WordPress that would offer many advantages to the current site, namely little requirement to understand coding languages, easier to transfer duties to another volunteer, and several technical advantages including mobile device support and automated security and functionality updates.

Also keep in mind that while "creating a new site" may sound onerous, platforms like WordPress make it easy and fast to get up and running given so much of the process is automated and already created. Many of the platforms like this are free of charge to use as well (but with some paid requirements, and the routine website expenses of hosting and domain registrations).

If the club does eventually choose a new direction with a new member, I did mention I would be happy to assist with the graphics and photos required to make that happen.

Any member wishing to take on this challenge please send your details by email to: Bonita Magill
madam.commodore.fyc@gmail.com

ED NOTE: FYC needs your help and ideas.

The communications at the club changed considerably over the years from a paper copy newsletter and phone committee to the present system involving Kevin Biskaborn (and Riley McClusky on the Facebook page), Mark Cole and I:

*1.**The FYC website** surpasses the sites of almost all other sail clubs large or small online in its design and functionality, all because of the time and creative skill of Kevin*

*2. **A Facebook page** which I am sure will continue, that provides a venue for members to interact with one another. I understand Kevin and Riley worked on this.*

*3. **The FYC secure email list** managed by Mark Cole. This position maintains the emailing information of members and has runs securely behind the club website with a very good record of no security breaches or scams. Most important for Member only information in the club including security and safety issues.*

*4. **The Dockside Scuttlebutt newsletter** that I post every 2 months that highlights the events in the club both social and racing, accomplishments of the members (Cruise blogs for one) photos of the events and physical changes in the club over seasons and time, meetings, and general sailing information such as techniques, equipment, safety information, trends in sailing, writing by the members from poems to stories and so on.*

Currently, I view the newsletter as perhaps an archival document of club events, changes, changes in sailing in general and, member's accomplishments and it is sent to the UWO archives

for FYC. For today's club, it lacks the right now information we want.

A blog on our new website could provide

- *all the information for events and racing along with a report on the event afterwards*
- *post member's stories or donations and such*
- *participation in events that are prepared to market the club and sailing*
- *Anything that presents a positive view of the club that would maybe interest potential new members.*

There will need to be considerations of our Communications policies as these changes take place to ensure security of members information and the nature of posts permitted on al these online sites both by the club and the public.

With our past newsletters that were only read by members, there were discussions of contentious issues. I have not continued that as our newsletter became more public although we did talk about opinion columns.

Any thoughts?

2021 FYC Events, Racing and Meetings

A tentative calendar events follows but this is all subject to change depending on lock ups, openings, lockdowns, openings .... oops.... did I say Lock ups? Hmmmmm.

You will receive emails about events as they are organized with all the information you need to be a participant or even help with the event. Stay tuned to the FYC email!!!

The one go is the **Wednesday racing** which was described earlier in this issue. A wonderful chance to see other sailors on the lake for an informal race and some dockside sailing chatter! The June Bug Regatta could not be held but the other 4 regattas could be a go.

2021 FYC – the Dream!
A tentative Calendar

UPCOMING EVENTS

July		
Mon	Jul 5	Board of Directors Meeting 7 - 9 PM
August		
Sat	Aug 28	Club Championship Regatta 8:30 AM - 4 PM
		Annual Corn Roast 5 - 8:30 PM
Sun	Aug 29	Club Championship Regatta 8:30 AM - 4 PM
September		
Sat	Sep 4	Plywood Classic Regatta 10 AM - 4 PM
Mon	Sep 13	Board of Directors Meeting 7 - 9 PM
Sun	Sep 19	Commodore's Cup 10 AM - 4 PM
October		
Sat	Oct 2	Pumpkin Regatta 9 AM - 4 PM – Day 1
Sun	Oct 3	Pumpkin Regatta 9 AM - 4 PM – Day 2
Mon	Oct 4	Board of Directors Meeting 7 - 9 PM
Sat	Oct 16	Work Party: Fall #1 8:30 AM - 4 PM
Sun	**Oct 17**	**Fanshawe Pittock and Wildwood CAs Close**
November		
Mon	Nov 1	Board of Directors Meeting 7 - 9 PM
Sat	Nov 6	64th Annual Banquet 5 - 10:30 PM
December		
Mon	Dec 6	Board of Directors Meeting 7 - 9 PM

Check the water level at FYC from your home!

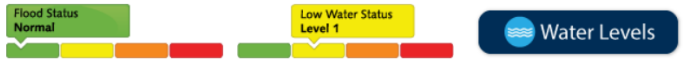
Here are the simple directions to find out if the water is over the dock after a storm. If the heaviest rainfall is north and east of the city the resevoir may fill rapidly. It may also take a few days for the head of water to move downstream so it can coninue to rise for a time.

If the level as indicated is over the top of our main dock, you should check your boat if it is on a mooring or along the shoreline to be sure it's secured propery. Years ago when Rick and I had a 470 on a shoreline finger dock at FYC; Fanshawe Lake rose to

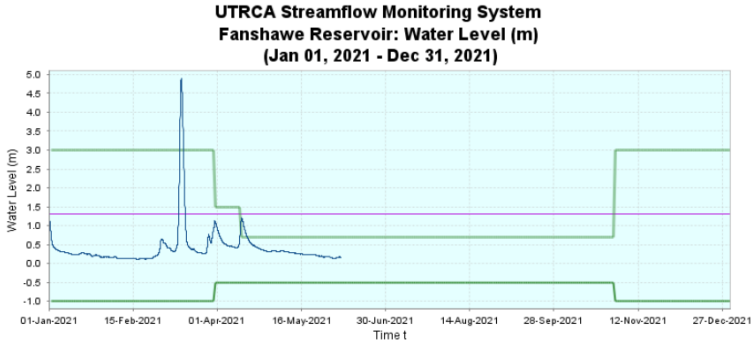
one of its highst levels following heavy rains for a time. Our nieghbour's boat when we checked was tangled in a branch of a tree over his dock. Would have been an interesting sight when the water came down later!

How to check:

1. Go to the UTRCA website at www.thamesriver.on.ca
2. Click on water level on the line depicted there and then I agree to the statement



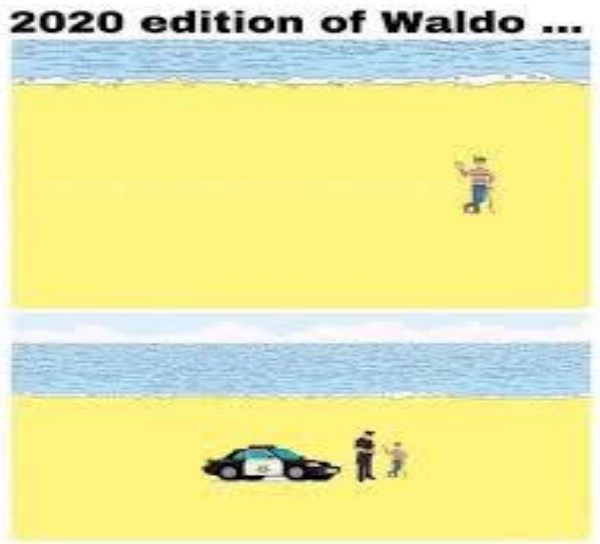
3. On the right under river levels select reservoir levels
4. Scroll down to the graph of Fanshawe Reservoir



5. At 0.7 m the water will at the top of the main dock

UR challenge section!

Can you find Waldo?



Information from the UTRCA

Low water levels currently- Media release

May 28, 2021 – On May 11, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) issued a **media release** indicating that the watershed is experiencing **Level 1 Low Water conditions**, according to the UTR Low Water Response Team. The Level 1 advisory is part of a three-tiered system used in Ontario to inform the public of local low water conditions.

The watershed received an average of 51 mm of precipitation in April, which is about 61% of the long term normal for that month. Precipitation from February to April was only 46% of normal for that time period.

Stream flows across the watershed are also below normal for this time of the year, and that's affecting water levels in some UTRCA reservoirs. The Conservation Authority maintains three large reservoirs and several smaller ones across the watershed. Two of the large reservoirs – Pittock and Wildwood – provide flow augmentation in the summer as well as flood control year-round.

"We hold back some of the spring runoff to raise the reservoirs to their target summer elevations," said Mark. "This year, **Wildwood Reservoir** is still about one metre below its target summer level, but we've been able to fill Pittock Reservoir and hopefully we can maintain it at that elevation until mid-June when we begin to release water and augment flows downstream."

Two small recreational reservoirs that are lowered in the fall and filled in the spring are RT Orr Reservoir in Stratford and Mitchell Reservoir in Mitchell. RT Orr Reservoir was filled earlier this season and reached its target summer level. **Mitchell Reservoir** is usually filled a couple weeks after Orr and has yet to be filled due to the dry conditions.

The UTRCA has 28 monitoring wells that measure groundwater levels continuously, as part of the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network. Data from these wells indicates that groundwater levels were lower at the end of 2020 and continue to be below normal this spring due to the lack of precipitation.

Ontario Low Water Response Levels*

*The Ontario Low Water Response report was developed by the Province, municipalities and Conservation Authorities. The report defines drought and low water and describes the means of measuring and quantifying drought and the conditions leading up to it. Three drought condition levels are described: Level I (warning), Level II (conservation) and Level III (restrictions). The report also identifies precipitation and streamflow indicators used to determine the level for watersheds.

Level 1 Bulletins

Issued when stream flows are approximately 70% of their normal flow or the watershed's precipitation for one month falls below 80% of average. Level 1 bulletins also report general conditions of the watershed, and ask the public to voluntarily reduce water consumption by 10%.

Level 2 Bulletins

Issued when stream flows are approximately 50% of their normal summer flow or the watershed's precipitation for one month falls below 60% of average. Level 2 bulletins also report specific drought related concerns and ask all holders of Permits to Take Water and the general public to voluntarily reduce water consumption by 20%. Municipalities may implement or increase restrictions on non-essential water use.

Level 3 Bulletins

Issued when stream flows are approximately 30% of their normal summer flow or the watershed's precipitation for one month falls below 40% of average. Level 3 bulletins also report the potential for significant harm to the ecosystem and economic harm to water takers. Municipalities may implement or increase restrictions on non-essential water use.

Getting your money's worth when purchasing a boating pass

Getting your money's worth when purchasing a boating pass

It is important that you recognize and understand the impact that the low water will have on boating this season, before you purchase a boating pass. Refunds will not be issued in the event of a shorter boating season; however, our fee schedule provides options for you to consider based on your anticipated usage.

WATERCRAFT FEES*	NO HST	HST INCLUDED
Motor/Sail Boat Day Pass*	$13.27	$15.00
Motor/Sail Boat Season Pass*	$106.19	$120.00

* Vehicle admission not included

Seasonal Boat Pass

A 2021 season boat pass is $120 (vehicle pass is extra). If you plan to visit our reservoirs more than 8 times this season, this is your best investment.

Daily Boat Pass

Paying the daily rate of $15 for a boat pass (vehicle is extra) may be your best choice if you don't know how often you will visit.

Stamp Cards

Stamp Cards can be issued and stamped for Daily Vehicle and/or Motorized Boat admission. After 5 visits, your 6th visit is free.

- A filled Stamp Card may be redeemed for one Daily Vehicle admission and/or one Motorized Boat admission only.
- Stamp Cards may not be used in conjunction with any other offer or promotion and are valid for the current operating season only.
- The holder is responsible for presenting the Stamp Card upon entry and obtaining a stamp. Stamps will not be issued retroactively.
- The UTRCA is not responsible for lost or stolen Stamp Cards.
- Stamp Cards expire October 17, 2021 or while supplies last.

Wildwood Wet Dock Rental

Similar to boating activity, wet dock rentals at Wildwood CA will likely be impacted also. We expect that boats will need to be removed earlier in the season than usual due to low water. The fee schedule gives you options based on how much you believe you will use the wet dock – whether it is for the season, the month or the day. Another option is the dry dock, but space there is limited.

WET & DRY DOCK FEES*	NO HST	HST INCLUDED
Wet Dock Season*	$362.83	$410.00
Wet Dock Month*	$163.72	$185.00
Wet Dock Week	$110.62	$125.00
Wet Dock Day	$22.12	$25.00
Dry Dock Season*	$163.72	$185.00
Dry Dock Month*	$97.35	$110.00
Dry Dock Day	$13.27	$15.00

* Vehicle admission not included * Seasonal & monthly docks require a motor/sailboat seasons pass

Stay informed about COVID-19 impacts on UTRCA programs and services

- fanshaweconservationarea.ca
- pittockconservationarea.ca
- wildwoodconservationarea.ca

Cruising The Gulf Coast of Florida on a 22' Trimaran

by Carleen Hone, June 2021

In the Fall of 2014, Jim and I decided to trailer our 22' Trimaran “Raise a Little Hull” down to Florida over Christmas and New Year’s.

We had two weeks of holidays so we figured it would take 2 days to get to the Cape Haze area of Florida’s south-western Gulf Coast and 2 days to get home. So, we’d have 9-10 days to cruise with fingers crossed that the winter weather coming and going to Florida would be ok for driving.

At the time, we had a manual transmission E-150 van. I was not super comfortable driving a long load with a stick shift so poor Jim did all of the driving! I was the Navigator and Snacktician.

Thankfully, our 2-day drive down I-75 was smooth sailing and we launched at Eldred’s Marina at Cape Haze on Day 3. We parked the van and trailer there and motored our way north up the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) to an anchorage we knew about at Englewood Beach. The Gulf shore is lined with low, sandy land covered in mangroves by the shore, scrubby bushes and trees inland and the odd palm tree. Beaches are scattered here and there and are more likely to be exposed along the Gulf shore and not so much along theICW.

The thing about the ICW on the west or east coasts of Florida is that even though it may be fairly accurately charted, it can change depths without warning if a storm blows in a new sandbar or sinks vessels in the middle of the channel! The prudent sailor will keep a sharp eye on the colour of the water and if he or she spots a light spot ahead, it is best to steer clear of that shallow area...which we didn't do so we gently rubbed a sandbar just next to an ICW marker!

We enjoyed our first night at anchor yet a quick study of the wind forecast prompted us to sail south toward Cayo Costa State Park just south of Gasparilla Island. We knew of a protected anchorage there to shelter in as some strong west winds were coming. The direction and distance we sailed on this trip would be decided by the weather. We needed to make sure that we had time to see some interesting anchorages yet leave enough time to get home safely. Cruising on a schedule is a bit of a bummer sometimes!

En route to Cayo Costa, we sailed past the village of Boca Grande on Gasparilla Island. We knew this area well as we had rented vacation houses in the area several times in the past. But it was fun to see these places from the water. We knew that dolphins and bull sharks frequented Boca Grande Pass as the fishing must be good but we didn’t see any as we crossed the Pass. Nor did we see any manatee - the gentle, slow-moving “Sea Cows” who munch on seagrass in these subtropical waters. It was a big worry of mine
to hit a manatee so I tried to keep a careful eye on the water at all times.

We anchored in a small nook off of Pelican Bay at Cayo Costa State Park. The opening was about 40' so as our tri is only 18' wide when unfolded, we had enough width to easily motor through. Once inside, the nook opened into a small shallow pond 350' across. A perfect hidey hole to escape the coming strong west winds.

We kayaked to the park dock and explored the trails to the Gulf Side. Visitors can camp on the island so there is a park ferry that brings them there from Bokeelia on nearby Pine Island. Back on the boat, we watched mackerel leaping out of the water, trying to get away from whatever was chasing them in the murky water. Aside from one manatee and a few fishermen who trolled in silently, the place was deserted and quiet.

The next day was Christmas Day and the strong west winds decided our path. Staying out of the wind and high waves of the Gulf of Mexico, we sailed south down the ICW in Pine Island Sound, the protected watersbetween Pine Island and North and South Captiva Islands. We followed the many, many ICW markers to St. James City at the south end of Pine Island and looked for a local restaurant where we hoped to treat ourselves to a festive supper. But alas, it was closed for the holidays. We learned they wouldn’t open again for a couple of days, so we stayed tied up at their dock and cooked up our own wonderful Christmas meal of Barbeque Turkey breast in a bag, coleslaw and mashed sweet potatoes. Delicious! We took a short walk ashore and made sure that the water dishes for the local cats at the restaurant had some fresh water. A manatee was cruising up and down the canal. What a different way to enjoy Christmas!

The next morning, we decided to try to find some fuel. As we neared one of the many canals in St. James City, a fellow hailed us from shore. He had what looked like an F-31 on a trailer on his land. He suggested we could get fuel at a marina up the Monroe Canal so we thanked him and wove our way past charming waterside canal-side homes to the marina.

We had a little time to explore before the marina opened so we took a short walk ashore to a local convenience store for an ice cream and some milk. It was a quiet town with kind of an old Florida coastal feel to it. Everything was kind of weather beaten, and the land was low, sandy and scrubby. It was uncrowded and comfortable.

We moved on and thought we’d find a place to anchor for the night somewhere south of Fort Myers Beach. Not far from Fort Myers a few dolphins came to join us, effortlessly skimming along on our bow waves. Magical. The Fort Myers area is a popular boating area and we motored down the ICW past various crowded mooring fields next to many large fishing boats and lots of vacation homes on the waterway. Suddenly the homes and busy areas disappeared and we were into the Estero

State Preserve. We found a secluded area in the mangroves just south of Big Carlo Pass near the New Pass Bridge and dropped anchor. This area is on part of the popular paddling trail Great Calusa Blueway that meanders off of the ICW through the mangroves. Some kayakers passed us with surprised looks as it's not everyday that a green trimaran anchors there!

We enjoyed kayaking these quiet areas with so many species of birds and other animals to see. There were dolphin fishing nearby as well as Roseate Spoonbills roosting in the trees. Great Blue Herons, Little Green Herons, Night Herons, Egrets, Ibis, and even a Bald Eagle or two were all on display in these quiet areas. Osprey cried above us all day and many of the ICW markers had osprey nests on them. Florida may be known for its beaches and amusement parks, but it is these quiet waterways that make Florida special for us.

The next day the weather was fine and we called for a bridge opening at Big Carlo Pass and headed out into the Gulf of Mexico. We turned south toward Naples. We had hoped to go as far south as the beginningof the Everglades near Marco Island but the weather and our schedule, as always, dictated our course. We could only go as far as Naples. We had a lovely sail to Naples and tucked into Gordon Pass where we motored past massive canal-side homes. We continued to a blessedly quiet area to the south just off of theICW and again anchored in the mangroves. One thing to remember when anchoring in the mangroves is that the closer you are to the trees, the more the chances of mosquitoes and no-seeums grows! We had screens for our hatch and companionway that are like tulle but finer mesh. This way, the tiny no-seeums couldn't get in. Those little buggers love Jim and the mosquitoes like me! A bit of breeze helps to keep them down too if you can anchor where the trees aren't too close around you.

It was time to turn north again so once more we sailed along the Gulf shore. We stopped in at Lovers Key State Park to grab an ice cream and fix one of the nets between our main hull and the ama (pontoon). We beached the boat and pushed an anchor into the sand from the bow and one from the stern to hold her intothe oncoming waves. There is a little ice cream shack on the beach and it was great to enjoy a cool treat on a hot day. Back at the boat, some beach walkers wondered if we were in trouble and needed help! Very kind.

We carried on to just west of Fort Myers where we ducked into a canal with an undeveloped mangrove area off to one side. I found this place on Google Maps using the satellite view. Very helpful. I also had a navigation app on my phone which, at the time, was fairly new called Navionics. We still use this app as ourprimary navigation aide on a tablet and our phones if needed.

So, I have never fallen overboard in my life except once on Fanshawe Lake when my brother and I were racing our Y-Flyer (I failed to hook my feet under the hiking strap when a gust came and I hiked out...then fell out!! The next day we motored to what was listed as a "marina" on the app so we could get some ice. As we neared the dock, I waited on the port ama with the docking lines. The dock we were approaching had a line strung about waist height between two poles. I grabbed the line thinking to move the boat forward, when the line gave way and into the drink I went. I kind of flung myself to the end of the dock as I fell so I wouldn't be between the boat and the dock. I was thankful that the water was deep enough and that I didn't land on any junk by the dock. It was quite a show for the two dozen folks gathered aboard a big charter fishing boat next door! I just climbed up our boarding ladder and shouted that I needed to cool off anyway!! It turned out the "marina" was a private charter fishing marina. When Jim asked one of the members if we could buy some ice, he said "Have you got a bucket? There's a shovel in that bin of ice over there. Help yourself to my quota as I don't need it today!!!" Again, the kindness of strangers.

Provisions properly cooled, we motored away from Fort Myers Beach and out into the Gulf past Sanibel Lighthouse into the clear blue waters off of the Sanibel Island shore. There was no wind but we could see alarge pod of dolphin fishing a few hundred metres away. Jim headed toward them and cut the motor.

Drifting quietly, we could hear the "whoosh" of their inhaling and exhaling. It was quite a sight as a dozen of these clever mammals encircled schools of fish. Sadly, we had to move on. The wind began to fill in and wesailed into Captiva Pass at North Captiva Island and then over to Bokeelia at the north tip of Pine Island. Once again, we found a quiet mangrove pond to drop anchor in.

Now when I scout these places to anchor, I usually have some idea of the depth of the water. There is only a small tide in Florida and as freshwater sailors, it's pretty easy to forget that little tide. As I lowered the anchor into what we thought was to be at least 1.5 metres deep, the tip of the anchor shaft stuck out of the water!! But we were still floating!? I asked Jim how long the anchor shaft of our 22lb Bruce-style anchor was. He guessed about 18" so I told him we were in about 16" of water! We had pulled up the centreboard all the way and tilted up the rudder to enter the mangroves. Jim steered us slowly into the pond with our Tohatsu 6hp outboard. There must have been a little sandbar ahead where the anchor shaft had stuck out but the mangrove pond was too murky to see the bottom. However, we liked the quiet area and decided to stay. Sure enough, the tide soon went out and we settled into the soft muck.

Sometimes in salt water, you can hear a weird "snapping" on the outer hull. When we first heard this, we were puzzled. We later learned that microscopic shrimp blow jets of water at the hull to dislodge food thus making the odd crackling noise like Rice Krispies! We heard the tiny creatures again this afternoon and the sound was very loud!

After we settled in and screened up, we went for a paddle to Bokeelia. As we approached the inlet, a long, large dolphin came toward us fishing and passed Jim's kayak by just a few metres. How special! We enjoyed paddling by this old Florida village. It was pretty quiet. We saw an ice cream cone sign on the local store/marina building so we dragged the kayaks ashore by some old fishing boats. I literally marked "Ice Cream bars and cornets" on my chart for next time! We walked the "town" a little for more exercise but the sun was getting lower and we didn't want to return to the boat at dark. That would encourage our insect friends to visit and we didn't want the boat full of bugs!
One of the other interesting things we saw were long shallow draft fishing skiffs with a motor well in the centre of the boat. These were usually steered from a high

central steering station above the motor. One fisherman told us that it was easier to see the ever-shifting sandbars and shallows as well as signs of places to fish like birds above the water or jumping mackerel. The nets could go out of the stern of the boat and not get tangled in the prop. Very clever.

On New Year's Eve we motored and sailed across Charlotte Harbour to Gasparilla Marina in Cape Haze. We thought it might be a happening place for New Year's Eve. Because of our width, the marina had us tie up to an outside dock so I was worried about a lot of boat wake. But I needn't have been concerned as the place was pretty quiet. We enjoyed a late lunch and drinks at the marina bar then strolled around the nearby hamlet of Placida. It was a lovely balmy evening.

Back on the boat we enjoyed a barbeque dinner and settled in to enjoy celebratory drinks in the cockpit. Another lone dolphin cruised its way through the marina hunting whatever yummy fish lurk under the docks.In the distance we could hear some fireworks as darkness fell but nothing at all was happening in the marina!! We learned the next day that most folks go out to some nearby island to set off fireworks. Oh well. It was a nice night anyhow.

The next day we wove our way through the narrow channel markers out of the marina with three dolphins riding our bow waves. At Gasparilla Island, we called on the VHF radio for the Boca Grande Causeway swing bridge's next opening. The bridge tender replied that she could open the bridge in 10 minutes.

According to my chart, this particular bridge opens on the hour and every half hour during weekdays. We sadly headed to the boat ramp at Eldred's Marina nearby and got the boat ready to pack up and drive to Fort Walton Beach on the Florida Panhandle where a friend would store it until March when Jim and his friends Paul and Don would race in the 2015 Corsair Nationals.

We had a wonderful trip with great weather and lots of new places that we explored. There is nothing like cruising new areas on your own boat. Fair winds friends!

A gallery of photos from our cruise is below.






















Hydrofooooooooooooiiiiiiiiiii

WOOHOO!

So, we had the pleasure this winter and spring to watch both hydro foiling catamarans and monohulls race. The speeds are pretty amazing, and so are the mistakes made at those speeds! I have heard that the hydrofoil is now a part of more water sports such as surfing, SUP, cycling, windsurfing, kite boarding and kayaking so....






Maybe it is time for FYC to start thinking into the future and look at....yes....the foiling Opti!!! This sailor is in 5 Kn winds....he was traveling pretty fast!

SAFETY- How to stay on deck and avoid MOB

ED NOTE: this may seem a longish article but the top causes of losing sailors is not wearing their lifejacket and falling overboard. This applies to a 32-foot boat but can be adapted to our craft up to 26 feet. Really helpful if, as a number of our club members, you should wish to cruise bigger waterways.

Chris Beeson

I was sailing aboard Freelance, a Swan 43, in the 1989 Fastnet Race. We were heading north-west across the Irish Sea at night with a reef in the mainsail and the No2 jib when the wind picked up and the skipper called a sail change. Three of us went onto the foredeck, clipped on to the weather jackstay, hoisted the No3 and clawed down the No2. My feet were braced against the leeward toerail and I had an armful of sail when a wave swept the foredeck. When it cleared, I found myself half overboard. There was still slack in my tether. The only thing that stopped me from being swept off deck was the stanchion between my legs.

A sail change in a lumpy sea, at night on a wet deck is clearly not without risk, but my behaviour wasn't cavalier or gung-ho. I'd taken all the appropriate safety measures and yet it was nothing more than a stroke of luck, albeit a fairly painful one, that kept me on deck and possibly saved my life.

The incident came back to me when we reported on the death of Christopher Reddish, skipper of the 38ft racing yacht Lion. The circumstances were similar, but he wasn't as lucky. Although clipped on to the weather jackstay, he slid unnoticed under the lower lifeline, and was towed alongside at the end of his tether, where he drowned.

The question we have to ask ourselves is this: is going overboard is just one of those ever-present risks involved in sailing, or could we do things differently to improve our chances, not just of staying attached to the boat, but of staying safely on deck?

PHOTO: Reasons to go forward under way are fewer now, but it's still something we need to be able to do

Fortunately, most modern cruising yachts are set up to reduce greatly the reasons to go forward under way, but some of us still reef and adjust the main outhaul from the mast, the trysail or storm jib may need rigging if you get caught out, an anchor retaining pin may fall out, or a furling line could jam. Whatever the reason, we need to be able to get forward and work safely.

In an attempt to find some answers, we looked at the deck of a 32ft cruiser, Graham Snook's Sadler 32 Pixie, and tried to think of how we could make it safer to move around on. We consulted with safety experts James Hall and Ash Holmes from Spinlock and looked for ways to minimise the risk to crew working on deck. Here we share our findings for this particular boat. It's quite possible that these won't translate

directly to the deck of your boat but the principles underlying each of the changes and suggestions can be interpreted in a way that does.

It's important to realise that, while safety equipment is regulated by ISO12401, safety itself is not. For example, the ISO standard specifies that a tether must be 2m (6ft 6in) or less. In fact – and as we will show – that is dangerously long for the boats that most of us sail and will not keep you on board. The reality is that the safety of boat and crew is entirely the skipper's affair. It involves assessing the risk presented by the prevailing and forecast conditions, specifically the ability of boat, skipper and crew to handle them, and acting to reduce that risk, whatever that may entail. It means rejecting conventions and using inventions that you feel ensure safety. Some measures may present other risks, and it's up to you to judge whether the reduction of one greater risk justifies the increase of a lesser one. You've much to think about.

Drowning at the end of a tether

PHOTO: Christopher Reddish slipped off the foredeck and under the lifelines while tethered to jackstays on the 38ft racer Lion

The Reflex 38 Lion was taking part in a race from Cowes to Cherbourg in 2011. Force 7-9 winds and 3-3.5m seas were forecast. After a sail change, skipper Christopher Reddish was on the foredeck to free a changed foresail snagged on a cleat, before taking it aft.

He was clipped onto the windward jackstay on a 1.8m (5ft 11in) tether. Moments later a lifejacket's strobe light flashed through the foot of the jib and the alarm was raised. He was recovered 16 minutes later but no signs of life were found.

The MAIB report found that recovery was hampered by the conditions, by the fact that no second-in-command had been named, hindering communications, because some crew had missed the man overboard (MOB) drill six weeks earlier, and because recovery of a tethered MOB was not routinely covered by RYA training courses.

What is wrong with the current set-up?

PHOTO: Even on the tether's shortest leg, a sudden lurch could easily pitch me over the side. It's obvious that jackstays are rigged too far outboard

Put simply, the problem is that people wearing harnesses with tethers clipped onto jackstays are still going overboard. As I found in the Irish Sea, you can do everything right, take all the standard precautions, and still end up over the side. The standard precautions aren't up to the job.

If a tether is to work properly, it needs to pull taut while you are still inside the lifelines to prevent you falling over the side. If it doesn't do that, one could argue, in the light of MAIB's Lion report, that you're safer arming your lifejacket with an AIS beacon and not using a tether at all – at least you could argue that, if getting a crew member back on board was not so unbelievably difficult, even in benign conditions. A PLB will attract rescue services but the situation simply should not be getting to that stage.

PHOTO: I'm almost overboard and the 1.8m tether is still uselessly slack

Another problem is that jackstays are rigged too far outboard. If you take one thing and one thing only from this article, let it be this: rigged along the sidedecks, as they are on most cruisers, jackstays aren't safe. They are too close to the lifelines and that means you can be pitched overboard. The weather may be bad, it may be dark, the boat may take an unexpected lurch on a lumpy sea, and you're over the side, be it windward or leeward. That's all it takes.

PHOTO: To stop being washed aft, Volvo Ocean Race boats sewed loops onto jackstays and clipped onto those

Another drawback of the jackstay as we know it is that there is nothing holding you in place. If you are working at the mast, say, using both hands to put in a reef, and a wave crashes over the windward side, you could have your feet swept from under you and find yourself washed down the deck and out of the scuppers. The Volvo Ocean Race boats suffered a similar problem, in that crew could be washed down the deck and smashed into deck gear. Indeed, several injuries were inflicted in this way.

Lateral thinking

Their solution was to sew loops onto the jackstay at the point where crew would be working. They emerge clipped on, head to their station, then clip onto the loop. If a wave swept the deck, they would be pulled up within the length of their tether rather than the length of the jackstay.

One final point, obvious but often overlooked, is grip. Many MOBs result from lost footing. You need to make sure that, when you plant your feet on the deck, they stay put while you work. The deck will be wet, it will be lurching but, as long as you don't slip, you stand a decent chance of keeping your balance and staying on deck.

What's the best way to rig jackstays?

PHOTO: A weak anchor point renders your jackstay worthless. Use chunky shackles and properly installed deck strongpoints for jackstay terminals

We have looked at rigging jackstays in many previous articles. Terminals must be proper strongpoints, through-bolted with backing plates, deck cleats or shackles of a decent size on the toerail. The jackstay is only as strong as the fastening.

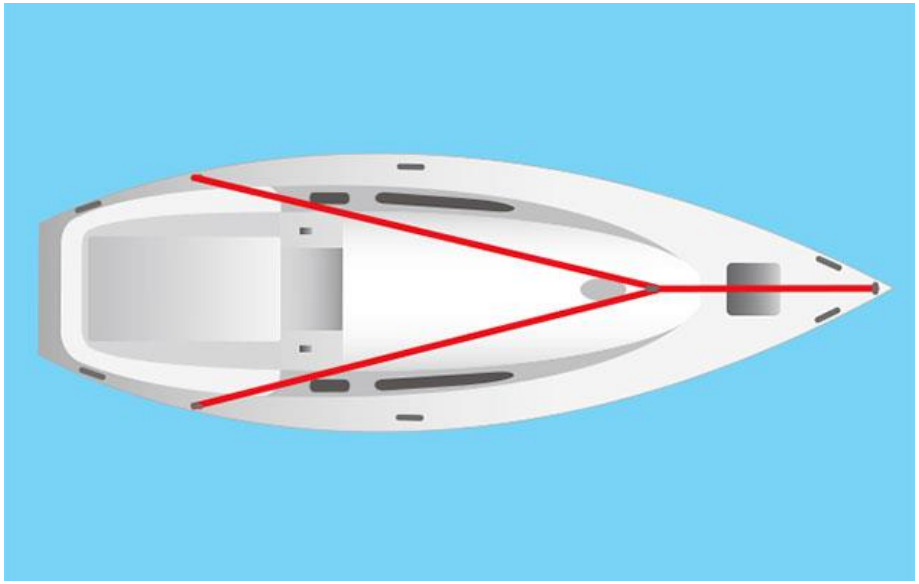
Dyneema is OK but make sure it's at least 5mm (breaking strain 1.9 tonnes), bearing in mind that a webbing tether has a safe working load of at least two tonnes. Either buy or make Dyneema soft shackles, or use several loops and plenty of half hitches to secure the tether to the strong point. Don't forget that, when you leave your boat, webbing jackstays need to be stowed below, out of the sun. This may lead you to conclude that, unless you have soft shackles, Dyneema is possibly not the most convenient fastening.

Clearly the conventional method of rigging jackstays is less than ideal. We sat down to think about a safer way of rigging jackstays. First, we looked at the 'perfect' jackstay:

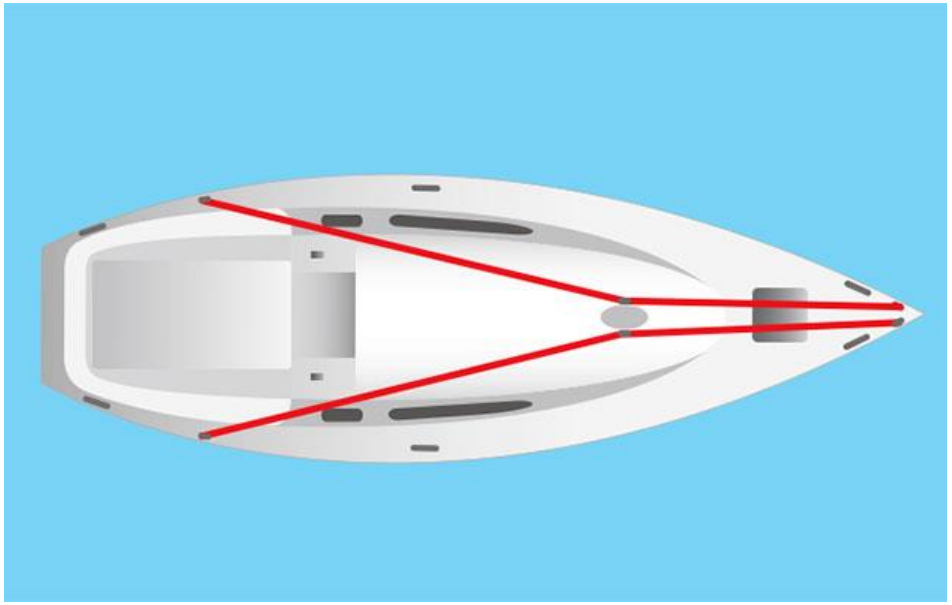
- You must be able to clip onto the jackstay from the cockpit
- The jackstay must run as close to the centreline as possible
- It must run the whole length of the deck
- It must be as tight as possible

The safest orientation we found was one that can be used on yachts with mainsheet arches towards the back of the cockpit. The jackstay would run from the centre of the arch forward to the mast base, with a second jackstay running along the centerline to the bow. Legend Yachts aside, we couldn't think of any other suitable marque. Some brands, like Malö and more recent Bénéteau Oceanis models, have arches but they are forward in the cockpit. Others, like Ovni and Allures, have arches well aft, but the jackstay would foul the coachroof mainsheeting.

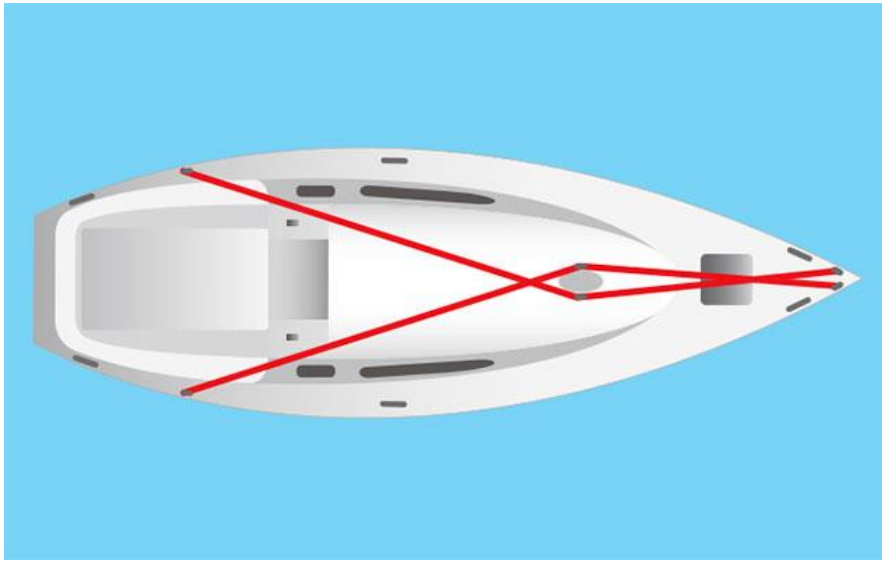
A centreline jackstay works on few boats



Most of us will need a Y-shaped configuration adapted to fit our particular deck setup



This arrangement may suit boats with halyard exits in the mast



With halyard exits at the mast base, this could work

Then we came up with a variety of alternative configurations, all of which boiled down to a Y-shape. The aft terminals are outside the cockpit and run forward, over the running rigging, to a strongpoint at the mast, or cow-hitched around it. This allows crew to move along the side deck using a shorter tether, which will pull up before you're outside the lifelines.

PHOTO: Using the Y configuration, the short tether stops us inside the lifelines, which is what we need

On the foredeck, another jackstay runs along the centreline from the mast to a strongpoint forward. We have seen an orientation that uses a single jackstay, running forward to the mast then back aft down the other side. The foredeck jackstay is cow-hitched onto it and both are tightened using a Dyneema purchase at the bow. I would prefer three separate jackstays, port aft, starboard aft and foredeck, as this will limit stretch, but you need a good spread of strongpoints.

The foredeck configuration will obviously foul the forehatch emergency exit. Whether this is a risk worth taking is up to you. The foredeck jackstay should have enough slack or elevation to enable a knife-wielding
hand to emerge.

Take time to fine-tune your setup

PHOTO: A static tether at the mast, the grey Dyneema line, keeps you secure while you change from one jackstay to the other

One idea is the static tether: a length of Dyneema cow-hitched to a deck strongpoint, with a quick release snap shackle cow-hitched at the other end. These are long enough to enable you to work while standing, and brace your feet against the deck, but keep you inside the lifelines. Think about where you spent most time working on deck and rig your static tethers there.

While transferring between jackstays at the mast, the static tether, clipped on before you unclip your own tether, makes sure that you stay put. A three- clip tether can also do this job, clipped to both jackstays, forward and aft, but we liked the simplicity and security of the static tether.

PHOTO: A Dyneema loop around the mast also serves to keep you where you need to be while working

Graham Snook adapted the idea and spliced a loop of Dyneema around the mast with a quick release snap shackle cow-hitched on. This allows him to use one strop to work on both sides of the mast. However, Pixie's halyards exit at the mast base. If there were exits higher up, the Dyneema loop would need to be rigged outside the mast's running rigging to enable you to move around the mast.

Safety on the foredeck

The foredeck narrows toward the bow, bringing you closer and closer to the toerail as you move forward. Even with the shortest safety line, like a 1m (3ft) tether doubled to keep you within 0.5m (18in) of the jackstay, you could still end up over the side while working at the bow.

PHOTO: A Prusik knot attached to your harness can be slid up and down a vertical line but locks onto the line if you slip

YM reader Tony Hughes suggested clipping to a vertical line, like a spinnaker halyard or pole

uphaul, instead of jackstays. A fall arrester or a Prusik knot clipped onto your harness is used to slide up and down the vertical line to ensure you're securely attached at the same level above deck as you move forward. If crew went over the side, a line is already attached and they can be winched back aboard. I had instant visions of being towed through the sea with the boat heeled well over but we decided to try it out anyway.

PHOTO: Combined with a shorter tether on a centreline foredeck jackstay, the vertical line does add security

In early discussions with James and Ash from Spinlock, it was pointed out that, unless the Prusik knot is regularly moved down as you move forward, the vertical line may support your weight on the foredeck, reducing your grip on deck. The boat may lurch and you could lose your footing and swing outside the lifelines.

In practice, I found it worked very well, but only when combined with a tether attached to the centreline jackstay. This has all the benefits of the vertical line but keeps you inside the lifelines. Spinlock's Ash Holmes, a former sailing instructor, reminded us of the convention that you should never secure yourself to the mast as, in the event of a dismasting, you could find yourself in all sorts of trouble. It's up to you to decide whether this risk is acceptable.

Are there other ways we can help ourselves stay on board?

PHOTO: While moving around on deck, try to keep both hands free and make use of handholds

I met Steve White in Les Sables d'Olonne before the start of the 2008-09 Vendee Globe. As he talked me through his IMOCA 60 Toe in the Water, he mentioned a comment by a French colleague: 'He scuffed his boots along the deck and said "Zis deck, it will kill you!"' Happily, it didn't, as Steve addressed the issue, but it does illustrate how crucial good grip is. If you're not prepared to repaint the deck, consider grip strips in crucial places where you would expect to spend time working with both hands.

The same goes for footwear. However, attached you are to that manky pair of deck shoes or sea boots, have a good look at the sole and decide if you would trust it with your life. Think outside the box. When he was teaching, Ash from Spinlock wore tennis shoes.

PHOTO: Modern boats lack toerails so there's not a huge amount to brace your feet against. Grip strips here would help a little

Handholds and footholds are also very important, particularly when entering and leaving the cockpit. A bar around the sprayhood is very useful, likewise grip strips on the coaming. Modern boats seem to be clearing the sidedecks, which looks clean but does cut down available footholds. They're also moulding hull-deck joints rather than bolting through a toerail, which isn't good for bracing against.

Another feature fast fading into memory is netting on the foredeck lifelines. Cruisers will rarely have a changed sail bungeed to the foredeck these days but netting does provide security if you were to get sluiced to leeward by a wave while working on deck. Christopher Reddish may have received little more than a dousing and a salty story to recount had Lion been fitted with stout Dyneema netting on the foredeck lifelines instead of the bungee twine that served only to keep sails on deck.

PHOTO: A wider gate and a simple unlocking mechanism make this clip easier to use but just as secure

I sailed aboard the Prima 38 Mostly Harmless in the 2006 non-stop Round Britain and Ireland Race. We got round in 13½ days, of which, bizarrely, 12 were upwind. On the stand-by watch, we were usually clipped on at the weather rail. Whether it was fatigue, dehydration, cold or gloves, I often found it frustratingly difficult to open my tether clip, and when I did the little hook on the inside of the clip would snag the tether.

Spinlock's James brought along a larger clip sourced from a mountaineering outlet that uses palm pressure to open the lock, has no hook to snag the tether, and a wider gate. This would be easier to use if you decided to have your own tether made up.

Finally, you need a last line of defence: a knife. You may need to cut your tether if somehow you did end up overboard and faced drowning, or to cut your static tether at the helm if the boat inverted. If you were using the vertical line method on the foredeck, you would need to cut yourself free from the pole uphaul if the boat was dismasted.

Fit padeyes in critical places

PHOTO: Deck safety relies on having well-fitted strongpoints in the right places

You need padeye strongpoints just outside the companionway so you can clip on while below, at the wheel or tiller so you can stay on board in a knockdown, and at the mast to secure

jackstays and static tethers. They're not easy to fit on cored decks so consider calling in a pro to ensure absolute security.

Other behaviours that help you stay safely on board

PHOTO: A static tether with a quick release clip at the helm keeps you onboard

As skipper, you should think hard about safety when jackstays, harnesses and tethers are required. Are there enough cockpit strongpoints? Are they in the right place? If you were knocked down, is your tether too long to keep you in the cockpit? Would a short static tether serve that purpose better?

Think hard too about any situation that requires you or your crew to leave the cockpit in rough weather. Can you clip onto the jackstay while still in the cockpit? Are there handholds to help you out of the cockpit, and move forward, safely? Would grip strips help your crew work securely at the mast? What tools do you need, so that you can make sure the trip forward isn't complicated by a trip back to pick up a head torch or a forgotten tool, or sending someone else forward with the missing kit?

One more thing: if it's rough, chaps, don't dangle off the backstay or head for the leeward shrouds to have a pee. Either go below, which involves a fairly tedious amount of undressing, bucket and chuck it, or pee in the cockpit drains.

Deputy skipper

PHOTO: You and your co-skipper need to devise, test and refine a method of retrieving a real MOB. It tends to focus the mind on staying onboard

We can't get away from the fact that people will go over the side so it's worth briefly addressing the worst-case scenario here. The truth is that very few of us will practice our MOB drill this summer, never mind with a real person in the water, regardless of how important we know it to be. That means we don't know how difficult it is first to locate, then to recover an MOB. Perhaps if we did, we might take it more seriously.

It took Lion's crew of seven experienced racers 16 minutes to get Christopher Reddish back on board. The MAIB report concluded that the recovery was complicated, among other things, by the fact that not everyone was familiar with the MOB retrieval drill. Nor did they know that their chosen retrieval method wouldn't be able to lift the skipper high enough to get him over the top lifeline. The final contributory factor was that there was no co-skipper appointed, so communication became confused and things took longer than they should.

You can spend as long as you like thinking through scenarios, devising solutions and finessing ideas, but what happens if you go over the side, leaving just your panicking crew on deck, or knock yourself out leaving your crew to fumble their way through a Mayday while sailing the boat and administering first aid?

Whatever may happen, you need a shared plan. It's essential that you and your co-skipper both know and understand the plan, and have rehearsed it, because it's highly unlikely that your plan works. It will need improvement, and you won't know where to make those improvements until you put the plan into action. When it works perfectly, that gives you both vital confidence in the plan.

Graham Snook: 'I'm convinced it helps'

'After seeing it was possible for me or my crew to fall over the side using the short tether on my existing jackstays, I thought it was time to act.

The distance from my existing jack stay attachment point to forward of my babystay and back to the cockpit was 6m in total. I bought a length of Dyneema, allowing 0.5m for a splice in each end, and an extra 2m of line to make soft-shackles.

PHOTO: Splicing loops in the jackstay and making soft shackles took just 30 minutes

PHOTO: The new Dyneema jackstay is soft shackled onto the existing jackstay anchors

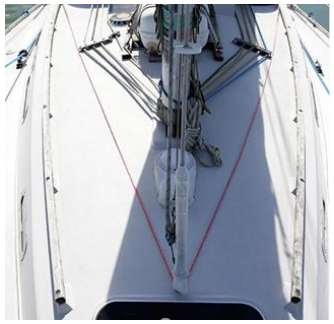


PHOTO: The new Dyneema jackstay is soft shackled onto the existing jackstay anchors

Ideally, I would have liked to buy 6mm Dyneema, but even 5mm has a breaking strain of over 1.8 tonnes. It cost £14.25 from YouBoat in Gosport and I spent 30 minutes making the shackles and adding locking splices in the end of the jackstays. So, for £15 and 30 minutes in sunshine at anchor, I've made my boat safer.'