

ALLPORT MARINE SURVEY

Quarterly Newsletter
Volume 1, Issue 2

www.marinesurveyor.com/allport/
January 16, 2008

On Owning a Boat

© By Tony Allport

In the midst of a major mechanical refit on my boat I sat wondering, “Why do I own a boat?” There may be as many answers to this as there are sailors, and for me it took some serious thought to put one into words. “Well, it must be fun,” I mused, as I stared at the sooty exhaust manifold lying across my knees, “Hmmm...I don’t know.”

Sailing makes us focus on things that matter at the moment. We do it in a separate domain that we enter by choice but never solely on our own terms. We sail on the boundary between two vast and turbulent fluids, air and water. The boat cuts into both in a sideways manifestation of the principles of flight, finding a balance between opposing forces to hold a desired course. Achieving a level of competence in managing this chaos is the key to enjoying it.

A boat is also a thing of beauty; shaped by the demands of the sea and by the hearts of men and women. A great boat represents the yearning for perfection. It is perhaps the ultimate expression of completeness; an earnest investment of dreams, skill, and resources. These qualities are palpable and can be breathtaking.



There really is no such thing as an everyman’s boat. They tend to be very specific in their qualities. From the naked truth and efficiency of a kayak, to the glittery deep-throated muscle boat, or the uncanny swiftness and balance of a sailboat, there is but one, maybe two, for each person. As a marine surveyor, I find that a boat mirrors its owner’s soul.

No matter if you sail around the world or across the bay, the experience is so focused and refreshing that you cannot help but gain perspective and be restored. It is not an escape from reality but a moment of truth. Somewhere in it all is an opportunity to grow, succeed, and wonder. That is why I own a boat.



If a man must be obsessed by something, I suppose a boat is as good as anything, perhaps a bit better than most. A small sailing craft is not only beautiful, it is seductive and full of strange promise and the hint of trouble.

E. B. White, from *The Sea and the Wind That Blows*, 1977

A Call to Action

Federal legislation currently in committee needs the support of every recreational boater in the country. It is House Bill H.R. 2550 and it will preserve our right to discharge engine cooling water, non-oily bilge water, deck-wash runoff, etc. without a permit. A recent court ruling has found that all normal operational discharges, such as those listed above, are subject to regulation by the EPA. The ruling stems from an effort to control the discharge of ballast water from international shipping, which is known to contribute to the spread of harmful invasive species. Without the exemption provided by H.R. 2550 we could be required to get permits for the routine and relatively benign discharge of water incidental to the operation of our boats. This bill preserves the ban on discharging oil and raw sewage. It simply fine-tunes a broad sweeping legal interpretation of what a regulated discharge should be. Please contact your representatives and urge them to support H.R. 2550.

Just a Reminder

If you own a class B 121.5/243 MHz EPIRB, its signal is no longer being monitored by our satellite network. The current generation EPIRB is a 406/121.5 MHz version, which is GPS enabled. Unfortunately, the new models are a lot more expensive than the old ones.

Why Survey A Boat?

The most important reason to survey your boat is for the safety of those on board. A marine survey can also save prospective buyers thousands of dollars by advising them of a vessel's true condition, possible defects, and fair market value. Most insurance companies and banks require a current survey on an older vessel in order to underwrite and/or finance it. We offer comprehensive and professional marine surveys at competitive rates. Services are available seven days a week, at your convenience. Our reports are accepted by all banks and insurance companies. If you are not fully satisfied, we will cheerfully refund the survey fee. We are ABYC Standards Accredited, and Corrosion Certified.

Tony Allport is available to address your group on marine survey and boat related topics.

Contact us at: 253-405-8324 or visit us online at www.marinesurveyor.com/allport/

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