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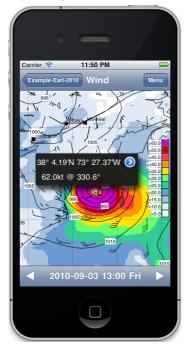
blog



Gear & Electronics

WeatherTrack's GRIB System for iPhone, iTouch and iPad makes real cruising weather conditions accessible!

If you've got an iPhone like I do (or iTouch or an iPad), Weathertrack's GRIB weather



viewer may just be the best option for you as a cruiser/navigator. Weathertrack gives you simple, accurate information on everything from wind speed and direction, currents, wave height and direction, sea temperature to barometric pressure, precipitation and severe weather detail. It even offers a Meteogram feature which gives you an easy-to-understand graphical representation of weather and trends. Weathertrack and your phone's GPS let you get a snapshot of weather in your region, so you'll know right away if it's safe to push off. You can also get a complete picture of your enroute weather (including wind, currents, etc.) and the weather conditions at your destination.

> Weathertrack makes a level of information available to the mariner (or the individual going to a picnic or the ball park!) that has not been available before without an expensive subscription (read: Sirius Weather), and this has made a big difference in how prepared you can be. **Use Weathertrack** before you ever leave

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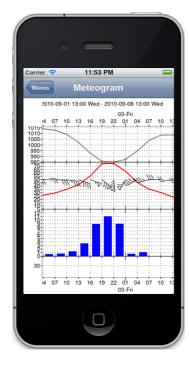
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home, and you'll

have more weather, current and wind information at your fingertips than you thought possible.

Weathertrack is available at the iTunes App Store for \$19.95. One well-planned cruise – or weather system avoided – ought to make you feel that it was worth it! Learn more at <u>www.weathertrack.us</u>.

* * * *

Bazooka Bailer Boat Hook – Hook, Bailer and Power Washer ...

I remember playing with a boat hook one sunny afternoon in the Deception Pass State Park and remarking to Lee Ann that it would be really cool if it held water so that we'd



have spare fire extinguisher aboard. I should have guessed that Taylor Made, a decided leader in marine gear, had already developed a triplepurpose device that is proficient at that and two additional tasks.

This afternoon a fellow Rosborough yacht owner in Vermont e-mailed me about the "Bazooka Bailer", pointing out that it works beautifully in bailing out a particular catch basin in the cockpits of our boats that collects water. She related her experience and told me how she'd come across the Bazooka Bailer when another Rossie owner she

had met at a rendezvous introduced it to her. She asked me to consider putting it on <u>compactyachts.com</u> because it's such a great tool, and so here I am sharing it with you. Thanks to the crew of "Cloud Nine" for recommending this unique product to all of us.

The Bazooka Bailer is a high-quality boat hook (with a locking mechanism that works better than the twist and lock styles; especially as those age), an effortless bailer and a wash down/cleaning device. It collapses to roughly half its extended length, features an anodized aluminum shaft, two foam hand holds and quality fittings and hardware. The locking mechanism automatically engages when the boat hook is fully extended, and it Yacht Charter in Turkey Luxury Vacation on a Turkish Yacht Fully Crewed with Gourmet Cuisine www.saildulcinea.com/



SkyHAWK BLUEBLOCKERS for just \$14.98 per pair!

Choose from your choice of the latest SkyHAWK styles in the Marine Store (located in the menu bar above) and own them for just \$14.98 per pair (vs. the list price of \$49.95)! We ship fast from our California headquarters and will be happy to include a FREE SkyHAWK case and SkyHAWK lanyard with your sunglasses purchase (value \$9.50).

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firmly stays in its extended position until released by the user.

The result is that the Bazooka Bailer proves to be an exceptional boat hook, and you don't have to worry about a twist-lock coming loose at a critical moment. When it's time to bail, simply put the hook end in the water to be removed and extend the Bazooka Bailer. The 8' model holds about a quart per pull. It's that easy. Last, how many times have you needed to wash off the anchor, or anchor line, or rinse off a seat, or clean footprints off the cockpit deck ... and had to pull out a hose to do so (if you have a water outlet). No more! Short wash down jobs are accomplished beautifully with the Bazooka Bailer. Water comes out at approximately 36 times the device's operating speed and has an effective range of 50 feet. Cleaning off debris and anchor sludge is a breeze, even from a distance. And, it functions well as a squirt gun in those moments where you need ... well ... a Bazooka!

Taylor Made makes two models of the Bazooka Bailer; a 5' model and an 8' model. Which one you'll choose will be depend on storage space on your boat (remember, the Bazooka Bailer *replaces* a boat hook, so additional storage is unnecessary) and how you'll use it. My bet is that anyone who uses it as a bailer, washer or 'blaster' will go for the larger (1 quart) capacity unit which is about \$10 more. The Bazooka Bailer is available at most marine stores, but I've noticed that it varies in price between the outlets. You should expect to pay between \$44 and \$61 for the 5' model, and between \$54 and \$71 for the 8' model, plus shipping.

* * * * *

AMSTEEL BLUE vs. Winch Cable

by Steve Reeves



I recently had to replace the winch on our King trailer. The Fulton 3200# 2-speed model's directional switch buckled and broke when I tried pulling the boat up to the roller after loading it onto the trailer at Brannan Island marina in the Sacramento River Delta.

In replacing the winch, I decided on another winch of the same type (best of the choices out there). I removed and sanded and painted the steel plate that the winch mounts to, and mounted the new winch with the same three bolts to the

trailer. Then I ordered a strap with a similar working strength to what had been on the old winch (figured I should get everything new, though the old strap was still serviceable) and prepared to install it. The strap seemed less substantial to me than the old one (that came on the trailer) was, and so I returned it and began looking at alternatives.

I could put a cable on the boat, oil it regularly and replace it every few years. I could order a heavier strap, adapt the winch (which is fitted from the factory to handle a cable or rope) by drilling holes in either side and fitting a bolt for the strap to mount to. Or I could think 'outside the box'.

I did the latter and, after looking at many types of heavy duty rope, came across one that bills itself as the alternative to cable. It's called Amsteel Blue, and it utilizes Dutch technology which makes it several times stronger than rope and stronger than the equivalent size of cable. It is nearly impossible to cut (requires a very sharp razor knife) and it floats! So I ordered 25 of Amsteel Blue in a 5/16 thickness, and installed it on

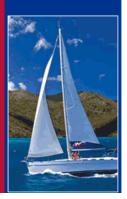
trawler that has an Atlantic crossing in her resume!

- An Excellent Portable Refrigerator/Freezer for your Yacht!
- BACK COVE 30 This luxurious lobster yacht is feature-rich, built to last generations and ready for your next adventure!
- CAFRAMO: Top-Quality Marine Fans; RARE Customer Service
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- Caledon 27 Luxurious Woods Inside, All Business Outside
- TomCat 255 A Tough, Versatile (Twin Hull) Cruising Yacht
- Albin 30 Family Cruiser 2 cabins and a legendary hull ... Made in the U.S.A. & based on the famous Swedish North Sea vessels
- Samson 28 A Rugged Cape Island Style Yacht
- Ranger Tugs R-29 Luxury On A Trailer
- "A Horrid Engine Noise, A Gorgeous Chris Craft, and A Lesson Learned ..."
- Ellis 28 Flybridge Cruiser 55+ years of boat building excellence
- "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday ..." Transmit your ID info and exact position at the push of a button in an emergency with DSC ...
- Aspen Cat C90 A Single Engine Catamaran With New Hull Technology, a Diesel Powerplant & 3 gph at 16 Knots ...



Moorings: Weltweit Segelurlaub der Extraklasse

Moorings bietet Ihnen



my winch (with a 4 section of shrink-tubing where the rope passes through the wall of the winch to be anchored the outside). Couldn't be happier with the rope's performance to date. The breaking strength of the 5/16 Amsteel Blue is 13,700#. I don't anticipate any trouble with a boat that, fully loaded is about 8000#.

I liked it so much that I ordered four lengths of 3/16 Amsteel Blue for my fenders. Overkill perhaps (breaking strength of 5400#), but I'll never worry about currents or a rough dock wearing on my fender lines! An added benefit is that you can use a much smaller thickness of line (3/16 vs. 5/8 in regular rope), leaving more room on the cleat for your docking lines, etc.

Resource: There are several places to get Amsteel Blue, but I think I found the best: Greg Kenley at Midwest Winchrope (www.midwestwinchrope.com) will cut your length(s) to order and splice loops/thimbles into the ends for you. He does top notch work, and his prices are at least as good as larger 'discount' shops. His phone number is: (573) 703-3040 and, as a bonus, he's a nice guy. Amsteel Blue is as tough as it gets and I'm glad I found it for Kokomo. You may have an interest in taking a look at the demo video (Greg's homegrown video) at: http://www.youtube.com/watch? =FcifJkhXpMM. Even if you're not looking for heavy duty, light weight winch line, it's pretty interesting.

* * * * *

Time For Trintec

by Steve Reeves



this panel.

I've known since Kokomo became ours that I wanted to put a nautical clock in the boat, but I was unprepared for the vast number of choices I'd be faced with when I began looking at models within the size range that would fit in/on her center overhead panel. I knew that we could accommodate only about a 5.5 overall size, and that I could just fit three instruments on

I looked at every imaginable configuration of clocks ... including those which have a barometer and thermometer built in. Those with all of the instruments on a single plank of wood were interesting, and I thought I'd found one that looked nice until I got a close look at it and learned a portion of the bezel on the clock was plastic (vs. brass). Wanting something that was low-maintenance and rugged in construction (like the boat, a Rosborough RF-246), I waited and looked.

In a West Marine store in Oakland, I saw a line of Weems & Plath clocks that looked like they were well built. In handling the model, I found a Canadian maple leaf on the rear of the box, and thought to myself that it would be kind-of-nice to honor the lineage of the vessel (she's built in Nova Scotia) with a clock that was also Canadian.

So I came home and did some online research and found the company that built the



Weems & Plath models I'd seen. And I visited their website, which featured a nice selection of nautical clocks ... built right ... with five year warranties. I found an online dealer (OK, it was on eBay!) that offered the models I wanted, and ordered one each of the Coast Line tidal clock, thermometer and barometer. These were to be my Christmas gift from my wife ... perfect!

I installed them this week and couldn't be happier with the Trintec instruments. They

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seem to fit the boat perfectly and the price – which included all four of the instruments I want on the boat (the clock has a tidal clock built in) – was less than one of the fancy brass clocks I was looking at before.

* * * * *

Is your DITCH BAG ready for anything?

by Steve Reeves



If you've been boating for any time at all, you've heard the warning "Don't forget to have an up-to-date ditch bag onboard!" over and over ... and now let me say it again: before fancy toys and other expensive onboard luxuries, a ditch bag (also called an "Abandon Ship Bag") is critical.

For some reason, owners of smaller boats often think they don't need this vital item (I'd say it should be mandatory, if that didn't require another law) but the end result of an emergency can be either

manageable or disasterous based on whether it's available. If you don't have one, the following may be helpful to you in assembling this key item in your emergency gear (which I recommend you do BEFORE you take your boat out again). If you do have a ditch bag, this list may help you update it.

Use a bag that is designed for *marine* use. I've seen dry bags of all sorts used successfully for this. The bottom line is that your Abandon Ship, or ditch bag should (1) have ample positive flotation (dedicated ditch bags have flotation material sewn in, but sealed air-filled gear bags inside can achieve the same thing), (2) be waterproof (not simply water resistant, which means "splash proof"), (3) be large enough to carry all of your emergency gear, (4) be labeled and stowable, (5) have the right sort of reinforced grab handles, and (5) be light, bright-colored or feature reflective material that can be easily seen at night, presumably with a flashlight. A number of ditch bags are made by marine gear manufacturers, and they're reasonable in price and ideal for careful, safe stowage of your emergency gear.

The contents of your ditch bag will have a lot to do with where and what climate you're cruising in, but there are some critical items that are universal in their place in your emergency stores. They are divided into two categories: "Rescue" and "Survival" items. We recommend you carry some version of all of these in your bag.



Rescue items should include (1) a registered, functioning E.P.I.R.B. (Electronic Position Indicating Radio Beacon) with a current battery certification. I wrote an article 10+ years ago about preparing your ditch bag, and didn't feel right about including this expensive item in it, but prices have come down (you can buy the McMurdo 210 for \$249 or less) and we're living in an ever-more-electronic world that has more and more capacity for locating you via a device like this, whether hiking in the mountains, snow skiing or at sea, (2) a hand-held VHF radio that is either waterproof or in a waterproof enclosure, (3) a variety of flares

and smoke signals (both hand held and aerial – with parachutes – flares) (4) strobe light, (5) whistles (I recommend a loud one, like the storm whistles sold in marine stores; don't rely on the one that came with your PFD), (6) a signal mirror, (7) two waterproof flashlights with spare batteries and (8) a handheld GPS with current, applicable charts (and spare batteries). Survival items should include (1) water in individual packets (available through your marine store) or in sturdy jugs; take at least twice what you think you'd use in a worst case scenario, (2) a water making device, like a solar still or, if you can afford it, a hand-pump desalinating water maker, (3) food; packaged or canned (see the survival section at your marine store) (4) a sturdy can opener, (4) a well-equipped first aid kit and splinting material, (5) a quality all-purpose tool with a knife, (6) a patch kit and pump for your dinghy or life raft, (7) critical prescriptions/medications and spare prescription glasses (suggest you have second set in the ditch bag), (8) lightweight blankets, or solar blankets, for warmth, (9) basic fishing gear (line, hooks, cleaning gear, etc.), (10) sunscreen, (11) a sturdy bailer, (12) binoculars, (13) sunglasses, and (14) a broad brimmed hat.



Columbia Compact Ditch Bag

With this level of preparation, you and your passengers will only need life jackets and outerwear if you need to abandon ship quickly. If you have time (remember, the safest place for you is on your boat, even if it is filling with water; deploy the well-lashed life boat/dinghy and tie your ditch bag into it; wait until you can't wait anymore to abandon ship) and dependent upon the safety of doing so, I suggest you gather additional water jugs, the ship's flares, documentation (including passports) that may be need when you reach shore, additional food, etc.

Remember, the preparation of the ship's ditch bag "is critical when it becomes critical" ... you won't have that "sinking" feeling that you've left some important piece of emergency gear behind if you attend to it now and inspect it annually and before each long voyage.

* * * * *

ZF 2800 Drive For Smaller Yachts

Have you been aboard one of the big yachts and admired the joystick docking control at the helm? Wish you could put the efficient drive, joystick control and positioning control on your smaller vessel? Well, if you have a repower in mind, ZF of Italy (one the leaders in the manufacture of these systems) has the product you've been looking for.



The new 2800 series from ZF Pods fits boats with horsepower up to 450, and is ideal for yachts 30 to 48 feet in length. The revolutionary system reportedly gives up to a 15% better cruise speed and a 15% higher top speed. ZF says that this translates into a fuel efficiency enhancement of 30%.

The system (which is mounted vertically through the floor/hull) consists of a transmission, steering unit, and counter rotating propellers governed by an

electronic control system (called the SmartCommand System by ZF). The joystick is part of the JMS (Joystick Maneuvering System), an integrated system that works as a component of the SmartCommand system to provide easy, safe cruising and close quarters maneuvering.

The ZF iAnchor function is a GPS controlled option that keeps the boat in a static position (as if it were anchored) at the push of a button. Combined with joystick docking and the one-handed delight of piloting your boat, there's a lot to recommend in this propulsion system. Add the 30% in fuel you'll save and factor in the reduced up front costs and reduced through-life expense vs. a shaft and prop installation, and one gets the feeling that soon we'll be seeing this, and similar drive systems, in many of our favorite new yachts.

* * * * *

SkyHAWK Sunglasses – The Perfect Gift for a Stellar Captain

(now \$14.98 per pair)

I struggled with what to get my old friend on the occasion of our next rendezvous, and settled on a pair of new SkyHAWK sunglasses in the tortous shell frames. He'd been a cruise ship captain on two of my favorite lines, was an Italian (and therefore cared about how he looked), and was fond (as was I) of extending invitations for my wife and I to visit him on the ship's bridge, join him at the Captain's table, and sample Grappa wine from his village in the North of Italy.

This cruise the Captain was his positive self, and I presented him with a nicely wrapped gift box when he invited us to the bridge. He seemed genuinely pleased with the pair of Palm Beach blueblockers I gave him, and immediately stripped the tags off them and put them on. He did the usual double-take (not uncommon when people try their first pair of SkyHAWKS) at the clarity of vision he was experiencing, and then was called away by a steward, thanked us and wished us good night and a good cruise.

I didn't see him again for three and a half years, and we met aboard the newest ship in the line. He and I shared an espresso in the foyer of his cabin, where he told me he was sailing his final season with the line, and would at Christmas time return home a final time to his family, the several grandkids, and his little vineyard. I wished him congratulations and toasted his many years of success. He motioned to have our espresso refilled, and I followed him onto the bridge, and onto the wing where the bright sun was making its way toward the horizon.

The captain set his espresso on the rail and fished a pair of sunglasses from his shirt pocket. I tried not to show my delight when I saw that they were the same pair of SkyHAWKs I'd given him three and half years before, but he noticed that I recognized them (it didn't help that I was wearing a different model at the time). He told me that the SkyHAWKs had become his favorite sunglasses, that he taken them with him on sea and shore, and that he worried about losing or damaging them and not being able to find another pair.

I explained that I, too, had become a fan of the SkyHAWK Blueblocker sunglasses, had given up a \$250/pair Porsche Design shades in their favor, and had (since I made a gift of his pair) bought a distributorship for the line in order to provide them to my Cruise Club clients. Our conversation drifted off to ship stories (I think a major line had lost a ship off Tahiti the month before) and other topics, and we embraced and said our farewells, knowing that we'd probably not see each other again.

I sent the Commodore (he was promoted to Fleet Captain with two months left) a new pair of Aviators upon my return to the office, and stay in touch with him via regular mail to this day. He still has the original pair of SkyHAWKs I gave him, wears them nearly daily, and keeps the new pair in his desk for someday when they're needed. I've filled seven orders for his friends in the village who had to have a pair of their own.

I would be honored to ship you a pair of SkyHAWK sunglasses for 65% off the list price.

See the selection in the Marine Store.

* * * * *

Little Red Screamer

I have the ultimate bilge alarm on my vessel, and another of the same for my security system. A siren is overkill, some may say, but there won't be any doubt in the event of one of my through-hull fittings leaking or someone trying to break into Kokomo. I have



two, marine grade, fire-engine-red *mechanical* sirens mounted below decks in a battery compartment that wind up to a whopping 139db in an emergency situation.

The sirens are \$149 each and are well worth the investment. They are small enough to be mounted almost anywhere $\begin{pmatrix} 4 & X \\ 4 & \end{pmatrix}$, tough as they come (and have a warranty to match) and

loud enough to be heard above the worst racket imaginable. I came across the siren while touring a friend's new trawler yacht. The boat came with six of them, and used them for raw water, low oil, leak, and bilge alarms among other applications ... I think one of them was mast mounted and was used for a 'fog' horn and hailing siren.

I finally found where that trawler company gets them, and offer them here for just \$99 each (see the Marine Store). I recently installed one on my truck – it makes an exciting button for my grandson to push – but I really am sold on their marine applications and I'm still finding new and creative ways to use them.

* * * * *

Propeller Security

Posted on May 10, 2011 by skippersteve



After launching at a major Bay Area marina recently, I watched a 25 C-Dory launch and prepare to go to sea. The skipper of the other boat rushed around and got his icebox in the cockpit, perched his Bimini-style top (over the cockpit), and generally got her ready. He then parked his rig

(small, compared to mine; must be pretty nice to tow) and ran back to his boat. He started up the single Yamaha 115 outboard and let it warm up, then put her in gear.

There was a tone difference to the engine (the product of the transmission engaging), but no frothing of wake at the stern as I was expecting. I was more than a little interested now, as I had never seen an outboard behave this way. I thought briefly that it was a jet, but even a jet produces disturbed water. The skipper gave the engine a quick burst of power, and then walked back and looked at it, evidently as bewildered as I and several others in the area had become.

He went back to the helm, turned off the engine and raised it out of the water. Because of my position about 40 behind him, I got a first look at the prop shaft. He had no propeller, and at first I thought that he'd spun one off. But, in thinking about it, there had never been prop wash, even for a moment.

I could tell by his face that he was just as surprised to see a bare shaft as I was. In talking to him later, after he'd pulled the boat out of the water again, I learned that he'd just put a new propeller on the boat (after hitting the original one on a rock in an Oregon river this summer) and had spent \$600 total to do that. He remembers thinking that "Someone could just steal this!" and then letting the thought go. And someone had. Probably at his home in Redding, California, on the curb where he leaves his boat all day

and night, and likely during the day when he was at work. He figures the thief would have taken about 3 minutes to dislodge his cotter pin, nut and thrust washer and remove the propeller ... and all he'd need was a multi-tool or a pair of needle nose pliers. I've never had problems with the aluminum prop on my lake boat, and it and Kokomo live at home (which is, these days, well off the beaten path on our own acreage) near Paradise, CA. But I got to thinking that the two props on my boat were pretty valuable (stainless steel, etc.) and would make a thief a quick \$1000+ if they were stolen. Aside from the expense of replacing the props, there was the reality of traveling somewhere to use the boat (usually at least a 4 hour proposition) and finding, upon arrival, that your carefully-pampered outboards don't have what they need to 'go' (though I can't imagine leaving for such a trip without checking the props). NOTE: This fella had traveled 2 hours further than I had (6 hours) to get to the marina, and had no idea where to go to find a propeller and the mounting kit for his boat.

I decided to take affirmative action, and did research on the propeller locks that are out there. I settled on McGard propeller locks, ordered them, and had them on Kokomo the following week. In doing my research, I learned that, in California, one of every 24 stainless propellers is stolen (according to the guy who sold me the locks)! This includes the props on lots of boats that are not trailerable (it's evidently easy to remove them in the water too, and the thief – who does his work underwater – is less prone to being seen/caught). Alarming. The McGard locks mount in about 10 minutes (once I had the original prop nut, cotter pin and the thrust washer removed) and are designed to simply spin if someone without the "key" tries to remove them. I'm impressed with the quality of these locks, and only a little concerned about operating the engines without cotter pins on the propeller shafts (the McGard system requires torquing to their specifications and relies on other than the cotter pin method to secure the prop). I liked the product well enough that I also purchased one for the prop on my Volvo SX outdrive on the ski boat.

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